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THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND DIRECT ACTION

By John Lovejoy Elliott

WHENEVER I speak of this subject, I think of a section of the American desert in which I once lived. That land is absolutely sterile without irrigation. A man can nearly kill himself carrying buckets of water all day, and yet irrigate only a very small portion.

The only real way to get water is either to stop the rivers or to dig an irrigation well. A good deal the same sort of thing has got to be done if ever the times come when our American cities are fit places in which to live. In other words, the wealth we need must be provided from the inside—by the people themselves. In dealing with this problem I believe in direct action. The direct action of the I. W. W. may be destructive sabotage, but at least they have been working directly for the people of the abyss, now. The philanthropic associations have been like the man who runs with a bucket of water to irrigate the desert. The social reformers are slow. Socialism is gradually granting more and more time for its ideals to be realized. And yet, these conditions are here, and we are tired of living under them. There is getting to be more and more in our communities the spirit of restlessness. This restlessness is going to continue, to grow, to be more and more of a force.

The people of the abyss are saying, "We suffer, we die, now must we wait for you and me in our neighborhood. To paraphrase Matthew Arnold, I have sometimes thought that social reform was a vocabulary tinged with passion. For the man who stands on the street corner shouting for social reform till the windows rattle, and then goes home and does not practise brotherhood on his wife or his own brother, I have little use. The kind of fraternity that cannot stand the test of kindness to one's own neighbors is false.

In twenty years I have found out from my neighborhood several things, and one is that the women of the community were good at looking after the children of that community, and that there was need of them. You can't do all your duty indoors—not any more. To be a good mother you have got to be out of doors—in the dance halls and the saloons. The young fellows hanging before the saloons of any community are a challenge to that community to open some other kind of amusement for them. (Applause.) In our neighborhood the women are away ahead of the men. The tenement house burden is carried on the backs of the women. And, just as fifty years ago the word went through the world, "Working men, unite!" today there should go through the slums the cry, "Women, unite and organize!" Not just for the sake of the ballot, though I believe in that, too (Applause), but for the purpose for which the ballot has got to be used, for the sake of the children and the home. The women are doing the work today, and never will there be any great progress until the women organize. Without organization they are fighting mothers of the tenements, splendid but futile.

Above all things the social centre is trying to make articulate the living God in men and women—trying to bring out their spiritual power right in the darkness of the together as neighbors and help the big influences to be made real things. Open your schools, open these centres, and if the right standard is raised there and the right spirit predominates, the men and women will come together and work so that it will create centres of light in the darkest places of this or any other community.

THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL

By Mary P. Follett.

THE Social Centre movement is, as you all know, the movement for opening the public school buildings evenings for community purposes. But I wonder if you all know how rapidly this movement is spreading throughout the United States, from Wisconsin to Texas, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. City after city, town after town, is throwing open its schoolhouses evenings. And this rapid development is not surprising, for everywhere it has been the same fundamental need in the community which has brought about the Social Centre movement, the same hunger we have all felt for a wider fellowship and a common life. If I were asked to name the most striking characteristic of the present time, I should say that people are doing more things together; they are coming together more than ever before in municipal movements, for national purposes, in labor organizations, in co-operative societies, in associations of employers and employees, etc. The keynote of the twentieth century is the passion for solidarity. That this is so is the great hope of our future democracy.

Industrial democracy gets nearer, and political democracy is becoming more real with changes in the form of...
THE PRAYER.

Help us to find Thee, O God, in the hearts and lives of the men, women, and children that are all about us. May we break down every barrier that hinders us from really knowing one another. Bring us together, we pray Thee, in friendly intimacies, in mutual enjoyment, and in common aspirations. Let those who are privileged bring gifts of leisure and culture. Let the distressed and the unsatisfied bring gifts of eagerness and desire. Let the powerful lift up the weak and the light-hearted bring comfort to the over-burdened.

Though we come from the ends of the earth and are separated by injustice, prejudice, and untoward circumstances, help us, O God, to seek out one another in love and patience and to rest not until, through fellowship and friendliness, we have realized a large measure of the relationship of brothers and sisters of a common Father. Amen.

(Continued on Page 4.)
THE QUESTIONS

Q: What do you think of the German emperor's decorating Adolphus Busch, and Harvard's accepting a gift from him?

A (Miss Follett): They do.

Q: How often do these meetings in the schools take place?

A (Miss Follett): Our full social centres are held in the high school buildings, and we have them three times a week, when the evening high schools do not occupy them.

