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another collection of introductory writings

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The ANARCHISMS series is an attempt to collect a wide range of personal statements and introductory accounts regarding anarchism. They are presented without regard to tendency and without editorial comment. No reader is likely to find everything collected to their taste, but most readers will be likely to encounter some new perspectives.

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WHY I AM AN ANARCHIST

Louise Michel

1896

I am an Anarchist because Anarchy alone, by means of liberty and justice based on equal rights, will make humanity happy, and because Anarchy is the sublimest idea conceivable by man. It is, today, the summit of human wisdom, awaiting discoveries of undreamt of progress on new horizons, as ages roll on and succeed each other in an ever widening circle.

Man will only be conscious when he is free. Anarchy will therefore be the complete separation between the human flocks, composed of slaves and tyrants, as they exist to day, and the free humanity of tomorrow. As soon as man, whoever he may be, comes to power, he suffers its fatal influence and is corrupted; he uses force to defend his person. He is the State; and he considers it a property to be used for his benefit, as a dog considers the bone he knaws. If power renders a man egotistical and cruel, servitude degrades him. A slave is often worse than his master; nobody knows how tyrannous he would be as a master, or base as a slave, if his own fortune or life were at stake.

To end the horrible misery in which humanity has always dragged a bloody and painful existence incites brave hearts more and more to battle for justice and truth. The hour is at hand: hastened by the crimes of governors, the law's severity, the impossibility of living in such circumstances, thousands of unfortunates without hope of an end to their tortures, the illusory amelioration of gangrened institutions, the change of power which is but a change of suffering, and man's natural love of life; every man, like every race, looks around to see from which side deliverance will come.

Anarchy will not begin the eternal miseries anew. Humanity in its flight of despair will cling to it in order to emerge from the abyss. It is the rugged ascent of the rock that will lead to the summit; humanity will no longer clutch at rolling stones and tufts of grass, to fall without end.

Anarchy is the new ideal, the progress of which nothing can hinder. Our epoch is as dead as the age of stone. Whether death took place yesterday or a thousand years ago, its vestiges of life are utterly lost. The end of the epoch through which we are passing is only a necropolis full of ashes and bones.

Power, authority, privileges no longer exist for thinkers, for artists, or for any who rebel against the common evil. Science discovers unknown forces that study will yet simplify. The disappearance of the order of things we see at present is near at hand. The world, up till now divided among a few privileged beings, will be taken back by all. And the ignorant alone will be astonished at the conquest of humanity over antique beastiality.

I became definitely an Anarchist when sent to New Caledonia, on a state ship, in order to bring me to repentance for having fought for liberty. I and my companions were kept in cages like lions or tigers during four months. We saw

noting but sky and water, with now and then the white sail of a vessel on the horizon, like a bird's wing in the sky. This impression and the expanse were overwhelming. We had much time to think on board, and by constantly comparing things, events, and men; by having seen my friends of the Commune, who were honest, at work, and who only knew how to throw their lives into the struggle, so much they feared to act ill; I came rapidly to the conclusion that honest men in power are incapable, and that dishonest ones are monsters; that it is impossible to ally liberty with power, and that a revolution whose aim is any form of government would be but a delusion if only a few institutions fell, because everything is bound by indestructible chains in the old world, and everything must be uprooted by the foundations for the new world to grow happy and be at liberty under a free sky.

Anarchism is today the end which progress seeks to attain, and when it has attained it will look forward from there to the edge of a new horizon, which again as soon as it has been reached will disclose another, and so on always, since progress is eternal.

We must fight not only with courage but with logic; that the disinherited masses, who sprinkle every step of progress with their blood, may benefit at last by the supreme struggle soon to be entered upon by human reason together with despair. It is necessary that the true ideal be revealed, grander and more beautiful than all the preceding fictions. And should this ideal be still far off it is worth dying for.

That is why I am an Anarchist.

WHY WE ARE ANARCHISTS.

Louise Michel

1891

Our Comrade Louise Michel has received the following letter from a stranger; we insert the letter and a translation of her answer.

Dear Miss: — You have been represented in various periodicals and newspapers, (which I have read at various times) as the leader of the school of Anarchists and of all those who wish to undermine the national Governments of civilized countries. I write to ask you whether you have not been misrepresented upon this matter, and if not, how and by what system of reasoning have you come to believe that we shall reach a perfect state of Society by destroying all Government, than by helping or forcing' Governments to make laws which shall better the social condition of the people. I apologise very much for troubling you and remain,

Yours Sincerely, S. B.

I should have been satisfied with answering by post the question which Mr. S. B. has put in such an open handed manner, if this question was only asked by one man and if my views only were to be expressed.

We are Anarchists because it is absolutely impossible to obtain justice for all in any other way than by destroying institutions founded on force and privilege.

We cannot believe that improvement is possible, if we still keep up the same institutions, now more rotten than in the past, or if we merely replace those whose iniquities are known by new men.

These latter become in their turn what the others were, or else become barren.

After the gradual changes of past centuries the hour has come when evolution cannot be separated from revolution, as in all birth they must be accomplished together. You can no more retard the birth of a system than you can that of living being.

In what would you that we should help those who govern—their work being only exploitation and wholesale murder—it has never been otherwise: the reason for the existence of a state is nothing but the accomplishment of some crime or other in order to assure the domination of a privileged class.

An equal division of wealth would also be as mad as capitalism is criminal: to expect any amelioration of misery by modifying laws is a piece of stupidity of which we are not capable: we have seen the work of men whose illusions have only been able to perpetuate misery — millions of years being insufficient for the least amelioration of the lot of the workers. We can now see the fin-de-siècle cutthroats and assassins. That is better. We can see power on trial — we can judge it for what it is worth.

The land which belongs to all can no more be divided than the light which also belongs to all.

When free groups of men will use for the general welfare machines which reduce the hours of labour to a few, and in many forms of production the toil of rough work will be annihilated, there will remain for the intellect of the time, some time for the pursuit of art and science; and when men are delivered from the struggle for existence, they will also be delivered from crime and grief.

The ideal alone is the truth — it is the measure of our horizon. Time was when the ideal was to live without eating an other up. Is it not so still under another form which exists in the so-called civilized countries where the exploiter eats up the exploited? Do not the people in nocks fertilize the soil by their sweat and blood?

That is what we want to destroy — this annihilation — this eating of man by another man.

The old bogie of "Society" is dead. It is time that she was buried with the worms burrowing in her vitals, in order that the air may be pure for young Anarchy, which will be order and peace under freedom instead of order kept by the murder of the multitudes.

How did I become an Anarchist? This is how. It was during a four months voyage for New Caledonia while looking at the infinity of the sea and of the sky — feeling how miserable living beings are when taken individually — how great is the ideal when it goes beyond time and beyond the hecatombs as far as the new aurora.

There I deeply felt how each drop of water of the waves was but microscopic, but how powerful it was when joined to the ocean.

So also ought each man to be in humanity. As for the third question I am not the least bit in the world "chief" of the "International school"; the word "directrix" which my comrades have joined to my name is worth nothing either, for each of us gives freely according to his conscience the courses of instruction with which he or she has charged him or her self.

What would you have? Our tongue is poor, the words are old and so they ill express new ideas.

And finally is it not time that our limited tongues should fall into the ocean of speech and of human thought? What will be the language of mankind delivered to the new Aurora — Anarchy!

Louise Michel.

A CRISIS CHAPTER ON GOVERNMENT

Calvin Blanchard

1865

We are in the midst of one of those awful crises, when vindictiveness, called "civil government," stands nakedly revealed, so that all who have eyes can plainly see this horrible monster. Now's the time to tell the truth—the whole truth—and "shame the devil." Now's the time to strike an effectual blow for real freedom.

Governments are triumphant monopolies of murder, robbery, swindling and all that is atrocious and detestable. Ever since the beginning, they have forced mankind to kill or prepare and hold themselves in readiness to kill each other by the thousands and even millions at a time, and by the cruelest and most destructive means that spite can devise.

All the so-called religions the world has yet "experienced" have solemnly declared that "Almighty God" upholds these governments, all the moralists that have had any practical influence have sanctioned that declaration and all the infidels and political economists have said Amen: some of the infidels most libelously substituting the word "Nature"—their miserably narrow comprehension of it—for "Almighty God."

Whenever one of these governments gets conquered and overthrown by another of them, or by internal revolution, (events that often happen), "Almighty God," the moralists, the infidels, and the political economists turn dead against the fallen government. Whenever rebellionists murder and steal, and devastate so magnificently that the police cannot put them down, they thereby gain "belligerent rights;" their murdering, robbing, &c., &c., &c. thenceforth considered honorable, and enterprising individuals of other nations may honorably join them. But these are not half the inducements that governments hold out to excellence in atrociousness; they punish in the cruelest and most disgraceful manner, all the scoundrels they can catch and convict, who do not attain that excellence; and they plan society so that every man and woman must try their luck at scoundrelism or pay the expenses of those who do.

The fastest of all governments is Demagoguery—swindlingly named "elective" or "free government." The buncomest demagoguery the world has ever seen—a rotted-off branch of the most abominable of monarchies—has just capt the climax: it has spawned an atrociousness far more atrocious than any before, and that cannot be surpassed. One of the principals in a million or so of murders, with robbery and devastation to match, struts flauntingly wherever he pleases, with his insignia, (as do all the principals who are not to proud to stay and associate with their fellow-citizens), and the great general who was pitted against him writes him the politest notes, signing himself "Very *** *****", your obedient servant," while reimprisoning at hammering stone, about a hundred escaped convicts, whose crimes did not average the damage of \$20. In

demagogues, the great brigands have to be sated with plunder every year; at furthest, every four years. In monarchies they are only sated once in a life time.

The legislature of a single State in the "Model" Demogoguery perpetrated more and viler corruption in the year of grace "1865," than did the most tyrannical monarchy in the world.

But in spite of the murderers, and robbers, and swindlers, and impostors and quacks that govern mankind, liberty has gained some ground through those only possible liberators, the scientists and artists. It is now manifest destiny that these will finally rule the world, and then freedom will be a reality. It cannot be long before present government runs the length of its tether. Unless it stops in its course, such hells as the people of the United States hope they have just got through the hottest of (March, "1865") will come in such quick succession that no one will be at all provident in guessing "it won't come in my day." The reins of power will then spontaneously fall into the hands of those who will abolish all vindictiveness and constraint; mankind will then be as free as the planets in their orbits; "Heaven" will be realized on earth; the earth itself will be physically changed so as to meet the case, and all through material development; through science and art—the same that has given to us the steamboat and the railroad. The great car of progress speeds on. Noiselessly but surely it will reach its destination. Wealth will then be incomparably more valuable than it now is, thousands of times more plenty, and perfectly secure to its individual owners. Machinery will do all labor that is repulsive, and be owned in shares, by the Universal Mutual Guarantee Co. "The People" will dwell in palaces, splendid as the faith-built "mansions in the skies." All the women will be enchantingly beautiful, all the men faultless, all the children real angels. Love will be free, and universally reciprocal, "virtue" and "vice" obsolete, all constraint banished, everybody completely happy. Between desire and its object, there will intervene only the exertion requisite to impart due pleasurable to possession. Life will last until all clearly imaginable varieties of delight pall on the five senses from repetition. Sickness will be unknown. Death itself will be only a welcome, painless transit to everlasting forgetfulness.

All this is clearly preconceived, and therefore must necessarily take place. For thought is not absolute, but relative. The impossible, self-evidently cannot be conceived, even prospectively. Mentality does not transcend materiality, but functionally depends on it, objectively and subjectively. Perfection—"Heaven"—is preconceived even by common intellectual faculties; though mistakenly, in toto, as to method. Perfection, therefore, will, self-evidently, be realized. Nature—all which to or in man exists—is not, fixedly, a mere half and half of good and evil. Nature is "God" and will prove all-sufficient.

Hark ye, my fellow-citizens of the United States. You seem wholly intent on having another patch up of old government schemes and devices. That patch up won't last fifty years; then, or probably much sooner, you'll have a civil war a great deal worse than the present one; it will be felt both North and South. Do you think it was the enslavement of the Negro that caused this war? Pshaw! It

was the enslavement of human nature that has caused all the war that has ever taken place! And human nature can't be conquered; she is backed up, slowly but surely, by Almighty Power, by the force of all cognizable existence, marshalled by ART.

STUBBORN QUESTIONS

1. How much deeper in war debt has the detestable Monarchy of England run in a thousand years than the "Model Republic" has in less than a century? Professor Lewis says our war debt is not over \$3,000,000,000; be he don't reckon the state, county, city and even village war debt.

2. Wouldn't it be perfectly true to call every "election" a Game of Caucus and Ballot Box—a Grand Raffle for the Public Treasury—a Stupendous Swindle? Are not the People mere cards of the politicians in playing that game? Do they any more than decide for this or that spoil distributor, between whom the odds is merely the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee?

3. If the State Capitol at Albany and the State Prison at Sing Sing had changed inmates in "1865," wouldn't a great act of justice have been done? and wouldn't the "dear people" have gained immensely thereby? and might not this question have been fairly raised with respect to the incumbents of the Federal Capitol any time since the commencement of Andrew Jackson's administration?

4. Were the "angels" who sang "peace on earth and good will to men" "heavenly angels" or "masked imps of hell," judging the tree by its fruit?

