On Picket Duty.

I am really sorry to have made so true a man as Henry D. Lloyd a target for the abuse of the Chicago "Inter-Ocean" (see article in another column), but he must take the consequences of his mistaken policy. Of course the assertion of the "Inter-Ocean," that the invitation to me was extended in ignorance of the fact that I am an Anarchist is utterly without foundation. To be sure, in my letter of declination, I myself, in addressing Mr. Lloyd officially, was bound to assume such ignorance on his part, as nothing else would be consistent with the officially-declared policy of excluding Anarchists. But as a matter of fact I knew perfectly well that I was known as an Anarchist, not only by Mr. Lloyd, but by nearly all the other members of the committee. About this matter, however, I expect to have more to say hereafter. I am looking for interesting developments in connection with the invitations extended by the Y. M. C. A. Congress Auxiliary.

I had no sooner received a copy of "Instead of a Book" from the binder's hands than I discovered in it a typographical error which made me tear my hair. On the eighty-fifth page of the volume the reader will find this remarkable statement: "It is undeniable that the most important freedoms, those without which all other freedoms are of little or no avail, the freedom of banking and the freedom to take possession of unoccupied land, exist now here in the civilized world." Would it be true? Had it been, there would have been no occasion to publish "Instead of a Book." Unfortunately it is false, and this false statement is put into my mouth by a friend of a printer, against whose idleness I am powerless. By changing the word "nowhere" into the words "nowhere he has exactly reversed the statement that I made. There is no excuse for the egregious blunder. Plain reprint "copy" was furnished; therefore no such error as this ought to have appeared, and it did not appear in the page-proof furnished to me. I have spent a thousand dollars in the publication of a book the purpose of which was to prove that the absence of freedom of banking and freedom of the land is the principal cause of existing social evils, and yet the book declares that these freedoms now exist! I presume that a week hence I shall have recovered my equilibrium and a portion of my good nature, but at the hour of going to press the most charitable hope within my breast is that John Gutenberg, the accredited inventor of the artesian age of printing, is now writhing in the flames of hell, and that the dolt, his disciple, whose helpless victim I am, may go speedily to join him there.

Problems of Anarchism.

PROPERTY.

7.-Collectivism. The Facts Speak.

We are unable to go back to a time in which the property idea did not in some degree exist. For not only do the lowest types of men exhibit a crude sense of ownership, but sub-human animals also show distinct consciousness of it. And that the conception of property has throughout the various stages of civilization grown in an individualistic direction is still more certain. In an earlier chapter it was pointed out that with human progress personal possession becomes ever more absolute and inviolable. Collectivists may attempt to refute these facts by pointing to the apparent growth of public property and industrial functions as evidence of the decline of the idea of personal property. This line of argument has been dealt with, and its validity from the viewpoint of sociological and economic science made sufficiently clear. We may now consider some broad and well established truths which will leave no tangible room for doubt as to the soundness of the position we occupy. A comparison between the individual organism and the social organism has shown us that the tendency to suppress private by public activity, or voluntary industrial organization by compulsory collective organization, must inevitably be in the nature of a reversion, a social retrogression. And a study of the leading facts of social phenomena will render the same truth still more conclusive.