Q: How can we have social centres when the forces above are so opposed to them?

A (Mr. Elliott): We never will change the spirit above until we get the spirit of democracy among the people underneath.

Q: Do you believe that organized social centres will gradually do away with poverty?

A (Miss Follett): I don't know whether we shall ever get our social centres as effective as that, but organization can do anything.

Q: How can we get the people together in a united effort when they are divided so sharply religiously?

A (Miss Follett): Religious differences are no longer so important as they once were.

Q: Wouldn't it help a lot of the short-lived organizations which spring up continually if they had a good leader?

A (Miss Follett): At first, but we don't want a leader from the outside; we want a leader from the inside, one who is associated with the people and will take the people together and work with each other so that they will not be exploited for profit.

A (Mr. Elliott): I want people to get together and work with each other so that they will not be exploited for profit.

Q: What do you think of the German workers' idea? A (Mr. Elliott): Both he and the social reformer who does not practise what he preaches are equally public nuisances.

Q: Will not too many social gatherings encourage idle gossip and destroy valuable individual abilities?

A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.

Q: What do you think about the Arcadia fire?

A (Mr. Elliott): I see no connection between what does happen and what ought to happen, in this world.

Q: Does not the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the upper classes, which most need training of this sort, do not get it?

A (Miss Follett): I think some are better than others.

Q: What do you think about the Arcadia fire?

A (Mr. Elliott): I see no connection between what does happen and what ought to happen, in this world.

Q: Does not the saloon when prohibited cause a greater desire for drink than when not prohibited, just as when religion was prohibited, people wanted it?

A (Mr. Elliott): No, it seems to me that the further you can keep it back the better it will be. There is no natural craving for liquor.

Q: What effect have the settlement houses had on our cities?

A (Mr. Elliott): They give good training in co-operation and organization.

Q: Do you advocate the teaching of sex hygiene in social centres?

A (Miss Follett): Not at present.

Q: What do you think of the German workers' idea?

A (Mr. Elliott): I do not think they are. I think that in the long run fights of this sort have been successful, and never more so than they are now. Those that have lost have gone at it in the wrong way.

Q: Are not the saloons the foundation of most of the evils that exist?

A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, and I quite agree with you.

Q: What do you think of the German workers' idea?

A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.

Q: Do you think of the German workers' idea?

A (Mr. Elliott): I don't think they are. I think that in the long run fights of this sort have been successful, and never more so than they are now. Those that have lost have gone at it in the wrong way.

Q: Are not the saloons the foundation of most of the evils that exist?

A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, with most officials it is themselves first, the party next, and then, after a long space, the people. But the people elect them to tariffs with the same breath.

Q: Why don't both the speakers join the Socialist party and help along the things they advocate? (Laughter.)

A (Mr. Elliott): In many important respects Socialism stops just when the real work begins. I do not object to any of the practical measures of Socialism. (Miss Follett did not reply.)

Q: How do you regard the man who is good to his family and immediate friends, but who oppresses his fellow men in the economic life?

A (Mr. Elliott): Both he and the social reformer who does not practise what he preaches are equally public nuisances.

Q: How do you regard the man who is good to his family and immediate friends, but who oppresses his fellow men in the economic life?

A (Mr. Elliott): They will not be exploited for profit.

Q: Do you advocate the teaching of sex hygiene in social centres?

A (Miss Follett): Not at present.

