

Foreword

The causes of contemporary social conflicts are hidden in the contradictions in our lives. It seems to me that the most common and significant cause of social conflicts is the fact that the rights of individuals are not ensured and that individual responsibilities are not enforced.

The preliminary objective of the following essays is to demonstrate the existence of and to clarify the reasons for the inconsistencies causing confusions and conflicts in major fields of social activity.

I shall deal with the problems of—

Social organisation	(failures of authorities, hypocrisy)
Politics	(permissiveness and oppression: confusion in civil rights and responsibilities)
Morality	(private rights and communal harm)
Legality	(the letter and the spirit of the law)
Conscience	(the rights and responsibilities of killing)
Economics	(income distribution; exploitation and the limits of communal responsibilities)

The major objective of my work is an attempt to sort out the contradictions; to unravel the inconsistencies and to suggest some more satisfactory arrangements — reforms which may resolve the increasing dissatisfactions caused by social conflicts.

In my view social conflicts can only be solved by the application of enlightened self-interest. Mankind can live in freedom only if the rights of the Individual are ensured. But individual rights can only be enjoyed if personal responsibility for all actions — for harm and damages caused — is accepted and enforced.

The major cause of our conflicts is the foolhardy belief that we can retain our Individual Rights and at the same time expect the community to take over the responsibility for solving all the problems of the individual. This is of course not possible and it results in a chaotic irresponsibility, dissatisfaction and lawlessness.

We live in an era of "rising expectations" and our expectations are irresponsibly limitless. This is because we are told that not the individual but society ("someone else") is responsible for fulfilling his needs, his expectations, his demands.

When we do not compel each person to be responsible for the results of his actions — in the hope that society ("someone else") can remedy all consequences — we are digging the grave of humanity.

No society can solve the problems caused by personal irresponsibility — such as unlimited population growth, increasing pollution and waste of irreplaceable resources. No society can meet unlimited and ever-increasing demands made on limited resources and limited production. No welfare society can cope with the unlimited needs of all its members. We simply cannot "keep" our irresponsible brothers.

In reaction, when society ("someone-else") takes over the responsibility for looking after the "welfare" of the individual, the state always finds it necessary to take over also the rights of the individual. The euphoria of social bliss results in regimentation. The irresponsible, limitless demands must be limited at some stage and this evident need creates the opportunity for oppressive, authoritarian, disciplinarian forces to crush individual rights.

The present confusions which lead to these cyclic conflicts, must be replaced by a system which clarifies and enforces the RIGHTS together with the RESPONSIBILITIES of the INDIVIDUAL.

The basic ideals of such a social order are already inherent in the commonly accepted "Human Rights". It seems to me, therefore, that the solution of social conflicts does not need "revolutionary" or completely new approaches. What we need is a re-assessment of failures, a cutting of losses, a facing up to realities, a re-formation of social methods.

Being an optimist, I believe that such "reformation" is possible.

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