5. How much more honorable is war (except war absolutely necessary in defense of most important rights) than assassination? How much more honorable is it to compel, or entice (generally by lying and intoxication) peaceful men to kill each other, and to bombard and starve women and children by the thousands, than to creep, ever so stealthily, behind your single enemy and stab only him in the back? What's the difference between cowardice and the difference between our treatment of secessionists and State prisoners?

We are education and habituated to consider the most cruel and cowardly assassination as "honorable war!" and to submit to the most expensive and abominable oppression that can be imposed, because that oppression is magically surrounded with a make-believe of freedom.

Disdainful of Monarchies, the Great Republic sycophantically apes their religion, their law, their moralism. She even emulates their cowardice, in knuckling to generals, in crime, whilst savagely torturing and hanging comparative nothings in crime. Abolish this horrid injustice; take the lead in delivering mankind from the religious, political, and moral "Hell" in which they have always been tormented, and be the glory of the nations, whilst earth and man endure. By "whorawing" and calling ourselves a great people, and all that sort of thing, over such gross injustice, we are but preparing a volcano more dreadful than the one that has just spent its worst fury. Right is mighty and will prevail.

The distinction that is made between scoundrels under the law and scoundrels over the law; between "criminals" and officer [?] "warriors," slaps justice full in the face, and kicks right, and honor, and mercy, and truth, clean out of court, and stinks most abominably of cowardice.

Let us pardon ALL scoundrels, beginning with the hen-roost robbers, and proceeding thence to pardon the Secessionists of every grade, and then even those scoundrels at the very bottom of the pit of scoundrelism—the UTTERLY CORRUPT, LOBBY ANOINTED LEGISLATORS. Then, let us have a new order of things; a REALLY

NEW CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I.—All constraint shall be abolished; every man, moan and child shall be fully developed or perfected, and be so situated as to do exactly as they please.

ARTICLE II.—Congress shall make an appropriation sufficient to rear every child born in the United States, in the best manner that MATERIAL SCIENCE AND ART can devise, and similarly provide for the mothers, during their lying in.

ARTICLE III.—Supernaturalism: all that pretends to go beyond or exceed the powers or laws of nature, is henceforth and forever excluded from the domain of government.

There, Fellow Citizens, that's just what's got to be done, and there will only be worse and worse "Hell to pay" till it is done. Till just this is done, mankind will be worse and worse tormented by the religious, political, and moral quacks, who screen themselves behind "Divine Providence" and teach and habituate us to worship a personification of their own unsurpassable foolishness and villainy, as "Almighty God."

"I accept this war as the providence of God," says Hardee, Secesh General and D. D., as reported by the N.Y. Herald. Nearly all the Union Generals and D. D.s agree with Saint Hardee on this tremendous point. But just think of it; just try to think that any real "God" couldn't or wouldn't do what "He" wanted to do except by means of big guns and little guns and put punchers and brain splitters, and Libby prison horrors, and Shoddy, and bounty jumpers, and widows and orphans made by the hundred thousand, and a million or so of murders, including that of President Lincoln, and more than five billion dollars other damage. Why, men can do such things in that way, and the foolishhest and wickedest men have done just exactly that. What's the use of "Him"?

If the theology of General Saint Hardee and his brother theologians in the States north of Dixie be true, isn't it the rankest blasphemy to offer those big rewards for Jeff Davis & Co., and call them murderers and fugitives from justice? Haven't they, up to the time of their hegira, acted under the "providence of God"? What if Jeff and his colleagues should offer to surrender, and turn State's evidence against their principal, on condition of being let off?

What would Secretary Stanton, General Hardee, and our other civil and military doctors of divinity do in such a case? In "God's" name, what could they do?

There! I've spoken the bold truth, and I'll bet it will "shame the devil" and a good many of his imps; that "devil," the only "devil" that ever was or can be—ignorance; alias Mystery; alias Foolishness; he is one of the two great Omnipresents who live on balderdash and have their thrones in the realm of nonsense; and his imps, all of them who instigate any harm worth noticing, are the parsons, politicians, and moralists. These miserable wretches are chargeable with all the woe mankind have ever endured. I wouldn't have a thousand billionth part of their guilt resting on me, for all the gold in the universe.

CALVIN BLANCHARD

ANNOUNCER OF THE RELIGION OF SCIENCE, PROFESSOR OF RELIGIO-POLITICAL PHYSICS, EXPOSITOR OF THE STATICS AND DYNAMICS OF GOD ALMIGHTY, ADVOCATE FOR THE CONSTITUTION MANIFEST IN HUMAN NATURE, AND HEAD MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY FOR ABOLISHING UTOPIA, AND HUMBUG, AND FAILURE, NO. 23 ANN STREET, NEW YORK, MAY 5, 1865, VULGAR ERA.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL SOCIETY Edward Carpenter

1911

Most people agree nowadays in the view that the growth of bureaucracy and officialism in the modern State is a serious evil, and that the extension of Government interference and the multiplication of Laws are a great danger. We all know that the institution of the Law and the Courts actually creates and gives rise to huge masses of evil—bribery, blackmail, perjury, spying and lying, wrongful accusation, useless and deliberate suffering and cruelty; that it publicly sanctions and organises violence, even in extreme forms; that it quite directly and deliberately supports vast and obvious wrongs in Society—as for instance land-monopoly; that it is absurd and self-contradictory in much of its theory and practice; that (as Herbert Spencer so frequently insists) it paralyses the folk that submit or trust to it; and finally that it is to-day for the most part so antiquated and out of date that (even if this were thought desirable) it might well seem impracticable to patch it up for real human use.

Yet in these cases—though we admit that the things are evil—our defence usually is that they carry some compensations with them, and that anyhow they are *necessary* evils, which we cannot dispense with, and without which disorder, violence and social disruption would ensue.

It may be worth while to consider this defence more closely; for curiously enough the history of nations and peoples is, on the whole, to contrary effect. Not only have all the early tribes of the world got on and cohered together in order and social amity without any rigid and ponderous system of laws; but even among the peasant peoples of to-day—like the Irish or the Swedes or the Swiss or the Chinese—where they are still living in moderately primitive conditions, we find the same thing. Governmental law and its operations and institutions occupy but a very small part in their lives. It is true that Custom is strong among all primitive folk, no doubt as a very necessary backbone or framework to their society; but Custom is a very different thing from Law. It is law in its inception—when it is yet in a tentative, rudimentary condition; and however harsh, rigid, or senseless the customs of many savage tribes may be, they are yet easier to alter than when they have become ossified into written forms, with their huge weight of age and ceremony, and the authority of armed men to enforce them.¹

That human societies can subsist without a considerable amount of Custom we may well doubt; but that they can subsist and maintain themselves in good

¹ See below, p. 50 Spencer and Gillen, in their late book *The Northern Tribes of Australia*, say that there are no chiefs even or headmen among these people; but the old men constitute an informal council, which punishes "crime", and the breaking of marriage rules, organises the ceremonies, and from time to time inaugurates reforms.

order and vitality without written law and its institutions there is no reason at all to doubt. And when Custom, among a reasonable and moderately advanced people, leaving behind the barbarities of the savage age, takes on a gentler form, and while exercising considerable pressure on individuals is itself fairly plastic and adaptable to the general movements of society—we seem to see in such pressure a force as far superior to Law as life itself is superior to mere mechanism. A vast amount of our social life to-day in all departments of its activity is ruled by Custom, and some of these customs, like those of “society” and fashion, have a very powerful sway. There is no law, for instance, for the recovery of betting debts, yet their non-payment is extremely rare.

Of course, accustomed as we are to “call the policeman” on every emergency, we find it hard to imagine life without this institution; and our life being largely founded on it, it is so far necessary, and its removal would cause dislocation. That is, since without the police the present spoliation of the poor would not be possible, and the enormous existing inequalities of wealth and poverty could never have been heaped up—without them the society founded on these artificial inequalities could not well be maintained.² But to say that because a certain institution is necessary to build up and retain society in a certain abnormal and unnatural form, therefore society cannot exist without that institution, is the same as to say that because to a Chinese woman of rank foot-bandages are necessary, therefore women generally cannot exist without foot-bandages. We have to realise that our present social forms are as ugly and inhuman as a club foot; and then we shall begin to realise how little necessary are these institutions, like law and police, whose chief concern and office is to retain and defend these forms.

The chief difficulty, then, which arises in people’s minds at the thought of a free nongovernmental society does not concern its desirability—they are agreed as a rule that it would be desirable—but concerns its practicability. And much of this difficulty is derived from the society of the present. People see, in fact, that an internecine competition for subsistence is the ruling force of life to-day, and the chief incentive to production, and they infer that without government society would dissolve into a mere chaos of plunder on the one hand and of laziness on the other.³ It is this difficulty which has first to be removed.

Though it seems a hard thing to say, the outer life of society to-day is animated first and foremost by Fear. From the wretched wage-slave who rises before the break of day, hurries through squalid streets to the dismal sound of the “hummer,” engages for nine, ten, or twelve hours, and for a pittance wage, in monotonous work which affords him no interest, no pleasure; who returns home to find his children gone to bed, has his supper, and, worn out and weary,

² Though, as all more primitive society shows us, small inequalities and such as arise from natural differences of human industry and capacity will always be welcome.

³ Though it must, to be strictly impartial, be pointed out that this difficulty is chiefly felt by those classes who themselves live on interest and in ornamental idleness.

soon retires himself, only to rise again in the morning and pursue the same deadly round; and who leads a life thus monotonous, inhuman, and devoid of all dignity and reality, simply because he is hounded to it by the dread of starvation,—to the big commercial man, who, knowing that his wealth has come to him through speculation and the turns and twists of the market, fears that it may at any moment take to itself wings by the same means; who feels that the more wealth he has, the more ways there are in which he may lose it, the more cares and anxieties belonging to it; and who to continually make his position secure is, or thinks himself, forced to stoop to all sorts of mean and dirty tricks;—over the great mass of people the same demon spreads its dusky wings. Feverish anxiety is the keynote of their lives. There is no room for natural gladness or buoyancy of spirits. You may walk the streets of our great cities, but you will hear no one singing—except for coppers; hardly a plowboy to-day whistles in the furrow, and in almost every factory (this is a fact) if a workman sang at his work he would be “sacked.” We are like shipwrecked folk clambering up a cliff. The waves are raging below. Each one clings by handhold or foothold where he may, and in the panic if he push his neighbor from a point of vantage, it is to be regretted certainly, but it cannot be helped.

But such a state of affairs is not normal. Allowing that the struggle for existence in some degree or form is unavoidable, history still, except at rare crises, presents us with no such spectacle of widespread anxiety; the study of native races whom we might consider in a state of destitution—reveals no such dominion of dread. I want the reader to imagine for a moment this burden of fear lifted off the hearts of a whole people, and the result.

Let us imagine for a moment that some good fairy—some transcendental Chancellor of the Exchequer—with a stroke of his wand, has assured to us all not only an old age pension, but a decent provision for all our days of the actual necessities of life (to go no further than that); so that for the future no man could feel any serious or grinding anxiety for his own material safety, or that of his family. What would be the result on our actions?

Perhaps, as many would maintain, nine-tenths of the population would say, “I’m blessed if I’ll ever do another stroke of work.” Like the organ-grinder who came into a little fortune, and who forthwith picked up an axe and fell upon his organ, shouting as he hacked it to pieces, “You shall neffer play dat tam Alabama Coon any more,” we should feel so sick of our present jobs that we should want to turn our backs on them for ever. Very likely, I should say—and rightly enough too; for “work” in the present day is done under such degrading and miserable conditions by the vast majority of the population that the very best and most manly thing would be to refuse to continue doing it.

But let us suppose, since a bare living has been assured to us, and we are in no danger of actual starvation, that we all take a good long holiday, and abstain religiously from doing anything. Suppose that we simply twirl our thumbs in idleness for two, three, four, or six months. Still, is it not obvious that at the end of that time nine-tenths of the population would find sheer idleness

appallingly dreary, and that they would set themselves to work at some thing or other to produce comforts or conveniences rising above the level of sheer necessity—objects of use or beauty, either for themselves, or for their families and neighbors, or even conceivably for society at large; that, in fact, a spontaneous and free production of goods would spring up, followed of course by a spontaneous and free exchange—a self-supporting society, based not on individual dread and anxiety, but on the common fullness of life and energy?

That people relieved from care do spontaneously set themselves to work is sufficiently shown by the case of the well-to-do classes today. For these people, though having everything provided for them, and not merely the bare necessities which we have supposed, exhibit the most extraordinary and feverish energy in seeking employment. A few decades of years have been quite sufficient to make them feel the utter failure of picnics as an object in life; and now we are flooded with philanthropic and benevolent societies, leagues, charity organisations, art missions to the poor, vigilance crusades, and other activities, which are simply the expression of the natural energies of the human being seeking an outlet in social usefulness. It is, of course, to be regretted that owing to the very imperfect education of this class their ideas and their capacities of social usefulness should be so limited. However, this is a defect which will no doubt be remedied in the future. All that concerns us here is to see that since the rich, though in many ways ill-adapted by training and tradition, do spontaneously take up a life of this kind, there is nothing extravagant in supposing that the average man, surrounded by so many unfulfilled needs, might do the same.

And if any one still doubts let him consider the thousands in our large towns to-day who would give their ears to be able to get out and work on the land—not so much from any prospect of making a fortune that way, as from mere love of the life; or who in their spare time cultivate gardens or plots or allotments as a hobby; or the thousands who when the regular day's work is over start some fresh little occupation of their own—some cabinet-making, woodturning, ornamental iron-work or whatnot; the scores of thousands, in fact, that there are of natural gardeners, cabinet-makers, iron-workers, and so forth; and then think how if they were free these folk would sort themselves spontaneously to the work they delighted in.