Q: What do you think of the German workers' idea?
Q: Are not the saloons the foundation of most of the evils that exist?
A (Mr. Elliott): I do not think they are. I think that they aggravate every evil in the world. They are a terrible irritant.
Q: How are you going to get the working class together when the struggle for existence takes all their energy?
A (Mr. Elliott): People will get a good deal better bread and butter when they do unite.
Q: How do you regard the man who is good to his family and immediate friends, but who oppresses his fellow men in the economic life?
A (Mr. Elliott): Both he and the social reformer who does not practise what he preaches are equally public nuisances.
Q: Will not too many social gatherings encourage idle gossip and destroy valuable individual qualities?
A (Miss Follett): I think you haven't understood what I mean by social gatherings. I mean every place where people meet together, no matter how serious the purpose.
Q: Are not many of the hindrances to our coming together due to people's holding themselves aloof and not being willing to meet other people?
A (Miss Follett): Just acquaintance—knowing each other—is the first basis of democracy.
Q: Can brotherhood be promoted by Mr. Coleman's "conundrum" in last week's Ford Hall Folk? What effect will that have?
A (Mr. Hogan): That remains to be seen! (Laughter.)
Q: Is industrial democracy possible under private ownership?
A (Miss Follett): I do not consider private ownership democracy.
Q: Wasn't it sabotage to put the tea in Boston Harbor?
A (Mr. Elliott): I don't care to say anything else from the lectern!
Q: Isn't sabotage as practised by the I. W. W., as a last resort, and not necessarily with violence, justifiable?
A (Mr. Elliott): No, because anything that is done in an underhanded way cannot be justified.
Q: What is the nature of the majority church in Boston toward social centres and other discussions?
A (Miss Follett): I have never heard any objection.
Q: Aren't the public officials whom the struggling people elect to represent them absorbed in their own interests, instead of serving the people?
A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, with most officials it is themselves first, the party next, and then, after a long space, the people. But the people who elect them are tarred with the same brush.
Q: How don't both the speakers join the Socialist party and help along the things they advocate? (Laughter.)
A (Mr. Elliott): In many important respects just when the real work begins. I do not object to any of the practical measures of Socialism. (Miss Follett did not reply.)
Q: How do you expect the people in the centre to organize when they are exploited for profit?
A (Mr. Elliott): I want people to get together and work with each other so that they will not be exploited for profit.
Q: What do you think of the work of the sociologists?
A (Mr. Elliott): I don't like to work with sociologists; they have too many notions it takes years to knock out. We have not yet had any great sociologist.
Q: Does not our present system of education entirely neglect the older people, and what does the social centre contemplate doing for them?
A (Miss Follett): That is one of the most important reasons for starting the social centre. We have a large number of groups for older people, and hope to have many more.
Q: How do you expect to arrive at democracy when people today are so selfish that they will match the bread from each other's mouths?
A (Mr. Elliott): I hope that doesn't hit everyone. I have known a good many people who would put bread in another's mouth.
Q: Doesn't sectarian organization create animosity, and doesn't it rule politics at the present time?
A (Mr. Elliott): Boston is "some problem," but I don't know but that the people have the main power in their own hands.
Q: How do you expect to solve the poor tenant's problem long as the economic law of marginal utilities demands that these tenements exist?
A (Mr. Elliott): It doesn't necessarily apply.
Q: Could or would a poor laboring man interest himself in the social centre after a hard day's work?
A (Miss Follett): I think some are better than others.
Q: What do you think about the Arcadia fire?
A (Mr. Elliott): I see no connection between what does happen and what ought to happen, in this world.
Q: Does not the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the upper classes, which most need training of this sort, do not get it?
A (Miss Follett): Let us work hard for that, too.
Q (Mr. Frazer): Have not the newspapers of Boston been a great help to Ford Hall?
A (Mr. Coleman): Yes, indeed. (Mr. Elliott): I do not know the Boston papers.
Q: Do you think that the statement often made, that the doctrines of the law of bar progress, is true?
A (Mr. Elliott): I feel very decidedly that a law must be obeyed before it can be changed.
Q: What should be done to the owners of property, in the slums and elsewhere, that is used for immoral purposes?
A (Mr. Elliott): The name of the man who owns the property should go over the door. That ought to be a beginning. (A Voice: We have that in Oregon.) (Mr. Elliott): I should have expected that. You have everything progressive there.
Q (Mr. Gallup): Is not much being done through Chambers of Commerce, city planning, etc., for social uplift by the upper classes?
A (Mr. Elliott): Yes, and they are getting good training themselves in the settlements.

**Other Meetings**

Sunday Commons, at Huntington Chambers Hall, Sunday, Dec. 28, at 3.30 P. M. Dr. Charles Fleischer, leader.

LOYAL TO THE DEATH.

"What happened to Rollignan?"
"He drowned."
"And could he swim?"
"He did, for eight hours; but he was a union man."—San Francisco Star,
Mr. Elliott: They do. How often do these meetings in the high schools take place?

Miss Follett: Our full social centre held in the high school buildings, we have them three times a week, when evening high schools do not occupy the buildings.

How can we have social centres when recesses are so opposed to them? Mr. Elliott: We never will change if we limit.a time until we get the spirit of industry among the people underneath.

Mr. Elliott: I don't know whether all ever get our social centres as others do, but organization can do anything.

How can we get the people together to insist when they are divided so religiously? Miss Follett: Religious differences are no longer so important as they once were. We never will change them.

Mr. Elliott: We never will change them. The social centres are so opposed to them? Miss Follett: Our full social centres in Boston as social centres are reduced to arcadian parties.