Let us compare different races and unlike social structures. Setting aside the savage and the barbarian, it is a mere truism that the more advanced the race the more complete do we find the development of individual property. The Russian peasantry still continue, in one form or another, the property customs of that early phase of social growth, the Village Community. Land till recently was held in common, but is fast giving place to the system of individual property. The methods of cultivation are still those belonging to the communal form. But the American agriculturist, with an intensely individualized system of property, is vastly ahead of the communal peasants, both in his individualistic methods of cultivation and in material well-being. In many parts of Germany and central Europe the peasants also follow the communal land system, but they are ages behind the average British farmer, not to speak of the American, whose methods are based on the clearest recognition of private property and enterprise. In China the regressive functions of government reach a peak unknown in any State in western Europe; in Russia the authorities are so anxious for the welfare of the individual that almost every action from the cradle to the grave becomes a question of fact before the constant solicitude; and in Germany the functions exercised by State officials, and their minute and unlimited interference with the private life of each citizen, seem incredible, as they would be unbearable, to an Englishman or an American. These characteristics are simply extensions of the same principle which the paternalistic legislation of England and the United States is rapidly following, and in which social reformers like those referred to find so much encouragement. Yet I doubt whether the most enthusiastic paternalist, even Mr. Webb himself, is prepared to claim that the ditmed autocracy of China, the brutal, reductive despotism of Russia, or the iron-bound, martial regime of Germany produces a higher type of society than the more capitalistic, individualistic English and American democracies. Moreover, the present fashion of historical research in the economic field has made it irksome to the legal and authoritative regulation of industry and commerce, and the direction and restriction of each individual's daily life, before the days of modern capitalism. Individualism—that is, personal freedom—had a back seat in past times, and private property was by no means secure. Still, if the Fabian view of the social organism is correct, the temporary revival of the spirit in the hard work of latter day reformers is direct evidence of the evolution of society into Socialism. Has the social organism, then, in its metamorphosis from mediavism into capitalism, been retrograding? The answer to this question compels us either to give up entirely the theory of social evolution and ignore sociological facts, or to set aside the Fabian interpretation of it: the latter course will prove the better choice. In any case an application of the principles of social evolution which modern collectivists profess to accept unmistakably demonstrates that every step in the direction of compulsory collectivism or governmental control of property is reactionary and against the ultimate welfare of the race.

These reformers, unceasingly urging on the blessings of the moderate amount of municipal Socialism already accomplished. Here the Nationalists find the monopolistic post-office an institution worthy of unbounded admiration and beyond the power of private enterprise to attain. The readers of Liberty, who have some little opportunity to judge, will doubtless sustain this view. In England we have Mr. Webb and others depicting the glories of aldermanic Socialism and flippantly admitting that it is made possible only by the creation of a gigantic and ever-increasing public debt, upon which a few years ago an annual tribute of over fifty million dollars was paid in the form of interest. Local rates are everywhere, says our Fabian author, in consequence rapidly rising. Now what more does the capitalist want than a safe opening for investment where there is the minimum of risk and a steady return? He would probably on an average receive less and be obliged to perform more service in return if he had himself to find employment in the open market for his capital. But the growth of this form of collectivism is no evidence that at all that private property or enterprise is disappearing before public control. Yet it is the very point which our Fabian reformers are endeavoring to prove. On the contrary, it is the intensifying and perpetuation of the existing unjust system of property that is being effected. It does not strike even the first blow at the most rapacious of all foes to property and to the property producer. That foe is usury. Such advocates are the true "bourgeois" reformers. Society would still remain organized on a system of status. There would be rapidity rising. Now what more does the capitalist want than a safe opening for investment where there is the minimum of risk and a steady return? He would probably on an average receive less and be obliged to perform more service in return if he had himself to find employment in the open market for his capital. But the growth of this form of collectivism is no evidence that at all private property or enterprise is disappearing before public control. Yet it is the very point which our Fabian reformers are endeavoring to prove. On the contrary, it is the intensifying and perpetuation of the existing unjust system of property that is being effected. It does not strike even the first blow at the most rapacious of all foes to property and to the property producer. That foe is usury. Such advocates are the true "bourgeois" reformers. Society would still remain organized on a system of status. There would be rapidity rising. Now what more does the capitalist want than a safe opening for investment where there is the minimum of risk and a steady return? He would probably on an average receive less and be obliged to perform more service in return if he had himself to find employment in the open market for his capital. But the growth of this form of collectivism is no evidence that at all private property or enterprise is disappearing before public control. Yet it is the very point which our Fabian reformers are endeavoring to prove. On the contrary, it is the intensifying and perpetuation of the existing unjust system of property that is being effected. It does not strike even the first blow at the most rapacious of all foes to property and to the property producer. That foe is usury. Such advocates are the true "bourgeois" reformers. Society would still remain organized on a system of status. There would
LIBERTY. 264

Issued Weekly at Two Dollars a Year; Single Copies, Four Cents.

BENJ. H. TUCKER, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Office of Publication, 19th Liberty Street.
Post Office Address: Liberty, P. O. Box No. 3182, New York, N. Y.