Thus it appears to be at least conceivable that a people not hounded on by compulsion nor kept in subjection by sheer authority, would set itself spontaneously to produce the things which it prized. It does not, of course, at once follow that the result should be perfect order and harmony. But there are a few considerations in the positive direction which I may introduce here.

In the first place, each person would be guided in the selection of his occupation by his own taste and skill, or at any rate would be guided by these to a greater extent than he is to-day; and on the whole would be more likely to find the work for which he was fitted than he is now. The increase in effective output and vitality from this cause alone would be great. While the immense variety of

taste and skill in human beings would lead to a corresponding variety of spontaneous products.

In the second place, the work done would be useful. It is certain that no man would freely set himself to dig a hole, only to fill it up again—though it is equally certain that a vast amount of the work done to-day is no more useful than that. If a man were a cabinet-maker and made a chest of drawers, either for himself or a neighbor, he would make it so that the drawers would open and shut; but nine-tenths of the chests made on commercial principles are such that the drawers will neither open nor shut. They are not meant to be useful; they are meant to have the semblance of being useful; but they are really made to sell. To sell, and by selling yield a profit. And for that purpose they are better adapted if, appearing useful, they turn out really useless, for then the buyer must come again, and so yield another profit to the manufacturer and the merchant. The waste to the community to-day arising from causes of this kind is enormous; but it is of no moment as long as there is profit to a certain class.

Work in a free society would be done because it was useful. It is curious, when you come to think of it, that there is no other conceivable reason why work should be done. And of course I here include what is beautiful under the term useful,—as there is no reason why one should separate what satisfies one human need, like the need of beauty, from another human need, like the need of food. I say the idea of work implies that it is undertaken because the product itself satisfies some human need. But strangely enough in Commerce that is not so. The work is undertaken in order that the product may sell, and so yield a profit; that is all. It is of no moment what the product is, or whether bad or good, as long as it fulfils this one condition. And so the whole spirit of life and industry in the other society would be so utterly different from that of the present, that it is really difficult for us to compare the results. But it is not difficult to see that if on the principles of freedom there was not so much produced in mere quantity, and folk did not (as may indeed be hoped) work so many hours a day as now, still, the goods turned out being sincere and genuine, there would really be far more value shown in a year than on the strictly commercial system.

In the third place, it follows—as William Morris so constantly maintained—that “work” in the new sense would be a pleasure—one of the greatest pleasures undoubtedly of life; and this one fact would transform its whole character. We cannot say that now. How many are there who take real pleasure and satisfaction in their daily labor? Are they, in each township, to be counted on the fingers? But what is the good of life if its chief element, and that which must always be its chief element, is odious? No, the only true economy is to arrange so that your daily labor shall be itself a joy. Then, and then only, are you on the safe side of life. And, your work being such, its product is sure to become beautiful; that painful distinction between the beautiful and the useful dies out, and everything made is an artistic product. Art becomes conterminous with life.

Thus it will be observed that whereas the present society is founded on a law-enforced system of Private Property, in which, almost necessarily, the covetous hard type of man becomes the large proprietor, and (supported by law and government) is enabled to prey upon the small one; and whereas the result of this arrangement is a bitter and continuous struggle for possession, in which the motive to activity is mainly Fear; we, on the contrary, are disentangling a conception of a society in which Private Property is supported by no apparatus of armed authority, but as far as it exists is a perfectly spontaneous arrangement, in which the main motives to activity are neither Fear nor greed of Gain, but rather Community of life and Interest in life—in which, in fact, you undertake work because you like the work because you feel that you can do it, and because you know that the product will be useful, either to yourself or some one else!

How Utopian it all sounds! How absurdly simple and simple-minded—to work because you like the work and desire the product. How delightful if it could be realised, but, of course, how “unpractical” and impossible.

Yet is it really impossible? From Solomon to Dr. Watts we have been advised to go to the Ant and the Bee for instruction, and lo! they are unpractical and Utopian too. Can anything be more foolish than the conduct of these little creatures, any one of whom will at any moment face death in defence of his tribe while the Bee is absolutely so ignorant and senseless, that instead of storing up the honey that it has gathered in a little cell of its own, with a nice lock and key, it positively puts it in the common cells, and cannot distinguish it from the stores of the others. Foolish little Bee, the day will surely come when you will bitterly rue your “unthrifty” conduct, and you will find yourself starving while your fellow-tribesmen are consuming the fruits of your labor.

And the human body itself, that marvelous epitome and mirror of the universe, how about that? Is it not Utopian too? It is composed of a myriad cells, members, organs, compacted into a living unity. A healthy body is the most perfect society conceivable. What does the hand say when a piece of work is demanded of it? Does it bargain first for what reward it is to receive, and refuse to move until it has secured satisfactory terms, or the foot decline to take us on a journey till it knows what special gain is to accrue to it thereby? Not so; but each limb and cell does the work which is before it to do, and (such is the Utopian law) the fact of its doing the work causes the circulation to flow to it, and it is nourished and fed in proportion to its service. And we have to ask whether the same may not be the law of a healthy human society? Whether the fact of a member doing service (however humble) to the community would not be quite sufficient to ensure his provision by the rest with all that he might need? Whether the community would think of allowing such an one to starve any more than a man would think of allowing his least finger to pine away and die? Whether it is not possible that men would cease to feel any anxiety about the “reward of their labor”; that they would think first of their work and the pleasure they had in doing it, and would not doubt that the reward would follow?

For indeed the instinct to do anything which is obviously before you to do, which is wanted, and which you can do, is very strong in human nature. Even children, those rudimentary savages, are often extremely proud to be "useful," and it is conceivable that we might be sensible enough, instead of urging them as we do now to "get on," to make money, to beat their fellows in the race of life, and by climbing on other folk's heads to ultimately reach a position where they would have to work no longer,—that we might teach them how when they grew up they would find themselves members of a self-respecting society which, while it provided them gratis with all they might need, would naturally expect them in honor to render some service in return. Even small children could understand that. Is it quite inconceivable that a society of grown men and women might act up to it?

But it is really absurd to argue about the possibility of these things in human society, when we have so many actual examples of them before our eyes. Herman Melville, in that charming book *Typee*, describes the Marquesas Islanders of the Pacific, among whom he lived for some time during the year 1846. He says: "During the time I lived among the Typees no one was ever put upon his trial for any offence against the public. To all appearances there were no courts of law or equity. There was no municipal police for the purposes of apprehending vagrants or disorderly characters. In short, there were no legal provisions whatever for the well-being and conservation of society, the enlightened end of civilised legislation." Nevertheless, the whole book is a eulogy of the social arrangements he met with, and with almost a fervor of romance in its tone; and yet, like all his description of the natives of the Pacific Islands, undoubtedly accurate, and well corroborated by the travelers of the period. An easy communism prevailed. When a good haul of fish was made, those who took part in it did not keep the booty to themselves, but parceled it out, and sent it throughout the tribe, retaining only their proportionate share. When one family required a new cabin, the others would come and help to build it. He describes such an occasion, when, "at least a hundred of the natives were bringing materials to the ground, some carrying in their hands one or two of the canes which were to form the sides, others slender rods of hibiscus, strung with palmetto leaves, for the roof. Every one contributed something to the work; and by the united but easy labors of all the entire work was completed before sunset."

Similar communistic habits prevail, of course, through a vast number of savage tribes, and indeed almost anywhere that the distinctively commercial civilisation has not set its mark. They may be found close at home, as in the little primitive island of St. Kilda, in the Hebrides, where exactly the same customs of sharing the hauls of fish or the labors of housebuilding exist to-day,⁴ which Melville describes in *Typee*; and they may be found all along the edges of our: civilization in the harvesting and house-warming "bees" of the backwoods

4 See Chapter XI of *Poverty and the State*, by H. V. Mills.

and outlying farm populations. And we may fairly ask, not whether such social habits are possible, but whether they are not in the end the only possible form; for surely it is useless and absurd to call these modern hordes of people, struggling with each other for the means of subsistence, and jammed down by violent and barbaric penal codes into conditions which enforce the struggle, societies; as it would be absurd to call the wretched folk in the Black Hole of Calcutta a society. If any one will only think for a minute of his own inner nature he will see that the only society which would ever really satisfy him would be one in which he was perfectly free, and yet bound by ties of deepest trust to the other members; and if he will think for another minute he will see that the only conditions on which he could be perfectly free (to do as he liked) would be that he should trust and care for his neighbor as well as himself. The conditions are perfectly simple; and since they have been more or less realized by countless primitive tribes of animals and men, it is surely not impossible for civilized man to realise them. If it be argued (which is perfectly true) that modern societies are so much more complex than the primitive ones, we may reply that if modern man, with his science and his school-boards, and his brain cultivated through all these centuries, is not competent to solve a more complex problem than the savage, he had better return to savagery.

But it is getting time to be practical.

Of the possibility of a free communal society there can really, I take it, be no doubt. The question that more definitely presses on us now is one of transition—by what steps shall we, or can we pass to that land of freedom?

We have supposed a whole people started on its journey by the lifting off of a burden of fear and anxiety; but in the long, slow ascent of evolution sudden miraculous changes are not to be expected; and for this reason alone it is obvious that we can look for no very swift transformation to the communal form. Peoples that have learnt the lesson of "trade" and competition so thoroughly as the modern nations have—each man fighting for his own hand—must take some time to unlearn it. The sentiment of the common life, so long nipped and blighted, must have leisure to grow and expand again; and we acknowledge that—in order to foster new ideas and new habits—an intermediate stage of definite industrial organization may be quite necessary.

When one looks sometimes at the awful residue and dregs which were being left as a legacy to the future by our present commercial system—the hopeless, helpless, drunken, incapable men and women who drift through London and the country districts from workhouse to workhouse, or the equally incapable and more futile idlers in high places, one feels that possibly only a rather stringent industrial organisation (such as the War has brought upon us) could have enabled society to cope with these burdens. The hand of the nation has already been forced to the development of Farm-colonies, Land-reclamations, Afforestation, Canal-restoration, and other big industrial schemes, and these are leading to a considerable socialisation of land and machinery. At the same time the rolling up of companies into huge and huger trusts is, as we plainly see,

making the transference of industries to public control and to public uses, daily more easy to effect.

On the other hand, the Trade Unions and Cooperative Societies by the development of productive as well as distributive industries, and by the interchange of goods with each other on an ever-growing scale, are bringing about a similar result. They are creating a society in which enormous wealth is produced and handled not for the profit of the few, but for the use of the many—a voluntary collectivism working within and parallel with the official collectivism of the State.

As this double collectivism grows and spreads, profit-grinding will more and more cease to be a lucrative profession. Though no doubt great efforts will be made in the commercial world to discountenance the public organisation of the unemployed (because this will cut away the ground of cheap labor on which commercialism is built), yet as we have seen, the necessity of this organisation has reached such a point that it can no longer be denied. And as it comes in more and more, it will more and more react on the conditions of the employed, causing them also to be improved. Besides, we are fain to hope that something else of which we see growing signs on every hand, will also come in—namely a new sense of social responsibility, a new reading of religion, a healthier public opinion—which will help on and give genuine life to the changes of which we speak. If so, it might not be so very long before the spread of employment, and the growing security of decent wages, combined with the continual improvement of productive processes and conditions, would bring about a kind of general affluence—or at least absence of poverty. The unworthy fear which haunts the hearts of nine-tenths of the population, the anxiety for the beggarly elements of subsistence, would pass away or fade in the background, and with it the mad nightmarish competition and bitter struggle of men with each other. Even the sense of Property itself would be alleviated. Today the institution of Property is like a cast-iron railing against which a human being may be crushed, but which still is retained because it saves us from falling into the gulf. But tomorrow, when the gulf of poverty is practically gone, the indicating line between one person and another need run no harsher than an elastic band.⁵ People will wake up with surprise, and rub their eyes to find that they are under no necessity of being other than human.

Simultaneously (i.e. with the lessening of the power of money as an engine of interest and profit-grinding) the huge nightmare which weighs on us to-day, the monstrous incubus of “business”—with its endless Sisyphus labors, its

⁵ This alleviation indeed is already in some curious ways visible. Forty years ago the few dressed in broadcloth, the masses in fustian; but now that silk is made out of wood-pulp, and everybody can dress and does dress in the latest fashion, it is no distinction to have fine clothes. Similarly with books, travel, and a hundred other things. What is the good of being a millionaire when the man with three pounds a week can make almost as good a show as you?

searchings for markets, its displacement and destruction of rivals, its travelers, its advertisements, its armies of clerks, its banking and broking, its accounts and checking of accounts—will fade and lessen in importance; till some day perchance it will collapse, and roll off like a great burden to the ground! Freed from the great strain and waste which all this system creates, the body politic will recover like a man from a disease, and spring to unexpected powers of health.

Meanwhile in the great industrial associations, voluntary and other, folk will have been learning the sentiment of the Common Life—the habit of acting together for common ends, the habit of feeling together for common interests—and once this has been learnt, the rest will follow of its own accord.