Mr. Elliott: I see no connection between what happens and what ought to be in this world.

Miss Follett: What does the operation of the social centres as now constituted show that the classes, which must need training of art, do not get it?

Miss Follett: Let us work hard for too.

Mr. Frasier: Have not the newspapers of Boston been a great help to Ford Hall?

Mr. Coleman: Yes, indeed. (Mr. t): I do not know the Boston papers.

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Ford Hall Folks
Edited by Thomas Dreier.

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF BOSTON
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21st
AT 3 P.M.
FRANKLIN UNION HALL, Berkeley and Appian Sts.
GEORGE KIRKPATRICK
Author of "WAR: WHAT FOR?"

ADVERTISING
A space of this size—one inch high and two and one-half inches wide—can be had for advertising purposes for one dollar a week. For information regarding advertising apply to Jacob London, Room 707, Ford Building, Boston, Mass.
THE PERSONALITY OF H. S. VIC-TORSON.

Part II.

Another factor in my life was a library of Jewish books kept up by the "Hebrew Progressive Association." I spent a good deal of time there, too, especially Sundays. Jewish literature always interested me, and later I wrote considerably for certain Jewish papers and magazines.

At the age of 23 I gave up the tailoring trade and became a life insurance agent. This profession of policy-hunting I detested just as much as I had hated the constant monotony and sameness of the tailoring trade. After two years' experience in that profession (which experience broadened and deepened my knowledge of human nature considerably) I accepted a rather far from lucrative position as traveling salesman for Jewish and English radical magazines, pamphlets and books. In addition to this I used to address gatherings of Jewish working men and women on different educational and propaganda topics. This, in addition to the articles I wrote for some Jewish publications, was the kind of work that agreed with me more than anything else, as it was in conformity with my intense desire to make as many converts as possible to the grandest and noblest ideal of modern times—Socialism, in its broadest and most comprehensive sense—among the Jewish working men and women.

I look back with pride and pleasure upon the four years I spent thus. It was a purely ideal state that I was then in, and although that sort of life spelled lack of material comfort in every sense of the word, I am, nevertheless, firmly convinced that, had I suffered infinitely more all through my life than I did, the everlasting impression and memory of that period would have much more than compensated for that suffering.

It was during those travels that I familiarized myself with the Great Old Town of this country—Boston. I intentionally used the word "familiarized" because I was acquainted with it beforehand. Many and many

THE SOCIAL CENTRE AND THE DEMOCRATIC IDEAL.

(Continued from Page 1.)

But the brotherhood of man is at present an ideal, not a reality. How are the Social Centres going to help us make it real? First of all, simply by providing a place where people can meet and become acquainted with one another. Where there is a better opportunity for this than in our schoolhouses, where we have the space and plant required—large rooms, halls, gymnasiums, and where all meet on common ground with equal rights,—where there are no races, but all are Americans, where no political party or particular religion has any special privileges, where no commercialism can dominate us? (Applause.)

The first aim of the Social Centres should be to train up young people with a sense of responsibility. Those of us who believe that the reform of city government is not to come so much through change of charters as through the associated life of citizens, recognizing their responsibilities, look to the Social Centres as one of the most effective means at our hands for revolutionizing the life of cities. (Applause.)

What we must all realize is that we are responsible for whatever government we have, that our government is not run by "they,"—by mysterious other persons, but that we ourselves are responsible for the life of our city and of our nation. We want it to become a matter of common realization that citizenship is not a duty to be exercised a few times a year, chiefly on voting days; citizenship is not a duty at all, really, it is not a privilege, it is just a function, like breathing, to be exercised every moment of our life. (Applause.) This is what we want the Centres to teach—we want to teach and to learn our share in the common life.

I want now to speak of four ways in which this civic and social responsibility may be developed in the Centres.

1. First, all the activities of the Boston Evening Centres are group activities. The race is now evolving a new being to meet the demands the democratic ideal has laid upon it—the social being—the man who looks upon himself in every respect
The kind of work that agreed with me more than anything else, as it was in conformity with my intense desire to make as many converts as possible to the grandest and noblest ideal of modern times—Socialism, in its broadest and its most comprehensive sense—among the Jewish working men and women.

I look back with pride and pleasure upon the four years I spent thus. It was a purely ideal state that I was then in, and although that sort of life is not the sort that I could ever conformably content myself with, I feel that I was doing the work I was destined to do. I was doing the work I was meant to do. I was doing the work I was appointed to do. I was doing the work I was designated to do. I was doing the work I was entitled to do. I was doing the work I was empowered to do. I was doing the work I was authorized to do. I was doing the work I was licensed to do. I was doing the work I was permitted to do. I was doing the work I was commissioned to do. I was doing the work I was accredited to do. I was doing the work I was accredited to do.