Established at New York on Second-Class Mail Matter.

NEW YORK, N. Y., MARCH 25, 1869.

237 The appearance in the editorial column of articles on other subjects than those which indicate that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every idea or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means proves that the editor approves of anything, much less of any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

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Liberty and Order.

In the February number of the "Personal Rights Journal," the editor, Mr. J. H. Levy, devotes an article to the consideration of my recent criticisms of certain positions of his. He not only attempts to repel my charge of inconsistency against him, made in proposito of his remarks on the relation of freedom and order, but takes occasion to explain his neglect of an earlier and much more fundamental criticism of mine, and towards the end assumes the offensive and seeks to convict Mr. Tucker of self-scruffiness and inconstant. I shall deal with Mr. Levy's position in the order in which I find them, first asking him, however, why he referred to my last criticism as "the Anarchistic Indictment of Individualism," this being the caption of his article.

My criticism was virtually simply a charge of inconsistency, and was by no means an indictment of the individualistic position, much less a presentation of the indictment of Individualism.

"In Liberty of the 1st ult.," wrote Mr. Levy, "the reader's "human agent" who writes these columns, very possibly insinuates an accusation of neglect on our part of a recent criticism of his. . . . We recollect this. It contained a number of small quotations from our columns, the accuracy, fairness, and relevancy of which we were unable to verify, as they were unaccompanied by reference notes. The editor of Liberty is one of the fairest of controversialists; but we must protest against his allowance of this practice. It is not proper treatment either of the readers of Liberty or of the persons criticised in its columns. From our reading of Mr. Varros's article, we came to the conclusion that it was a mere rehash of an old complaint of his, to which we had amply replied at the time. If we were mistaken in this, we only plead that the fault was not ours. We deny Mr. Varros's right to set us the task of wading through our columns in futile search after minute unspecified quotations."

Without undertaking a defense of Mr. Tucker's action in allowing the practice condemned by Mr. Levy, I may say that, while it is true that I generally omit to give reference notes in quoting from books or articles, I deny that my practice is fraudulent or unfair. On the contrary, I make every effort to prevent the author addressed or the writer criticised. Reference notes require time, patience, and access to the matter referred to; while I frequently find myself reduced to the necessity of working with only one of the requirements satisfied — with a stock of patience. I have to depend on my retentive faculty, which is fortunately not treacherous. Mr. Levy, however, so exaggerates his grievance that I am convinced he does not "recollect" the criticism he so freely characterizes. There is no justification for his statement that my article contained a number of slight and small quotations, and numerous unspecified quotations. There was but one "minute quotation" from his columns in my article, namely, the formula "no force save against force." Can there be any question as to the fairness and relevancy of such a "quotation" in a discussion of the central content of Individualism? As to its accuracy, if Mr. Levy really doubts the fact that he has editorially explicitly proclaimed the above formula as the precise expression of the Individualist position, I am ready to incur the expense and trouble of satisfying him on the point. Beyond this single "unspecified minute quotation," there was merely a reference to his "true admission" that compulsory taxation cannot be logically deduced from the law of equal freedom, but must be acquiesced in as an exception to that law. No reference notes are needed to prove the accuracy, relevancy, and fairness of this. Mr. Levy understands his own position and knows whether it involves such an admission or not. Specified quotations can easily be dispensed with here. It only remains to add that this criticism was not a "redherring" of an old complaint previously disposed of, and that a rejoinder to it did not necessitate any search after minute unspecified quotations. I shall not ask Mr. Levy to revert to that criticism and give it his attention; but an easy way occurs to me now by which the main point may be finally settled. Mr. Levy is doubtless familiar with Mr. Spencer's "Justice," and he may not have forgotten (seeing that he remembers less important efforts of mine) my review of it in Liberty, in which I proved that Mr. Spencer's defence of compulsory taxation and compulsory military service was plainly inconsistent with his formula of equal freedom. I would have Mr. Levy tell me whether he deems in the charge of inconsistency and illogicality against Spencer, — whether he shares my feeling that Spencer's conclusion on this subject is tame and inapt in view of his premises and general method of deducing men's rights (in the Spencerian sense). As an Anarchist, I am anxious to secure assent to the proposition that it is impossible to deduce compulsory cooperation for defence from the law of equal freedom as expressed by the Spencerian formula.