In the course of these changes, moving always towards a non-governmental and perfectly voluntary society in the end, it is probable that some Property-founded institutions, like the payment of labor by wages, though not exactly ideal in their character, will continue for a long period. It may perhaps be said that in some ways a generous wage-payment convention (as for instance sketched in the last chapter of Carruthers' Commercial and Commercial Economy) on a thoroughly democratic basis, gives more freedom than a formless Anarchism in which each one takes "according to his needs," simply because under the first system A could work two hours a day and live on the wage of two, and B could work eight and live on the wage of eight, each with perfect moral freedom—whereas if there was no wage system, A (however much he might wish to loaf) would feel that he was cheating the community—and the community would think so too—unless he gave his eight hours like everybody else.⁶

Some system too of National Guilds will quite probably be worked out, which, while rendering the worker-groups self-determining will award to them their fair share and their fair share only of the National income. Then, though the Cash-nexus I may and no doubt will linger on for a long time in various forms of Wages, Purchase, Sale, and so forth, it must inevitably with the changing sentiment and conditions of life lose its cast-iron stringent character, and gradually be converted into the elastic cord, which while it may indicate a line of social custom will yield to pressure when the need arises. Private Property will thus lose its present virulent character, and; subside into a matter of mere use or convenience; monetary reckonings and transfers, as time goes on, will seem little more than formalities—as to-day between friends.

Finally, Custom alone will remain. The subsidence of the Property feeling will mean the subsidence of brute-force Law, for whose existence Property is mainly responsible. The peoples accustomed to the varied activities of a complex industrial organism, will still—though not suffering from the compulsion either

⁶ It is difficult also to see how things like railways and the immense modern industries (if these survive) could be carried on without some such system of wage-payment and the definite engagement to fulfill certain work which it carries with it.

of hunger or of brute authority—continue through custom to carry on those activities, their Reason in the main approving.

Custom will remain—slowly changing. And the form of the Societies of the future will be more vital and organic, and far more truly human, than they have been or could be under the rigid domination of Law.

WHAT IS ANARCHY?

David A. Andrade

1887

"What is Anarchy? Admirers of the writings of that master poet, Percy Bysshe Shelley, will probably remember the definition he gives in his celebrated poem, "The Masque of Anarchy":

 Last came Anarchy; he rode
 On a white horse, splashed with blood.
 He was pale even to the lips,
 Like Death in the Apocalypse.

 And he wore a kingly crown;
 And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
 And on his brow this mark I saw -
 "I am God, and King, and Law!"

We shall presently see that Shelley's words hold good today, except that the name has been transferred to the opposite party, and is not now used to define "God and Kind and Law," but to define the principles of that party which Shelley so ably champions. But there is another definition of Anarchy; it is a similar picture to the foregoing, except that he is the symbol of lawlessness allied to disorder and violence. Who is not familiar with the terrible picture of Anarchy, the horrible spectre, mounted on his "horse of death," riding furiously over every man, woman, and child that come in his way, and ruthlessly trampling them to death in his wild career, in the name of lawlessness? This is the popular conception of Anarchy. It is the Anarchy described by newspaper scribes and lexicographers, - the big black bogie of the politician, - the synonym for war, murder, tumult, and general social discord. Such is Anarchy as defined by its foes, - those foes who willfully misrepresent it to guard their own vested interest by so doing, and another class of foes, more numerous and influential, who take up the cry of the former, utterly unconscious of its true character and of the bearing which it has upon their own individual welfare. News constantly flashes through the wires, or is carried through the post, telling the public of some diabolical plot of the Russian Nihilists, or some terrible insurrection among the Anarchists and the Dynamiters of Europe. Nobody troubles to ascertain the nature of the channels through which the news has filtered; nor do they trouble to ascertain the source from, or the conditions under, which it emanated. They are quite satisfied in taking the prescription just as their typographical physicians have prepared it, and never trouble to ask themselves if they are imbibing mental poison, instead of legitimate news as they imagine. Even those who pride themselves upon their scepticism in matters of theology are frequently among the first to condemn the actions and principles of the great

heroes of the antipodes, simply on the bare statements of a contaminated and deceptive press. It is not, however, their action so much as their principles which I intend to lay before you, although they are so intimately connected - their principles being principles of action - that it is impossible to speak of the one without occasionally alluding to the other. Neither do I propose to merely state the principles of the Anarchists, but to defend them also.

I have given the commonly-accepted definition of Anarchy, - that is, the definition as given by non-Anarchists: now let me give the definition of Anarchy as understood by the Anarchists themselves. Anarchy is Individualism consistently carried out and put into practice. It is the doctrine of autonomy, laissez faire, independence, and liberty. It is the doctrine which accepts all the social principles of that most advanced school of thinkers of which Herbert Spencer is at the head, and does not fear to carry them to their logical conclusions, even though the greatest expounders of those principles may fail to do so themselves. Anarchy, in short, is to politics what atheism is to theology. Atheism says: defy the priest, who robs you under the authority of a god; Anarchy says: defy the ruler who robs you under the authority of a State, as well. Atheism says: be free in your thoughts; Anarchy says: be free in your thoughts and actions too. Atheism says: face the gods like a man; Anarchy says: face all existence like a man. Atheism says: from the gods be free; Anarchy simply says: BE FREE!

As Atheism means "without God," so Anarchy means "without Government." It rejects all authority, whether emanating from gods, goddesses, kings, queens, popes, priests, presidents, or parliaments. It refuses to be crushed out by the rule of majorities or minorities, by monarchies or republics, by aristocracies or democracies, and by law-makers and law-executioners of all kinds whatsoever. The only truth it recognizes is the law of equal freedom. The only right it recognizes is the right to live, - the right of self-preservation, - the right to live as best the intelligence dictates, exercising every function of one's nature to one's best ability, and taking upon one's self the necessary responsibility of every action so performed. Its watchword is: "The equal liberty of each, limited by the equal liberty of all." And all the tyrannies which have so cursed the world in the course of its painful development is wages war with to the death. No matter what sacred halo may enshrine a deed; no matter what air of sanctity may pervade an institution, - if it fails to recognize that principle of equal liberty of all, Anarchy set its brand upon it, Anarchy is at war with it. If a papacy claim a divine appointment to govern mankind, Anarchy repudiates it. Your authority is false, says Anarchy, and, if it were not, we should still oppose it, because it is a tyranny and an enemy of liberty. Should the monarch claim the same right, he would receive the same answer. Should the president, the prime minister, the governor, or the chief secretary say: "We have been appointed by a majority of the citizens to dictate methods of action to each individual," Anarchy tells them they stand self-condemned,—for any act of a majority to coerce a minority is a direct infringement of the law of equal liberty, and as great a tyranny as the

others. Should a legislative body, without a president, without a chief secretary, without a head of any kind, attempt to control the actions of the community, acting under the sanction of a majority who had elected them to office, Anarchy would still deny their right to infringe the liberty of the minority: aye, although that minority be a minority of but one individual; for Anarchy knows no mathematical line of demarkation between a just tyranny and an unjust tyranny, no mystic property in figures which decides the morality of an act. Anarchy does not say that, because one individual out of a thousand has no right to coerce the rest, therefore somewhere further down in the scale a number can be found which has that right. It used to be thought that, in a society of a thousand members, one out of the number had a right to rule the rest: that was a despotic monarchy. Then it was thought that he had the right to do so, if he had five hundred to back him up: that was a limited monarchy. Then it was thought that the five hundred had the right to do so, if they picked another out of the remainder in place of the one who originally rules: that was a republic, with a president at its head. Then it was thought that the five hundred and one had the right to rule the other four hundred and ninety-nine, so long as they, or their representatives, voted in a body (that is, by dispensing with the office of a president, and not being split into two sections as they were formerly); that is the modern ideal democracy.

This constant changing of the forms of government is all very amusing to those who have not to pay for it. But what about those who have to suffer all these experiments? Where is the minority all the time? Where are the four hundred and ninety-nine or any lower figure that it may be, - perhaps one? Where are they? Forgotten! Every individual composing the minority is "The Forgotten Man," to use Sumner's excellent expression. All this foolish game of political chess has been played, and what for? Why is the limited monarch moved to the square lately occupied by the despotic monarch, and he subsequently removed off the board by the president? Why has this costly and fruitless game been played? Why, simply that the pawns should be enabled to see sufficient of its surface as silent spectators, and should lose sight, in the excitement of the game, of the part they themselves were playing in it. The rulers, the politicians, the tricksters, said to the people: "Here, we will give you a lolly to suck in the form of a vote, and it will keep you quiet; you will vainly hope by that means to checkmate us, but it will not give you the power; and you will continue to help us in carrying on the game, under the impression that you stand as good a chance of winning it as we do; you are too foolish at present to know that political chess is a game of 'heads I win, and tails you lose.'" But Anarchy come along, and says to the stupid voters: "Wake up! open your eyes, and see what you are about; you are not feeling yourselves with your votes; you are killing yourselves; you have got a State tape-worm inside of you, and you are feeding that instead; take an emetic in the form of a healthy mental revolution; if it doesn't act after a time, try a stronger does, - mix a little dynamite with it; that will help you to remove one of the worms, and you will have very little

difficulty in passing the rest, for they will only too willingly fall in with your ideas when they find your medicine too strong for them." And that is the method by which Anarchy proposes and has already commenced to cure humanity of the social diseases which have hindered its progress for so many untold generations. "We did not succeed, because we were mere talkers, incapable of real work", said the Nihilists reproachfully of themselves; and the cry, "Let us act," soon became a bye-word with them. And one needs not to be told that they put their resolutions into practice; even the falsifying press has told us that much.

But whence comes Anarchy? What are the circumstances which have brought it into existence? It is simply the revolt of intellectual man against the degrading principle of authority, which his ignorant and brutish ancestors have handed down to him. In the earlier stages of human existence, men, in order to avert the constant depredations of their kind, elected one of their number chief, or leader, of the general body, and, while acting under his leadership, acknowledged the supremacy of his dictates and voluntarily appealed to him to arbitrate between them in their little disputes one with another. This appears to have answered its purpose very well in the early stages of man's career, but, as society become more complicated and knowledge became diffused among the members, this chieftainship began to assume the nature of a tyranny rather than a blessing. The greatest wisdom had hitherto been the distinctive characteristic of the chief, but now it had become the general characteristic of the people as a whole, and in many instances the subject showed more wisdom than his ruler. In other words, the chieftainship of primitive ages had developed into that form of monarchy seen in modern times, where the king or queen, though blessed with all the luxuries and attractions which modern ingenuity can bring, - the costly trappings, the gaudy shows, the immense displays of wealth and mock charity, - is no longer received with that reverential and unquestioning devotion which characterized his or her less gaudy but more potent prototype. The lot of the modern monarch is one of extreme danger to himself, to say the least of it. The divine right which used to hedge a king has been swept away by the keen logic of modern scepticism, and the humblest laborer does not fear to proclaim himself a republican. He no longer admires the monarch's wealth, because he has realized the fact that he has to pay for it. He no longer looks upon his ruler as a majestic hero, when he proclaim war with another nation; but he looks upon him as a robber and a mercenary self-seeker, who sends his subjects to be butchered like so many rats in order that he may still further drain the pockets of the poor fools who so liberally support him in his grand system of spoliation and stolen luxury. The modern monarch durst not leave his palace, lest some brave Nihilist or Dynamiter shall seek revenge for the thousands of missing and brothers whom he has consigned to exile or to death. The time has passed for monarchy, for the people have learned that with power they are tyrants, and without it they are useless expenses. An absolute monarch is the simplest and most perfect form of government possible, and

consequently it is the worst possible system for the governed. And as the kings have had to disclaim any divine appointment and to practically admit that the only right they have to their position is the right of might, the people have said to them: "Be it so! if might is right, we shall put our respective strengths to the test and see on whose side the might lies." When a community has settled matters with its king, instead of dispensing with the office, it hands it over to the parliament or government, and when it finds its new master as treacherous as the old one, it sets about trying to hold the "reins of government" itself. It is here that the voting swindle comes more fully into play, and the wily politician proposes "universal suffrage" as a panacea. The tyranny of one man had been shown by experience to be detrimental to human welfare, so it was proposed to make every man a tyrant as far as possible by letting every adult individual have a vote in the election of representative rulers. But this does not materially change matters, for one half of the community are still without representatives, - that is, the half who voted for unsuccessful candidates. And even the successful voters who did return their representatives are not much better off than the unsuccessful ones. They are really no more "represented" than the others. Could a greater mockery exist than that involved in the word "representative"? Can any man be represented by any one else? Are there any two men alike in the world? Of course not. Then how ridiculous to say that one politician represents a few hundred individuals, not one of whom he resembles, and who, furthermore, differ from each other! The majority have no more returned representatives than the minority have done. What they have returned are men with ideas and crotchets of their own, or men with no ideas at all, as is oftner the case, - men who in their hearts can say with the pious editor:

I do believe hard coin the stuff
For Electioneers to spout on;
The people's ollers soft enough
To make hard money out on;
Dear Uncle Sam pervides fer his,
And gives a good-sized junk to all;
I don't care how hard money is,
Ez long ez mine's paid punctooal.

Some of the "representatives" are superior to that type, but even they are in most instances little better than the others. They are all tarred with the same brush; and the despicable tyranny of the common-place politician is carried on in an equally effective, though not so open a manner, by the wealthy idler who represents "respectability." One and all are office-seekers, trying to get cheap honors and well-filled pockets by following up the contemptible trade of minding other people's business, under the hollow pretense that they are their "representatives." No wealthy legislator can represent the hard-working, poorly-fed mass of the population; neither can a "poor" man, returned on the "payment

of members" system, represent them, for the individual is transformed in the operation. He is now a paid servant in an easy government billet, and no longer the hard-working and poorly-paid man that he was before his election; and he is no longer a representative of the class which returned him when his circumstances resembled their own. And the probability is that, if he went in a honest man (as occasionally happens), he will come out a rogue.