I was doing the work I was accredited to do.

It was during those travels that I familiarized myself with the Grand Old Town of this country—Boston. I intentionally use the word "familiarized" because I was acquainted with it before. Many and many a time I had dreamed and pondered about the Cradle of Liberty and the Birthplace of the Abolitionist Movement. Gen. Putnam, the Adams', Phillips and Garrison had always been among my favorite grand, ideal figures. And so, when I arrived here (in 1907) I decided to stay here as I wanted to make a change anyway. I decided to give up my activity in the Socialist movement, at least for some time, and I chose book selling as the kind of occupation most congenial to me. Then it was that I began to attend the Ford Hall meetings; that I met Mr. G. W. Coleman—one of the very few persons I ever knew whose first accidental meeting meant to me an instinctive soul-relationship; that I experienced the infinite pleasure of attending two of the Conferences at Sagamore Beach, and that I profited mentally and morally by all the things connected therewith.

The man who supervises the man at the machine so that the latter works more efficiently shares equally with the latter in the credit for the profit which that machine makes.

NOTICE!

There is a limited supply on hand of the copy of Collier's Weekly containing Peter Clark Macfarlane's write-up of Mr. Coleman. These may be had at 5e each by applying to Jacob London.

Friends Who Are Coming


Jan. 4—Dr. Stanton Coit of London, "The Ethics of Marriage and Divorce."

Jan. 11—Symposium, "What Is the Matter With Our Public Schools?" Miss Margaret Slattery of Fitchburg and others to be announced.


Jan. 25—Dr. Albion Woodbury Small of Chicago University.


Feb. 8—Prof. Edward A. Steiner, "The Inter-National Mind and the Inter-Racial Heart."

Feb. 15—Symposium, "Breeding Men."

Feb. 22—Charles Brandon Booth, "The Case for the Prisoner."

March 1—Leslie Willis Sprague of Chicago.

March 8—Symposium, on "Journalism," A. J. Philpot of the Boston Globe and others to be announced.


April 5—Mary Church Terrell, "The Case of the Prisoner."

April 12—Dr. Thomas C. He of New York.

April 19—Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch.
DECEMBER 28.—One of the most interesting evenings we ever had at Ford Hall was that on which Prof. James Hyslop was the speaker and “Can Immortality Be Proved?” the subject. Science will again be linked with faith on this platform when Rev. Allyn K. Foster of Worcester gives his remarkable address, “Can Religion Be Made Scientific?” Mr. Foster thinks it can and those who have heard or read this paper of his agree with him. Come and see whether you do. The questions ought to be particularly interesting, because Mr. Foster has been a lawyer, a lecturer and a newspaper man as well as a preacher. Mr. Coleman calls him a “live wire”—and our Chairman knows “live wires” when he meets them.

JANUARY 4.—Dr. Stanton Coit of London comes to us again, his topic this time being “The Ethics of Marriage and Divorce.” Those who heard Dr. Coit when he spoke to us on “Am I My Brother’s Keeper?” will not need to be told that he is one of the most brilliant orators of the day and possesses, besides, a remarkable power of infusing with spiritual truth every topic which he discusses. He is coming over from England for a few addresses only and will journey to us at Ford Hall directly from his boat in New York. Let us give him the welcome he deserves.

JANUARY 11 is the Sunday immediately preceding Boston’s school election and, very appropriately, school problems will be up for discussion. What could be done here—and has been done in Fitchburg—by a liberal use of “welfare teachers” will be told us by Miss Margaret Slattery, the well-known platform speaker. Then, turning to the immediate problems of our own community, as Dr. Elliott so truly told us we must do if we are ever to make things really better, Mrs. Susan W. Fitzgerald will discuss for us “The Fundamental Difficulty in Improving Boston’s Schools.” You’ll be sorry if you miss this.

GEORGE W. COLEMAN, Chairman and Director of Meetings
Miss MARY C. CRAWFORD, Secretary for the Meetings
Office Hours at Room 707, Ford Building, State House Hill, 3.30 to 4.30 daily, except Saturdays
Telephone, Haymarket 2247

THE MEETINGS ARE ENTIRELY FREE

FORD HALL, corner Bowdoin Street and Ashburton Place
DOORS OPEN AT 7 O’CLOCK