



1926

## Are We All Communists

North Dakota Law Review

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### Recommended Citation

North Dakota Law Review (1926) "Are We All Communists," *North Dakota Law Review*. Vol. 3: No. 11, Article 5.

Available at: <https://commons.und.edu/ndlr/vol3/iss11/5>

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cient room for the talents and taste stamped by the author on the face of it. The alterations made by the committee are not recollected. They were not such, as to impair the merit of the composition. Those, verbal and others, made in the convention, may be gathered from the Journal, and will be found also to leave that merit altogether unimpaired."

Letter of Gouverneur Morris to Timothy Pickering, December 22, 1814: "But, my dear Sir, what can a history of the Constitution avail towards interpreting its provisions? This must be done by comparing the plain import of the words, with the general tenor and object of the instrument. That instrument was written by the fingers which write this letter. Having rejected redundant and equivocal terms, I believed it to be as clear as our language would permit; excepting, nevertheless, a part of what relates to the judiciary. On that subject, conflicting opinions had been maintained with so much professional astuteness, that it became necessary to select phrases, which expressing my own notions should not alarm others, nor shock their self-love, and to the best of my recollection, this was the only part which passed without cavil.

"But, after all, what does it signify, that men should have a written Constitution, containing unequivocal provisions and limitations? The legislative lion will not be entangled in the meshes of a logical net. The legislature will always make the power, which it wishes to exercise, unless it be so organized, as to contain within itself the sufficient check. Attempts to restrain it from outrage, by other means, will only render it more outrageous. The idea of binding legislators by oaths is puerile. Having sworn to exercise the powers granted, according to their true intent and meaning, they will, when they feel a desire to go farther, avoid the shame if not the guilt of perjury, by swearing the true intent and meaning to be, according to their comprehension, that which suits their purpose."

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### ARE WE ALL COMMUNISTS?

There are those who answer that question in the affirmative, but most of them qualify the affirmation by saying that it is true, not in fact, but in theory, not as applied to our private and business lives, but as applied to our governmental pronouncements.

It has been our habit to take notes on interesting articles and addresses and put them away for future reference, and a recent magazine article, dealing with the observance of Constitution Week, brought to mind the fact that sometime in the not too long ago we took some notes on an address by a Mr. Kingsley, in which he intimated, with some gusto, that the opening phrase of our Declaration of Independence was highly communistic. He then re-processed that statement, through the medium of so-called fact and logic and more or less picturesque speech, into an impressive warning that the great danger to our democracy lay in the full and complete acceptance of that Jeffersonian doctrine—we should say, rather, in its misinterpretation.

It is true that one needs but to review the record of the past decade to become aware that there is need for some warning voice. Ignorance and irresponsibility have repeatedly lent their ears to demagoguery, with more or less resulting disorder, an occasional note of

despair, and a more than faint suggestion of possible dictatorship. As we recall it, no less a person than the Hon. William Howard Taft once suggested something of a similar nature. His phraseology was not as picturesque, nor as tactless, but his inferential conclusions were just as positive.

In other words, we have been getting, and are getting, this suggestion every little while—sometimes from sources that must be respected—namely: that our democracy is democratic in every field except that of government, and that it is democratic—wherever it is democratic—because it departs from the Jeffersonian dictum about the first “self-evident truth”, and that it is not democratic in the fields of government because we there adhere to the untruth of this “truth”.

Most assuredly, men are not equal in creative ability, in qualities of leadership, in achievement, in scholarship, in scientific discovery, in philanthropy, in public service. As a matter of fact, however, we are unable to say that we have discovered anything in Jefferson’s statements or writings that indicated any belief on his part that every baby born after the publication of the Declaration would weigh sixteen pounds and be so organized as to grow six feet tall, wear a number seven hat, and be able to spend, profitably to society, twenty hours of every day in idleness. We don’t think he believed it, and we don’t think that he said that he believed it.

Nevertheless, one wonders if Mr. Kingsley’s voice is the one that is needed. Whether it is or not, and whether the Declaration is taken literally, or in the sense that it means equality of opportunity, Mr. Kingsley is certain that the Declaration should be changed. His version is this: “We hold these truths to be self-evident—that all men are created unequal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to insure these rights a government must be set up to be controlled by the people, not through numerical majorities, but through a ballot which shall, as closely as may be, register the individuality, the brains, the creative power, the civic devotion, the scholarship, the scientific accomplishment, the public spirit—in short, all the tangible and intangible values—of the several men and women by whose votes our destinies are to be determined.”

That sounds alright, in fact, it sounds fine, but is it necessary, is it wise, would it work out if found necessary or wise? Before you answer permit us to remark that it is strange how few of the people who get wonderful theories concerning our economic and political welfare ever suggest the practical means for making their theories effective. Right now we wonder who would do the appraising under the Kingsley plan, and who would insure that we, including Mr. Kingsley, got as square a deal as we are now getting? We wonder, moreover, whether citizenship rating and a recognition of voting power in accordance with such rating would result in the election of the “best” men, prevent the passage of “phool” legislation, and generally bring to fuller fruition government of, by and for the people? At best, it is a matter for speculative meandering, isn’t it? And you have as much right to meander as Mr. Kingsley. So waddle along.