In the face of all this bamboozling, what is to be done? dignity and your individualist to the few professional politicians, who are deserving of nothing from you beyond contempt for their mischievous meddlesomeness. Do not countenance this pernicious system, which ignores the rights of every minority and every individual who is leading the progress of society. When next you go to register your vote, - that sugar-coated pill, - remember what the politician says of it:

This hath my faithful shepherd been,
In pastures sweet hath led me;
And this will keep the people green,
To feed, as they have fed me.

And let the voter bear in mind that every time he gives his vote he is assisting to perpetuate a system which has been continually waging war with the best interests of mankind. No matter what class may be in the ascendancy, the results to the ruled are disastrous nevertheless. If an aristocracy of wealth be represented, it means the enactment of more arbitrary and cruel laws to wring more securely from the laborers the necessaries and luxuries of which they are the sole producers. If the "poor" are represented, it means the enactment of laws to supply the requirements of the thriftless, the stupid, and the good-for-nothing at the expense of the industrious, the careful, and the hard-working, - robbing the successful Peter to pay the unsuccessful Paul. No party, no individual, is clever enough to legislate for others with good results. It takes a clever man to run a large business; but it wants an omniscient one to run a government. Every class government is an unqualified tyranny, whether it be a conservative House of Lords, or a House of Commons which refuses to allow Charles Bradlaugh to do what it does itself, or a government like that of Liberal (U.S.A.) [a town], which refuses to allow its inhabitants to erect and attend churches and public-houses; it is still a tyranny of the once class in power, arbitrarily dictating to all the other classes what they shall do and what they shall not do, irrespective of what the others are anxious to do in the matter. All governments are tyrannies; and that is why revolutions have generally resulted in the substitution of one tyrant for another, and why the general elections always produce a similar result, and "parliamentary reform" always turns out to be a sham. Reform comes from without, and it is useless to expect a government to reform itself when its own self-interest warns it against taking such a fatal step. Reformers in the past, and many in the present, who ignore the fact that "history repeats itself," have continued to formulate schemes for the

improvement of society, by means of the tyrannical institutions of which I have been speaking. All those people who are known under the generic name of State Socialists have aimed at modeling society on a totally different basis from that on which it rests at present, and hope to achieve their reforms by means of those demoralizing institutions founded on compulsion...All institutions which seek to force mankind to perform certain actions are based on the principle of slavery, and cannot fail to do harm to human welfare.

The natural function of government is to perpetuate slavery; for the more reverence there is in the people, the more they are law-abiding and cowardly, the more humility and loyalty they show, the easier it is for the few adventurers called "the State" to rule over them. No State can make much progress where the individual members of the community are brave, independent, and self-reliant. It is only the humble and the meek who submit to such a body. The idea of a State setting about to make people moral and prevent crime! Could absurdity go much further. Fancy a mixed body of novices and charlatans setting up as judges of crime, and passing acts to prevent it, without knowing what crime is, what produces it, or what will remove it. One of the most potent causes of crime is the want of self-reliance. And yet this is the very quality which all governments tend to destroy in the individual, directly they set about government him. Government have tried to suppress drunkenness and only succeeded in intensifying it, and turning honest people into sly grog-sellers. Governments try to make people moral by passing laws upon laws and torturing and imprisoning their victims. No one can fully define morality, and yet every ignorant government acts as though it actually knew more about it than other people. Heresy is immoral, says a government, and forthwith it persecutes a Columbus and a Galileo, burns a Bruno, and imprisons a Bennett or a Foote. A priestly government creates an inquisition, and a political government builds gallows and prisons, and makes laws to fill them. A government tries to keep the press pure, and inaugurates a vigilance which soon develops into a rigid censorship, which it requires a Nihilist to overthrow, or it enacts the most iniquitous laws, which it takes a Wilkes, a Bradlaugh, or a Symers to break. In the defense of the nation or the individual the State again fails to do as much good as evil. It makes legal expenses so extravagant that many a man has been ruined in trying to right a wrong by its assistance. It sets guard over us a body of policeman who in many instances are not better than itself, on the principle of "setting a thief to catch a thief." Its courts of justice are but a mockery of the name, frequently as unjust as they are uncertain; for they are always dependent on bad laws, the interpretation of which is often dependent on the humor of a judge or the state of his stomach. So little are the judges to be relied on for meting out justice that nine people out of ten have more faith in an ordinary body of jurymen, picked haphazard from every Tom, Dick, and Harry who passes by. That individual is best protected by the law who manages to keep out of its meshes. Long ago Bacon said that every man should know sufficient of the law to make him keep out of it, and his axiom holds as good as ever, and will

continue to do so as long as men are slaves, and until each is a law unto himself. As to the State's protection of the nation, history has plentifully supplied the record of wars and international intrigues which it has developed in that direction; and the cost and inutility of standing armies has been pretty well estimated. People are already beginning to learn that to be a soldier is to be a slave, and to pay taxes to support the army is to be a worse slave still. The British taxpayer is finding that, while he pays his rulers, it does not pay him. The State has defended (?) the English nation during the last two centuries by involving them in an expense of something like sixteen hundred million pounds, all of which has come out of the wealth - not the money - produced by the laboring classes.

The governments sometimes try "the 'prentice hand" on the management of the railways, the shipping, or the building operations of the country, and everywhere they leave a trail of devastation behind them. Even in the post-office, that cheaply-conducted, extensively-patronized institution, they conduct the business with less efficiency and at greater expense than private companies, whom they cannot compete with, and consequently have to drive out of the market by making their competition criminal, or carrying on their own system at a still greater loss, which has to be borne by the tax-paying public. Bungling and dishonesty characterize nearly every government undertaking. They superintend the management of the public libraries, art galleries, and museums, and close them on the very day in which the great bulk of those who are taxed to support them can only find time to visit them. The celebrated Sunday question, the laws regarding oaths, and the whole question of Church and State, show what little justice is to be expected from governments, and how they always take tyrannies under their wings and work together for a common object. The States have made such moral cowards of the people that they actually tolerate laws against libel; and the stupid and vexatious laws to regulate the sale of poisons they bear almost without a murmur. Even laws against vice are allowed to pass unquestioned, - laws "to save the individual from himself," to prevent him gambling and getting drunk, to make him insure his life, to prevent him from committing suicide when they have made his life unbearable.

Then the State becomes quack physician and decides that some shall practice the healing art and some shall not: a certain "diploma" shall be necessary to allow a man to practice as one of the "profession," - one of the monopoly which has grown out of that great monopoly, "the State." Nor content with going so far, they step between the parent and the offspring, and under threats of fine and imprisonment compel the unhappy parents to submit their children to that abominable and filthy practice, - vaccination, - it being to the interests of "the profession" to have it perpetuated. With the same kindly interest, the ignorant handful called "the State" next tells the parent what he shall do for his offspring in the way of education; how he shall be compelled to send his child to a State school to be formed by second-rate teachers into a

common-place individual; and how, if he has no child, he shall pay taxes with which other people's children shall be "educated." And by the time it has so crammed the child with "education" that its little brain has been turned, it bundles it off to a lunatic asylum to drag out its miserable little life in the company of other lunatics consisting of madmen and madwomen, people slightly "touched" and others quite sane, - all in fact, except the very class whose presence there would be the most advantageous to society, - the legislators themselves. After a while, the little creature dies, and is buried in a State cemetery,t here to rot and emit poisonous gases with which to destroy the health and shorten the lives of those whose turn has not yet come to return to their maker, the earth, The parents dare not subject the dead body to cremation instead, in order to ward off these evils because it is "unlawful" and "sinful," as it is called respectively by the twin life-destroyers, the Church and the State, in their omniscient wisdom.

And what says Anarchy in all this roguery? It says: Mind your own business. Anarchy says a man shall choose what physician he likes, and take the risk of a bad choice without being dictated to by the ignorant "State." It tells the parent to refrain from having his child vaccinated if he believes it to be injurious, or to have it vaccinated and take the consequences if he believes it to be beneficial. It tells the parent to educate his child in what he thinks necessary, and to choose the teachers and the place of education himself. And Anarchy tells the parent to dispose of the body of his dead child in whatever manner his judgment and good sense commend.

There is not corner free from the machinations of the State clique. They find their way into the factory and the store. But Anarchy with eagle eye is ever on their track, and well it need be, for "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Anarchy says that manufacturers, like all other people, should be left to manage their own affairs in their own way; and that no mischievous Factory Acts nor Eight Hours Bills should undertake to manage it for them. Neither should a government exist to dictate who shall work and who shall not whether he be an Englishman or a Chinaman, of whether he belong to any other nationality. Anarchy says no government shall interfere in the commercial affairs of individuals and nations, but each shall be free to deal with whom he likes, and to exchange what commodities he chooses to. He shall divide his labor as he finds convenient, and shall have his industries conducted simultaneously over the whole world if he finds it in his interest to do so. In this department, as in all others, Anarchy is satisfied with nothing short of absolute Free Trade. Every laborer shall do what he likes with the products of his own labor; and no "State" shall rob him of a large portion of it, as they now do, by means of compulsory taxation. Unfettered natural selection shall then operate upon the distribution of products to the advantage of our food and food-supplies, as it now operates upon other necessities which the State has not yet got it "protective" grip upon. The enormous waste of wealth by the State, its outlays upon wars, monarchies, aristocracies, government, civil services, pensions, and the thousand and one

other natural jobberies that government is heir to, shall thereby be cut off by having their supply stopped at the source. Capital shall then represent wealth and not currency, and the Issues of money shall be responsible for the repayment of it in the necessaries of life. Individuals shall be free to adopt what form of currency they desire and find most convenient, whether it be metallic money or paper money, private money or national money. There shall be no laws to imprison a man for issuing "unlawful" money, but each will be a liberty to adopt his own system, and the fittest system will survive. Plutocracy, shorn of its monopoly, shall no longer be the toiler's master, but shall be reduced to the useful function of acting as his servant.

Poverty will probably exist as long as humanity does, but without a State to foster it with its robberies and its poor-laws it will be transferred from the shoulders of the taxpayer to that of the idler. And who shall bring about the change? The legislators, whose interests are directly opposed to the legislated, are not the ones to look to for liberty in this direction. Their interests are as wide apart as the poles asunder. Law-making is the natural function of the legislator, not law-repealing. It is only the outside influence - the Anarchical influence - which can do it.

There is a lot of ink being spilt right now over the "land question," as it is called. Clever writers have been diligently occupied in showing the evils which arise from "landlordism," as shown in the private ownership of the land, and as a remedy they suggest that all the land should be confiscated by "the State" and "it" should be our landlord. It is often remarked that faith will remove a mountain, but what a lot of faith it must have taken to erect such a mountain as this! What a pleasant prospect for humanity to have a handful of irresponsible politicians for their landlords, instead of a few thousand private ones as at present! The politicians have given us an experience of their land laws when the land was in private hands. These have been bad enough, as they all admit; but what would they be like if the legislators had the land in their own hands? Men think land is not free enough, so they seek to remedy it by placing it on the government shelf, where it will be entirely out of their reach, unless they possess the essential requirements of one who would make a successful bargain with a "State," - a long purse and an elastic conscience. "Land nationalization" as it is vaguely termed, has no place in Anarchy.

Neither has Anarchy any sympathy for Malthusianism, - the doctrine of human over-population and concurrent starvation. Malthusianism teaches that there is not sufficient food in the world to feed all the laborers; but Anarchy says there is more than enough if they are wise enough to retain it for themselves. Malthusianism teach, and Plutocracy echoes, that there is not enough room in the world for all of us, and the toilers must cease from reproducing their species. Anarchy says there is room for all that work, and we can only spare to lose the drones from amongst us; if they desire to disappear off the face of the earth by practicing Malthusian doctrines, let them; it is

nature's way of ridding herself of the unfit. But let them not dare to dictate to others how large a progeny they shall bring forth.

Anarchy makes no distinction between the liberty of individuals on account of sex. It recognizes that woman is as deserving of individual choice as man, and that she is equally bound to respect the rights of others. It says she shall fill any station in life to which she considered she is fitted; but she is no more justified in legislating for her fellow-creatures, other otherwise intruding upon their liberty than a man is. Here, Anarchy is the advocate of woman's rights, but not of the cruel mockery, woman's suffrage.

Anarchy recognizes no "laws" to regulate sexual relationship. Here again individual choice, with its natural responsibility, is to be the guide of action. Instead of the religious mock currency, it lets the individual choose his or her own methods. Instead of uniting a couple for life, irrespective of the happiness or despair which is to follow, it leaves them to cohabit together as long as they consider advisable, whether it be for a day, a week, a year, or a life-time. And if a man desires two wives, and those two wives desire one man between them, it does not deny them the right of making their own choice. If any union proves a mistaken one, Anarchy says it shall be severed by mutual consent before further disaster follows, and no one else shall need to be polluted to procure that law-made evil, - a divorce. Each shall be free to follow his natural sexual instincts, and shall take upon himself the natural responsibility of his action, whatever it may be.