But to proceed to the main point in this controversy. Mr. Levy advises me to dismiss the notion that, in his strictures upon Lord Kimberley, he consciously or unconsciously reasoned from Anarchistic premises. My allegation that that was the case he declares to be "merely the blind assertion of a man who has not learned to realize the position occupied by those with whom he is contending." I assure Mr. Levy that he is mistaken in this. His position I thoroughly comprehend, as perfectly as I do my own. Let us see, then, how Mr. Levy reconciles the conclusion of Lord Kimberley to the essentially Anarchistic with his Individualist postulates. In the first place, Mr. Levy points out that his "supposition that a government has done its possible in the direction of freedom," so far from being Anarchistic, is utterly irreconcilable with Anarchism, the fundamental assumption of which is that government can do nothing for freedom. I have no exception to make to this argument, but it is certainly irrelevant. I never alleged that the supposition referred to indicated conscious or unconscious acceptance of Anarchistic premises. I spoke of the impression produced upon my mind by Lord Kimberley's proposition as a whole, not any distinct and separate supposition or affirmation. In the second place, Mr. Levy finds that in the speech which I put in Lord Kimberley's mouth order is taken, not as a coordinate end with liberty, but as instrumental to that end. "Could there be a more dismal failure?" cries Mr. Levy. "In the very speech conceived for our discomfiture, with an unheard-of meaning assigned to order for the very purpose of begging the question at issue, our critic is compelled to give it, not a place beside freedom as one of two ultimate aims of government, or to speak of it as the 'essential condition,' the 'condition precedent,' of liberty, which therefore stands out as the sole political end." That I assigned an unheard-of (in the literal sense) meaning to "order," I grant, but I did so, not for the purpose of begging the question at issue, but simply for the purpose of showing that, from the Individualist point of view, it is not necessarily nonsensical to speak of coupling order with liberty. The important consideration is that, unlike Anarchists, Individualists are not satisfied with absence of aggression, or equal freedom. Perhaps it is more correct to say that absence of aggression, equal freedom, is more than the Individualists want; they are not only satisfied with less, but absolutely refuse to ask for more than their present program demands. The meaning I assigned to order is unheard-of, but
not absurd; and it needs only to accept the assigned meaning to invest Lord Kimberley’s proposition with significance and value, from the standpoint of individualism. The same cannot be affirmed of Anarchism. Being satisfied with nothing less than equal freedom, to talk of coupling order with equal freedom is manifestly nonsense, no matter what meaning is assigned to order. As for the objection that, instead of taking order as a coordinate end with liberty, it spoke of it as a condition precedent of liberty, it is by no means clear that Lord Kimberley gave order a place beside freedom as one of two ultimate ends of government. If I am not mistaken, Mr. Levy had contended himself with giving this minute quotation from an address of Lord Kimberley’s: “I suppose there are few, if there are any, who do not think that a government, however successful, must couple order with liberty.” The expression, “couple order with liberty,” is not a very precise one, and it involves no violent assumption to give it my interpretation. The government must couple order with liberty—that is to say, it must levy taxes and compel cooperation for defense (order), while preventing invasion by private individuals and refraining from imposing restrictions not entailed by the need of compulsory cooperation (freedom). Now, according to Individualist philosophy, “order” in this sense is a condition precedent of freedom. But only by surrendering freedom can we get order. Freedom is impossible. But, as far as the government in its practical work is concerned, “order” and “freedom” may properly be said to constitute its two ultimate ends. What the government does is one thing; why it does what it does is another thing. The government has, practically, two ends: it has to secure maximum freedom, and to provide for compulsory cooperation—order with freedom. The government has to punish aggressors, and also to compel infantile citizens to join victims of aggression in putting down aggressors. Here we have two distinctly different kinds of duties. It cannot rationally be alleged that one and the same social principle covers both cases.