Such is the attitude of Anarchy towards existing institutions; how does it propose to conform society to its own principles? By evolution. Anarchy recognizes that society is a growth; that the terrible tyrannies which so oppress it are but the natural results of its blind gropings in its infancy; that in its dull infancy it evolved "The State", but as knowledge grows upon it, it shall as surely evolve a system of liberty. An few years ago, England was startled to learn that the works of Darwin had been forbidden entrance into despotic Russia. For the Czar and this courtiers understood the deep import of the great naturalist's generalizations far better than the careless, indifferent, and comfortable English squire did. The Czar knew that the popularization of evolutionary science meant the death blow to tyranny and authority. For evolution teaches that life is a struggle, and the fittest only can survive. What an inspiration for the despairing Nihilists! The fittest will survive! The who are the fittest, the slaves or the masters? The masters, of course, answers evolution. Let us be masters, the, said the Nihilists. How shall one be a master? By casting off the yoke of slavery! How shall one case off slavery? By fighting for it, - fighting physically and mentally! "Self-preservation is the first law of life,"and the individual who obeys that law the most faithfully is the fittest to survive. The Russians were being annihilated by brute force. What were they to do? Moral suasion, the favorite weapon of the Anarchist, could no longer hold its own united against bullets and dungeons. For the future force must repel force. Then arose that glorious Terrorism, which made the Russian despots quake with fear and the poor down-

trodden toilers realize for the first time that they had might as well as right on their side, and that liberty was never got by asking for it, but by taking it. "Who would be free, themselves must strike the blow." And the Nihilists are striking that blow, as the Czar knows to his discomfiture; and as certain other tyrants know, who feel the force of example making itself felt in every civilized land. Don't pray for privileges, but demand your rights, said the Irishmen, and they called dynamite to their aid and got some of them in very short time. And so they proved themselves the fittest to survive. Our political system is Christian to the core; it stinks of humility and slavery. But the new Terrorism overturns all that. Tyrannicide becomes a virtue and slavery a crime. The Anarchists' doctrine of "the equal liberty of all" does not stop short at kings and politicians, but applies to all alike. "A man's a man for all that," and if he claims authority for infringing upon the right of another, the Anarchist will soon relegate him to his proper place. This is the history of all government; Fools have built powerful institutions for self-protection, and rogues have taken the management of them. Anarchy, knowing this, strikes direct at this greatest of all tyrannies, - the "State". Society is just in that stage of its evolution where brute force (of which government is the concentrated embodiment) is giving way before the force of intellect, - the force which promises to govern the future. Government is one of the last semblages of the old force. Anarchy the force of the new. Men are realizing that the perpetual spoliation and exploitation of each other is not conducive to the general welfare; that nothing is gained by each man holding down the hands of every other man; that social improvement is dependent upon the improvement of each individual part and that there is scope for improvement only where there is liberty. As local autonomy succeeds to central government, so will local autonomy give way to individual autonomy. All reforms which have benefited society have been in that direction; and it is only there that we can look for them in the future. The growth from the barbarous to the intellectual is slow, but it is none the less sure. The tyrannical "State" system promises to make room for the peaceful Anarchical community, just as the despotic monarchy has made room for "the State". And as the edicts of an angry god have been supplanted by statute laws, so they in their turn will be supplanted by respect for the individual judgment. Humanity will learn that nature is self-regulative, and can manage its affairs without the intervention of the ignorant politician, as they have already learned that it can manage its affairs without the intervention of the ignorant politician, as they have already learned that it can manage its affairs without the intervention of an imaginary god. They will learn that every great achievement has been effected by individuals and not by "states"; that individualism is the foundation-stone of progress; that self-reliance makes a well-developed man, and well-developed men make a great nation, whereas reliance on a "State" or a Communistic utopia would destroy every noble quality in them by making them beggarly idlers; that enlightened self-interest (that self-interest that respects the rights of others for its own sake) is the crowning virtue in an individual, while altruism is the great

curse; that unrestricted competition is the most profitable order of natural selection; that as toleration has removed the fetters from our thoughts, so laissez-faire will remove the fetters from our actions: that as compulsion produces perversity, so voluntary action produces mutuality. The men and women of the future, in short, will learn by experience, if not by reflection, that voluntary cooperation is the only method by which to realize results satisfactory to all; and that the only system which allows such action to have full play is that of Liberty.

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ANARCHISM: WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Joseph A. Labadie

189?

So you want me to tell you what Anarchism is, do you? I can do no less than make the attempt, and in my own simple way try to make you understand at least that it is not what the uninformed and the capitalistic newspapers, liars, fools and villains generally say it is.

In the first place, let me urge upon all who desire to learn the truth about Anarchism not to go to its enemies for information, but to talk with Anarchists and read anarchistic literature. And it is not always safe to take what one, two or even a dozen persons may say about it, either, though they call themselves Anarchists. Take what a goodly number of them say and then cancel those statements in which they are not in accord. What remains in all probability is true. For example, what is Christianity? Ask a dozen or more people and it is likely their answers will not agree in every particular. They may, however, agree upon some fundamental propositions. This more likely to be the correct position of Christianity than the statements made by any one of them. This process of cancellation is the best way of finding out what any philosophy is. This I have done in determining what Anarchism is, and it is a fair presumption that I have arrived tolerably near the truth.

Anarchism, in the language of Benjamin R. Tucker, may be described as the doctrine that "all the affairs of men should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the state should be abolished."

The state is "the embodiment of the principle of invasion in an individual, or a band of individuals, assuming to act as representatives or masters of the entire people within a given area."

Government is "the subjection of the noninvasive individual to an external will."

Now, keep these definitions in mind, and don't use the word "state" or "government" or "Anarchy" in any other sense than that in which the Anarchist himself uses it. Mr. Tucker's definitions are generally accepted by Anarchists everywhere.

The state, according to Herbert Spencer and others, originated in war, aggressive war, violence, and has always been maintained by violence. The function of the state has always been to govern—to make the non-ruling classes do what the ruling classes want done. The state is the king in a monarchy, the king and parliament in a limited monarchy, elected representatives in such a republic as exists in the United States, and the majority of the voters in a democracy as in Switzerland. History shows that the masses are always improved in mental, moral, and material conditions as the powers of the state over the individuals are reduced. As man becomes more enlightened regarding

his interests, individual and collective, he insists that forcible authority over him and his conduct shall be abolished. He points to the fact that the church has improved in its material affairs, to say nothing of the spiritual, since the individual is not compelled to support it and accept its doctrines or be declared a heretic and burned at the stake or otherwise maltreated; to the fact that people are better dressed since the state has annulled the laws regulating dress; to the fact that people are happier married since each person can choose his own mate; to the fact that people are better in every way since the laws were abolished regulating the individual's hair-cut, his traveling, his trade, the number of window panes in his house, chewing tobacco or kissing on Sundays, and so on without number. In Russia and some other countries even now you would not be allowed to go into the country or come out of it without legal permission, to print or read books or papers except those permitted by law, to keep anyone in your house over night without notifying the police, and in a thousand ways the individual is hampered in his movements. Even in the freest countries the individual is robbed by the tax-collector, is beaten by the police, is fined and jailed by courts—is browbeaten by the authority in many ways when his conduct is not aggressive or in violation of equal freedom.

It is a mistake often made, even by some Anarchists, to say that Anarchism aims to establish absolute freedom. Anarchism is a practical philosophy, and is not striving to do the impossible. What Anarchism aims to do, however, is to make equal freedom applicable to every human creature. The majority under this rule has no more rights than the minority, the millions no greater rights than one. It assumes that every human being should have equal rights to all the products of nature without money and without price; that what one produces would belong to himself, and that not individual or collection of persons, be they outlaw or state, should take any portion of it without his knowledge or consent; that every person should be allowed to exchange his own products wherever he wills; that he should be allowed to co-operate with his fellows if he chooses, or to compete against them in whatever field he elects; that no restrictions whatsoever should be put upon him in what he prints or reads or drinks or eats or does, so long as he does not invade the equal rights of his fellows.

It is often remarked that Anarchism is an impractical theory imported into the United States by a lot of ignorant foreigners. Of course, those who make this statement are as much mistaken as though they made it while conscious of its falsity. The doctrine of personal freedom is an American doctrine, in so far as the attempt to put it into practice is concerned, as Paine, Franklin, Jefferson and others understood it quite well. Even the Puritans had a faint idea of it, as they came here to exercise the right of private judgement in religious matters. The right to exercise private judgement in religion is Anarchy in religion. The first to formulate the doctrine of individual sovereignty was a blue-bellied Yankee, as Josiah Warren was a descendant of the Revolutionary General Warren. We have Anarchy in trade between the states in this country, as free trade is simply commercial Anarchy.

No one who commits crime can be an Anarchist, because crime is the doing of injury to another by aggression—the opposite of Anarchism.

No one can kill another, except in self-defense, and be an Anarchist, because that would be invading another's equal right to live—the antithesis of Anarchism.

Hence assassins and criminals generally are called Anarchists only by the ignorant and malicious.

You can't be an Anarchist and do the things which Anarchism condemns.

Anarchism would make occupancy and use the sole title to land, thereby abolishing rent for land.

It would guarantee to each individual or association the right to issue money as a medium of exchange, thereby abolishing interest on money in so far as co-operation and competition can do it.

It denies the justice of patent and copyrights, and would abolish monopoly by abolishing patent rights.

It denies the right of any body of people to tax the individual for anything he does not want, but that taxation should be voluntary, such as is now done by churches, trade unions, insurance societies and all other voluntary associations.

It believes that freedom in every walk of life is the greatest possible means of elevating the human race to happier conditions.

It is said that Anarchism is not socialism. This is a mistake. Anarchism is voluntary Socialism. There are two kinds of Socialism, archistic and anarchistic, authoritarian and libertarian, state and free. Indeed, every proposition for social betterment is either to increase or decrease the powers of external wills and forces over the individual. As they increase they are archistic; as they decrease they are anarchistic.

Anarchy is a synonym for liberty, freedom, independence, free play, self-government, non-interference, mind your own business and let your neighbor's alone, laissez faire, ungoverned, autonomy, and so on.

Now that I am done, I find that you have been given only a faint outline of what Anarchism is and is not. Those who desire to pursue the subject further will find food for intellectual adults in Tucker's *Instead of a Book*; Proudhon's *What is Property?* and *Economical Contradictions*; Tandy's *Voluntary Socialism*; Mackay's *The Anarchists*; Auberon Herbert's *Free Life*; *The Demonstrator*; *Lucifer*, and a lot of other books, papers and pamphlets which may be had by addressing Henry Bool, Ithaca, NY, E.C. Walker, 244 West 143rd Street, NYC, "Liberty," Box 1312, New York, or "Mother Earth," P.O. Box 217, Madison Square Station, New York city.

ANARCHISM: WHAT IT REALLY STANDS FOR

Emma Goldman

1911

Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood,
Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
"Wreck of all order," cry the multitude,
"Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage."
O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
The truth that lies behind a word to find,
To them the word's right meaning was not given.
They shall continue blind among the blind.
But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
I give thee to the future! Thine secure
When each at least unto himself shall waken.
Comes it in sunshine? In the tempest's thrill?
I cannot tell—but it the earth shall see!
I am an Anarchist! Wherefore I will
Not rule, and also ruled I will not be!

JOHN HENRY MACKAY

The history of human growth and development is at the same time the history of the terrible struggle of every new idea heralding the approach of a brighter dawn. In its tenacious hold on tradition, the Old has never hesitated to make use of the foulest and cruelest means to stay the advent of the New, in whatever form or period the latter may have asserted itself. Nor need we retrace our steps into the distant past to realize the enormity of opposition, difficulties, and hardships placed in the path of every progressive idea. The rack, the thumbscrew, and the knout are still with us; so are the convict's garb and the social wrath, all conspiring against the spirit that is serenely marching on.

Anarchism could not hope to escape the fate of all other ideas of innovation. Indeed, as the most revolutionary and uncompromising innovator, Anarchism must needs meet with the combined ignorance and venom of the world it aims to reconstruct.

To deal even remotely with all that is being said and done against Anarchism would necessitate the writing of a whole volume. I shall therefore meet only two of the principal objections. In so doing, I shall attempt to elucidate what Anarchism really stands for. The strange phenomenon of the opposition to Anarchism is that it brings to light the relation between so-called intelligence and ignorance. And yet this is not so very strange when we consider the relativity of all things. The ignorant mass has in its favor that it makes no pretense of knowledge or tolerance. Acting, as it always does, by mere impulse, its reasons are like those of a child. "Why?" "Because." Yet the opposition of the

uneducated to Anarchism deserves the same consideration as that of the intelligent man. What, then, are the objections? First, Anarchism is impractical, though a beautiful ideal. Second, Anarchism stands for violence and destruction, hence it must be repudiated as vile and dangerous. Both the intelligent man and the ignorant mass judge not from a thorough knowledge of the subject, but either from hearsay or false interpretation.

A practical scheme, says Oscar Wilde, is either one already in existence, or a scheme that could be carried out under the existing conditions; but it is exactly the existing conditions that one objects to, and any scheme that could accept these conditions is wrong and foolish. The true criterion of the practical, therefore, is not whether the latter can keep intact the wrong or foolish; rather is it whether the scheme has vitality enough to leave the stagnant waters of the old, and build, as well as sustain, new life. In the light of this conception, Anarchism is indeed practical. More than any other idea, it is helping to do away with the wrong and foolish; more than any other idea, it is building and sustaining new life.

The emotions of the ignorant man are continuously kept at a pitch by the most blood-curdling stories about Anarchism. Not a thing too outrageous to be employed against this philosophy and its exponents. Therefore Anarchism represents to the unthinking what the proverbial bad man does to the child,—a black monster bent on swallowing everything; in short, destruction and violence.

Destruction and violence! How is the ordinary man to know that the most violent element in society is ignorance; that its power of destruction is the very thing Anarchism is combating? Nor is he aware that Anarchism, whose roots, as it were, are part of nature's forces, destroys, not healthful tissue, but parasitic growths that feed on the life's essence of society. It is merely clearing the soil from weeds and sagebrush, that it may eventually bear healthy fruit.

Someone has said that it requires less mental effort to condemn than to think. The widespread mental indolence, so prevalent in society, proves this to be only too true. Rather than to go to the bottom of any given idea, to examine into its origin and meaning, most people will either condemn it altogether, or rely on some superficial or prejudicial definition of non-essentials.

Anarchism urges man to think, to investigate, to analyze every proposition; but that the brain capacity of the average reader be not taxed too much, I also shall begin with a definition, and then elaborate on the latter.

ANARCHISM:—The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

The new social order rests, of course, on the materialistic basis of life; but while all Anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of EVERY PHASE of life,—individual, as well as the collective; the internal, as well as the external phases.

A thorough perusal of the history of human development will disclose two elements in bitter conflict with each other; elements that are only now beginning to be understood, not as foreign to each other, but as closely related and truly harmonious, if only placed in proper environment: the individual and social instincts. The individual and society have waged a relentless and bloody battle for ages, each striving for supremacy, because each was blind to the value and importance of the other. The individual and social instincts,—the one a most potent factor for individual endeavor, for growth, aspiration, self-realization; the other an equally potent factor for mutual helpfulness and social well-being.

The explanation of the storm raging within the individual, and between him and his surroundings, is not far to seek. The primitive man, unable to understand his being, much less the unity of all life, felt himself absolutely dependent on blind, hidden forces ever ready to mock and taunt him. Out of that attitude grew the religious concepts of man as a mere speck of dust dependent on superior powers on high, who can only be appeased by complete surrender. All the early sagas rest on that idea, which continues to be the LEIT-MOTIF of the biblical tales dealing with the relation of man to God, to the State, to society. Again and again the same motif, MAN IS NOTHING, THE POWERS ARE EVERYTHING. Thus Jehovah would only endure man on condition of complete surrender. Man can have all the glories of the earth, but he must not become conscious of himself. The State, society, and moral laws all sing the same refrain: Man can have all the glories of the earth, but he must not become conscious of himself.

Anarchism is the only philosophy which brings to man the consciousness of himself; which maintains that God, the State, and society are non-existent, that their promises are null and void, since they can be fulfilled only through man's subordination. Anarchism is therefore the teacher of the unity of life; not merely in nature, but in man. There is no conflict between the individual and the social instincts, any more than there is between the heart and the lungs: the one the receptacle of a precious life essence, the other the repository of the element that keeps the essence pure and strong. The individual is the heart of society, conserving the essence of social life; society is the lungs which are distributing the element to keep the life essence—that is, the individual—pure and strong.

"The one thing of value in the world," says Emerson, "is the active soul; this every man contains within him. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth and creates." In other words, the individual instinct is the thing of value in the world. It is the true soul that sees and creates the truth alive, out of which is to come a still greater truth, the re-born social soul. Anarchism is the great liberator of man from the phantoms that have held him captive; it is the arbiter and pacifier of the two forces for individual and social harmony. To accomplish that unity, Anarchism has declared war on the pernicious influences which have so far prevented the harmonious blending of individual and social instincts, the individual and society.

Religion, the dominion of the human mind; Property, the dominion of human needs; and Government, the dominion of human conduct, represent the stronghold of man's enslavement and all the horrors it entails. Religion! How it dominates man's mind, how it humiliates and degrades his soul. God is everything, man is nothing, says religion. But out of that nothing God has created a kingdom so despotic, so tyrannical, so cruel, so terribly exacting that naught but gloom and tears and blood have ruled the world since gods began. Anarchism rouses man to rebellion against this black monster. Break your mental fetters, says Anarchism to man, for not until you think and judge for yourself will you get rid of the dominion of darkness, the greatest obstacle to all progress.

Property, the dominion of man's needs, the denial of the right to satisfy his needs. Time was when property claimed a divine right, when it came to man with the same refrain, even as religion, "Sacrifice! Abnegate! Submit!" The spirit of Anarchism has lifted man from his prostrate position. He now stands erect, with his face toward the light. He has learned to see the insatiable, devouring, devastating nature of property, and he is preparing to strike the monster dead.

"Property is robbery," said the great French Anarchist, Proudhon. Yes, but without risk and danger to the robber. Monopolizing the accumulated efforts of man, property has robbed him of his birthright, and has turned him loose a pauper and an outcast. Property has not even the time-worn excuse that man does not create enough to satisfy all needs. The A B C student of economics knows that the productivity of labor within the last few decades far exceeds normal demand a hundredfold. But what are normal demands to an abnormal institution? The only demand that property recognizes is its own gluttonous appetite for greater wealth, because wealth means power; the power to subdue, to crush, to exploit, the power to enslave, to outrage, to degrade. America is particularly boastful of her great power, her enormous national wealth. Poor America, of what avail is all her wealth, if the individuals comprising the nation are wretchedly poor? If they live in squalor, in filth, in crime, with hope and joy gone, a homeless, soilless army of human prey.

It is generally conceded that unless the returns of any business venture exceed the cost, bankruptcy is inevitable. But those engaged in the business of producing wealth have not yet learned even this simple lesson. Every year the cost of production in human life is growing larger (50,000 killed, 100,000 wounded in America last year); the returns to the masses, who help to create wealth, are ever getting smaller. Yet America continues to be blind to the inevitable bankruptcy of our business of production. Nor is this the only crime of the latter. Still more fatal is the crime of turning the producer into a mere particle of a machine, with less will and decision than his master of steel and iron. Man is being robbed not merely of the products of his labor, but of the power of free initiative, of originality, and the interest in, or desire for, the things he is making.

Real wealth consists in things of utility and beauty, in things that help to create strong, beautiful bodies and surroundings inspiring to live in. But if man is doomed to wind cotton around a spool, or dig coal, or build roads for thirty years of his life, there can be no talk of wealth. What he gives to the world is only gray and hideous things, reflecting a dull and hideous existence,—too weak to live, too cowardly to die. Strange to say, there are people who extol this deadening method of centralized production as the proudest achievement of our age. They fail utterly to realize that if we are to continue in machine subserviency, our slavery is more complete than was our bondage to the King. They do not want to know that centralization is not only the death-knell of liberty, but also of health and beauty, of art and science, all these being impossible in a clock-like, mechanical atmosphere.

Anarchism cannot but repudiate such a method of production: its goal is the freest possible expression of all the latent powers of the individual. Oscar Wilde defines a perfect personality as "one who develops under perfect conditions, who is not wounded, maimed, or in danger." A perfect personality, then, is only possible in a state of society where man is free to choose the mode of work, the conditions of work, and the freedom to work. One to whom the making of a table, the building of a house, or the tilling of the soil, is what the painting is to the artist and the discovery to the scientist,—the result of inspiration, of intense longing, and deep interest in work as a creative force. That being the ideal of Anarchism, its economic arrangements must consist of voluntary productive and distributive associations, gradually developing into free communism, as the best means of producing with the least waste of human energy. Anarchism, however, also recognizes the right of the individual, or numbers of individuals, to arrange at all times for other forms of work, in harmony with their tastes and desires.

Such free display of human energy being possible only under complete individual and social freedom, Anarchism directs its forces against the third and greatest foe of all social equality; namely, the State, organized authority, or statutory law,—the dominion of human conduct.

Just as religion has fettered the human mind, and as property, or the monopoly of things, has subdued and stifled man's needs, so has the State enslaved his spirit, dictating every phase of conduct. "All government in essence," says Emerson, "is tyranny." It matters not whether it is government by divine right or majority rule. In every instance its aim is the absolute subordination of the individual. Referring to the American government, the greatest American Anarchist, David Thoreau, said: "Government, what is it but a tradition, though a recent one, endeavoring to transmit itself unimpaired to posterity, but each instance losing its integrity; it has not the vitality and force of a single living man. Law never made man a whit more just; and by means of their respect for it, even the well disposed are daily made agents of injustice." Indeed, the keynote of government is injustice. With the arrogance and self-sufficiency of the King who could do no wrong, governments ordain, judge,

condemn, and punish the most insignificant offenses, while maintaining themselves by the greatest of all offenses, the annihilation of individual liberty. Thus Ouida is right when she maintains that "the State only aims at instilling those qualities in its public by which its demands are obeyed, and its exchequer is filled. Its highest attainment is the reduction of mankind to clockwork. In its atmosphere all those finer and more delicate liberties, which require treatment and spacious expansion, inevitably dry up and perish. The State requires a taxpaying machine in which there is no hitch, an exchequer in which there is never a deficit, and a public, monotonous, obedient, colorless, spiritless, moving humbly like a flock of sheep along a straight high road between two walls."

Yet even a flock of sheep would resist the chicanery of the State, if it were not for the corruptive, tyrannical, and oppressive methods it employs to serve its purposes. Therefore Bakunin repudiates the State as synonymous with the surrender of the liberty of the individual or small minorities,—the destruction of social relationship, the curtailment, or complete denial even, of life itself, for its own aggrandizement. The State is the altar of political freedom and, like the religious altar, it is maintained for the purpose of human sacrifice.

In fact, there is hardly a modern thinker who does not agree that government, organized authority, or the State, is necessary ONLY to maintain or protect property and monopoly. It has proven efficient in that function only.

Even George Bernard Shaw, who hopes for the miraculous from the State under Fabianism, nevertheless admits that "it is at present a huge machine for robbing and slave-driving of the poor by brute force." This being the case, it is hard to see why the clever prefacer wishes to uphold the State after poverty shall have ceased to exist. Unfortunately there are still a number of people who continue in the fatal belief that government rests on natural laws, that it maintains social order and harmony, that it diminishes crime, and that it prevents the lazy man from fleecing his fellows. I shall therefore examine these contentions. A natural law is that factor in man which asserts itself freely and spontaneously without any external force, in harmony with the requirements of nature. For instance, the demand for nutrition, for sex gratification, for light, air, and exercise, is a natural law. But its expression needs not the machinery of government, needs not the club, the gun, the handcuff, or the prison. To obey such laws, if we may call it obedience, requires only spontaneity and free opportunity. That governments do not maintain themselves through such harmonious factors is proven by the terrible array of violence, force, and coercion all governments use in order to live. Thus Blackstone is right when he says, "Human laws are invalid, because they are contrary to the laws of nature."

Unless it be the order of Warsaw after the slaughter of thousands of people, it is difficult to ascribe to governments any capacity for order or social harmony. Order derived through submission and maintained by terror is not much of a safe guaranty; yet that is the only "order" that governments have ever maintained. True social harmony grows naturally out of solidarity of interests. In a society where those who always work never have anything, while

those who never work enjoy everything, solidarity of interests is non-existent; hence social harmony is but a myth. The only way organized authority meets this grave situation is by extending still greater privileges to those who have already monopolized the earth, and by still further enslaving the disinherited masses. Thus the entire arsenal of government—laws, police, soldiers, the courts, legislatures, prisons,—is strenuously engaged in “harmonizing” the most antagonistic elements in society.

The most absurd apology for authority and law is that they serve to diminish crime. Aside from the fact that the State is itself the greatest criminal, breaking every written and natural law, stealing in the form of taxes, killing in the form of war and capital punishment, it has come to an absolute standstill in coping with crime. It has failed utterly to destroy or even minimize the horrible scourge of its own creation.

Crime is naught but misdirected energy. So long as every institution of today, economic, political, social, and moral, conspires to misdirect human energy into wrong channels; so long as most people are out of place doing the things they hate to do, living a life they loathe to live, crime will be inevitable, and all the laws on the statutes can only increase, but never do away with, crime. What does society, as it exists today, know of the process of despair, the poverty, the horrors, the fearful struggle the human soul must pass on its way to crime and degradation. Who that knows this terrible process can fail to see the truth in these words of Peter Kropotkin: “Those who will hold the balance between the benefits thus attributed to law and punishment and the degrading effect of the latter on humanity; those who will estimate the torrent of depravity poured abroad in human society by the informer, favored by the Judge even, and paid for in clinking cash by governments, under the pretext of aiding to unmask crime; those who will go within prison walls and there see what human beings become when deprived of liberty, when subjected to the care of brutal keepers, to coarse, cruel words, to a thousand stinging, piercing humiliations, will agree with us that the entire apparatus of prison and punishment is an abomination which ought to be brought to an end.”

The deterrent influence of law on the lazy man is too absurd to merit consideration. If society were only relieved of the waste and expense of keeping a lazy class, and the equally great expense of the paraphernalia of protection this lazy class requires, the social tables would contain an abundance for all, including even the occasional lazy individual. Besides, it is well to consider that laziness results either from special privileges, or physical and mental abnormalities. Our present insane system of production fosters both, and the most astounding phenomenon is that people should want to work at all now. Anarchism aims to strip labor of its deadening, dulling aspect, of its gloom and compulsion. It aims to make work an instrument of joy, of strength, of color, of real harmony, so that the poorest sort of a man should find in work both recreation and hope.