Reason from Anarchist postulates, and it at once appears that the coupling of order with liberty does involve either a contradiction or a contradiction. Disorder is aggression; aggression is violation of equal freedom; hence to couple order with freedom, equal freedom, is to couple freedom with itself. I insist that, barring the suppression of government doing its possible in the creation of order, we have no alternative but to acquit him of the charge of consciously taking Anarchistic ground. Surely he cannot quarrel with us for suspecting an unconscious gliding into Anarchism.

And now for Mr. Levy’s counter-criticism. He easily understands, he declares, why I winced at his reasoning and why Mr. Tucker approved the “central purpose and general tenor” of my deliverance. “At the head of Liberty appears a motto taken from Proudhon, which asserts that freedom is not the daughter but the mother of order.” Now we venture to say that this geological smite is the coin of nonsense.

It is very characteristic of Proudhon that he is not satisfied with contradicting the assertion of those who maintain that order is the cause of freedom, but must needs reverse their dictum. If our assertion that “the coupling of order with liberty means the coupling of liberty with itself” is correct, Proudhon says it is, then liberty is neither the daughter nor the mother of order, but order itself. Does the reader now see why I winced at Mr. Levy’s reasoning and why Mr. Tucker concurred in my line of attack? I venture to say he does not. Mr. Levy is a logical and precise thinker, but we have certainly caught him in an incoherence.

Instead of explaining my unqualified endorsement of his view of freedom and order, he here adduces what seems at first blush an excellent reason for dissenting from him, or at least for preserving silence about the critical reader’s attention from Mr. Levy’s keen, sound, profound reasoning, which reflects so much discredit upon Proudhon. The fact that Liberty’s motto collides with Mr. Levy’s keen and profound reasoning cannot explain our eagerness to agree with Mr. Levy and tacitly repudiate Proudhon; on the contrary, it makes our eagerness very astonishing. To coincide with Mr. Levy and retain the motto of self-stabilization. If I had warmly repudiated Mr. Levy’s ideas, it would have been logical to account for my alleged “willing” and twisting by referring to the motto; but the reference is not reversed, either the proposition, or the explanation is similarly irregular.

But however this may be, since we have pronounced Mr. Levy’s reasoning on order and liberty keen and profound, it is necessary to explain the retention of the motto, which is, by implication, otherwise than keen and profound. It is true that, strictly speaking, liberty is neither the daughter nor the mother of order, but order itself. Proudhon’s aphorism was not intended for a scientific and precise expression of a truth; it was promulgated as a suggestive, happy, though loose, expression of the right sequence of reforms by the prophet of the individualist doctrine, either order exists, order was used in the ordinary, the idea was to suggest that order could be secured through more and more liberty rather than through restriction and espionage. The motto is useful because attractive and thought-provoking; but it is not advanced as an exact formula.

The Trouble Beginning.

The following editorial appeared in the Chicago “Inter-Ocean” of March 5 under the heading, “An Innocent Rejoinder.” It is perhaps, useless to say that the “Inter-Ocean” had the prudence not to let its readers see this “innocent rejoinder”.

One of the most impudent things given to print in some time is a so-called letter of declaration written by the editor of an Anarchistic publication in New York to the present writer. I am indebted to the secretary of the committee on programme and correspondence of the World’s Fair Auxiliary Congress for this person’s is invited to prepare and read a paper on “The Labor Movement from the Individualist Point of View.” The opportunity was seized upon by the editor.

* * *

I cannot accept Mr. Varro’s statement that Liberty’s motto is not advanced as an exact formula. I do advance it, as such, and an exact formula at that. The motto in general is a terse, succinct, and beautiful expression of the central teaching of this journal, Proudhon, in this motto, medalled with and embodied in this motto, medalled with the absence of aggression, and liberty’s highest in organization and developments. He used the word in the present sense, not the mere nominal sense. Mr. Varro is right, however, in denying any inconsistency between the motto and my contemplation of Mr. Levy’s reasoning. To say that liberty is the mother of order in the negative sense does not at all conflict with an endorsement of Mr. Levy’s identification of liberty (4th order in the negative sense) with Libertarian Liberty.

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