To achieve such an arrangement of life, government, with its unjust, arbitrary, repressive measures, must be done away with. At best it has but imposed one single mode of life upon all, without regard to individual and social variations and needs. In destroying government and statutory laws, Anarchism proposes to rescue the self-respect and independence of the individual from all restraint and invasion by authority. Only in freedom can man grow to his full stature. Only in freedom will he learn to think and move, and give the very best in him. Only in freedom will he realize the true force of the social bonds which knit men together, and which are the true foundation of a normal social life.

But what about human nature? Can it be changed? And if not, will it endure under Anarchism?

Poor human nature, what horrible crimes have been committed in thy name! Every fool, from king to policeman, from the flat-headed parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the more definite his insistence on the wickedness and weaknesses of human nature. Yet, how can any one speak of it today, with every soul in a prison, with every heart fettered, wounded, and maimed? John Burroughs has stated that experimental study of animals in captivity is absolutely useless. Their character, their habits, their appetites undergo a complete transformation when torn from their soil in field and forest. With human nature caged in a narrow space, whipped daily into submission, how can we speak of its potentialities?

Freedom, expansion, opportunity, and, above all, peace and repose, alone can teach us the real dominant factors of human nature and all its wonderful possibilities.

Anarchism, then, really stands for the liberation of the human mind from the dominion of religion; the liberation of the human body from the dominion of property; liberation from the shackles and restraint of government. Anarchism stands for a social order based on the free grouping of individuals for the purpose of producing real social wealth; an order that will guarantee to every human being free access to the earth and full enjoyment of the necessities of life, according to individual desires, tastes, and inclinations.

This is not a wild fancy or an aberration of the mind. It is the conclusion arrived at by hosts of intellectual men and women the world over; a conclusion resulting from the close and studious observation of the tendencies of modern society: individual liberty and economic equality, the twin forces for the birth of what is fine and true in man.

As to methods. Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of Anarchism therefore do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances. Methods must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime, and of the intellectual and temperamental requirements of the individual. The serene, calm character of a Tolstoy will wish different methods for social

reconstruction than the intense, overflowing personality of a Michael Bakunin or a Peter Kropotkin. Equally so it must be apparent that the economic and political needs of Russia will dictate more drastic measures than would England or America. Anarchism does not stand for military drill and uniformity; it does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form, against everything that hinders human growth. All Anarchists agree in that, as they also agree in their opposition to the political machinery as a means of bringing about the great social change.

"All voting," says Thoreau, "is a sort of gaming, like checkers, or backgammon, a playing with right and wrong; its obligation never exceeds that of expediency. Even voting for the right thing is doing nothing for it. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority." A close examination of the machinery of politics and its achievements will bear out the logic of Thoreau.

What does the history of parliamentarism show? Nothing but failure and defeat, not even a single reform to ameliorate the economic and social stress of the people. Laws have been passed and enactments made for the improvement and protection of labor. Thus it was proven only last year that Illinois, with the most rigid laws for mine protection, had the greatest mine disasters. In States where child labor laws prevail, child exploitation is at its highest, and though with us the workers enjoy full political opportunities, capitalism has reached the most brazen zenith.

Even were the workers able to have their own representatives, for which our good Socialist politicians are clamoring, what chances are there for their honesty and good faith? One has but to bear in mind the process of politics to realize that its path of good intentions is full of pitfalls: wire-pulling, intriguing, flattering, lying, cheating; in fact, chicanery of every description, whereby the political aspirant can achieve success. Added to that is a complete demoralization of character and conviction, until nothing is left that would make one hope for anything from such a human derelict. Time and time again the people were foolish enough to trust, believe, and support with their last farthing aspiring politicians, only to find themselves betrayed and cheated.

It may be claimed that men of integrity would not become corrupt in the political grinding mill. Perhaps not; but such men would be absolutely helpless to exert the slightest influence in behalf of labor, as indeed has been shown in numerous instances. The State is the economic master of its servants. Good men, if such there be, would either remain true to their political faith and lose their economic support, or they would cling to their economic master and be utterly unable to do the slightest good. The political arena leaves one no alternative, one must either be a dunce or a rogue.

The political superstition is still holding sway over the hearts and minds of the masses, but the true lovers of liberty will have no more to do with it. Instead, they believe with Stirner that man has as much liberty as he is willing to take. Anarchism therefore stands for direct action, the open defiance of, and

resistance to, all laws and restrictions, economic, social, and moral. But defiance and resistance are illegal. Therein lies the salvation of man.

Everything illegal necessitates integrity, self-reliance, and courage. In short, it calls for free, independent spirits, for "men who are men, and who have a bone in their backs which you cannot pass your hand through."

Universal suffrage itself owes its existence to direct action. If not for the spirit of rebellion, of the defiance on the part of the American revolutionary fathers, their posterity would still wear the King's coat. If not for the direct action of a John Brown and his comrades, America would still trade in the flesh of the black man. True, the trade in white flesh is still going on; but that, too, will have to be abolished by direct action. Trade-unionism, the economic arena of the modern gladiator, owes its existence to direct action. It is but recently that law and government have attempted to crush the trade-union movement, and condemned the exponents of man's right to organize to prison as conspirators. Had they sought to assert their cause through begging, pleading, and compromise, trade-unionism would today be a negligible quantity. In France, in Spain, in Italy, in Russia, nay even in England (witness the growing rebellion of English labor unions) direct, revolutionary, economic action has become so strong a force in the battle for industrial liberty as to make the world realize the tremendous importance of labor's power. The General Strike, the supreme expression of the economic consciousness of the workers, was ridiculed in America but a short time ago. Today every great strike, in order to win, must realize the importance of the solidaric general protest.

Direct action, having proven effective along economic lines, is equally potent in the environment of the individual. There a hundred forces encroach upon his being, and only persistent resistance to them will finally set him free. Direct action against the authority in the shop, direct action against the authority of the law, direct action against the invasive, meddlesome authority of our moral code, is the logical, consistent method of Anarchism.

Will it not lead to a revolution? Indeed, it will. No real social change has ever come about without a revolution. People are either not familiar with their history, or they have not yet learned that revolution is but thought carried into action.

Anarchism, the great leaven of thought, is today permeating every phase of human endeavor. Science, art, literature, the drama, the effort for economic betterment, in fact every individual and social opposition to the existing disorder of things, is illumined by the spiritual light of Anarchism. It is the philosophy of the sovereignty of the individual. It is the theory of social harmony. It is the great, surging, living truth that is reconstructing the world, and that will usher in the Dawn.

ANARCHISM: WHAT IT IS, AND WHAT IT IS NOT

Victor Yarros

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IT was an observation of John Stuart Mill's that to know a thing it is necessary to realize, not only what it is, but also what it is not. Applying this definition or test to that passage of Mr. Thomas B. Preston's paper on "Are We Socialists?" (ARENA, December) in which he states and criticises the principles of anarchism, we find ourselves entitled to affirm that Mr. Preston scarcely possesses such familiarity with, and comprehension of, the essential doctrines of anarchism as would justify confident criticism of that school.

What is anarchism, and who are the anarchists? Loosely speaking, there are two schools of anarchism, two species of anarchists. There is the school of communist anarchism. This school rigorously adheres to the economic and 'political teachings of Michael Bakounin. It insists on the "expropriation of the expropriators"—capitalists and men who live on rent, interest, or profit—and the total abolition of private property in capital, or the means and instruments of production. It favors the use of physical force, and is 'openly revolutionary. In short, most of Mr. Preston's statements concerning anarchists certainly may be accepted as tolerably exact with reference to this school. The school to which Mr. Preston's predications do not apply is that of individualist anarchism. Strictly speaking, this school is the only one in the field which possesses the right to the term "anarchist," since, as will presently be established, it is the only school which logically and consistently follows out the principle of non-interference with personal liberty. Whether it carries out the principle specified "to an exaggerated absurdity," is, of course, a matter of opinion; but before delivering any judgment, let us ascertain the precise significance of the principle of "personal liberty" espoused by the individualist anarchists.

Few are aware that the anarchistic principle of "personal liberty" is absolutely coincident with the famous Spencerian "first principle of human happiness,"—the principle of "equal freedom,"—to which precise expression is given in the following formula: Every man is free to do that which he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man. This principle of equal freedom the individualist anarchists accept without reservation or qualification, recognizing no exceptions to scientific ethical laws, any more than to physical laws. By accepting the principle is naturally meant the acceptance of all its corollaries or logical deductions; and these corollaries are: the right to physical integrity, which negatives murder, assault, and minor trespasses; the rights to free motion and locomotion, which imply the freedom to move from place to place without hindrance; the right to the uses of natural media — land, light, air; the right to property, in products as well as in means of production, which negatives any species of robbery and any system of compulsory "nationalism" or communism; the rights of gift and bequests; the rights of free

exchange and free contract; the right of free industry; the rights of free belief and worship; and the rights of free speech and publication. These rights are natural social rights, and no society can be stable and harmonious which tolerates their infringement. The test of social progress is observance and respect of these personal rights, and not any form of government. "Crime" can mean nothing else than the violation of one or more of these positive rights; no individual who refrains from aggression or invasion of rights can possibly be criminal. Now, from this point of view let us examine the ethical character of our present political practices. It is admitted without hesitation that no individual can rationally or justly claim the right to trench upon the freedom of any one of his fellows; but it is generally assumed that a government that is, a body representing a majority of the individuals -is entitled to traverse and violate many of the rights of the individual. If the government should attempt to murder a citizen against whom no crime was alleged, it would certainly cause a revolution, it being universally felt that murder does not cease to be a crime when committed by public authorities. Yet when government breaks the law of equal freedom by taxing men against their consent, and thus denying the right to property; or when it imposes a "duty" on imports, and prohibits men from exchanging

freely with people of other lands, and thereby tramples upon the right of free exchange; or when it passes laws in restriction of banking and the issuing of circulating notes, in distinct contradiction of the rights to free industry, free exchange, and free contract; or when it compels the observance of religious holidays in spite of the right to free belief; or when it monopolizes the letter-carrying industry regardless of the prohibition of such actions by the rightful freedom of industry, the great majority of men do not dream of interposing any objection or raising the question of the ethical propriety of such conduct. In other words, the great majority of people act upon the tacit or avowed belief that there are two ethical standards, not one, and that governments are not to be judged in the same manner as individuals. That which is a crime, a punishable act, when committed by a private citizen, may be a legitimate and even praiseworthy act when done in the name of the government. Is this belief rational?

No, answers the individualist anarchist. That which the ethical law interdicts is a crime when proceeding from the government no less than when proceeding from the private citizen. This answer clearly implies more than is embraced in the position of Spencerian individualists. According to these, it is wrong for the government to assume any function save that of protecting the rights of individuals, of enforcing the corollaries of the law of equal freedom. But it is claimed that there is an ethical warrant for compelling men to support a government organized for such a purpose ; that there is an ethical warrant for compulsory taxation and for government not based on individual consent. On the other hand, the individualist anarchists maintain that a government not based on the actual consent of the governed is pure tyranny, and that

compulsory taxation is robbery. To interfere with a man who acts within the limits of equal freedom, who invades no one's proper sphere, is a crime, and hence all governments resting on compulsory taxation are unethical. It is undoubtedly true that men are confronted with the necessity of providing for systematic and organized protection of their rights or freedoms; still, he who declines to accept the protection of government and to contribute toward its support, can only be said to be guilty of folly, and of folly which by no means necessarily involves the injury of his fellows; therefore there is no warrant for any interference with him.

In view of these elucidations, is it correct to assert that individualist anarchists contemplate the utter abolition of "all law and government"? The answer is, yes and no. It is important to distinguish and to bear in mind the anarchistic definitions of the terms used. If by "government" be understood voluntary co-operation for purposes of defence against aggression, then the anarchists are emphatically in favor of it. As long as anti-social feelings and tendencies exist, co-operation against invaders is a necessity. If by "law" be understood ethical law, the law of social life, then the anarchists strenuously insist on its faithful observance. But if by government he meant the coercion of the non-aggressive individual, then anarchism wages eternal war upon it; if by law be meant the statutes enacted by men both ignorant and reckless of the essential conditions of social happiness, then anarchism posits "no law." Those who imagine that "the abolition of all law and government" is equivalent, in intention and fact, to the deliberate abandonment of all attempts to enforce justice and punish aggression, are betrayed into error by their definitions of the terms "law" and "government." In proclaiming the sovereignty of the individual, the anarchist demands for him the full enjoyment of every liberty except the liberty to trespass. In other words, the anarchist contends for equal liberty, and wants every individual to count for one and no more than one. Invasion of rights he would punish, and he would co-operate voluntarily with his fellows for this as for numerous other purposes. But he would not coerce non-invasive citizens into co-operation of any kind. While, if left free, men's self-interest, as well as their love of fair play, will prompt them to co-operate in the organization of protection against crime, there is no ethical warrant for compelling men to belong to any defensive or insurance associations. The anarchist thus upholds the right of the non-aggressive individual to "ignore the state."

Two considerations have to be emphasized before proceeding to review and meet Mr. Preston's criticisms seriatim. In the first place, the anarchists do not expect to obtain golden conduct out of leaden instincts, and to realize the perfect political system under conditions so unfavorable as those of to-day. The fundamental question of voluntary taxation is not with them at present a question of practical politics, but one of scientific politics, or rather of ethical and social science. They believe, with Spencer, that "an ideal, far in advance of practicability though it may be, is always needful for right guidance." They are not impatient, and are satisfied with slow and gradual progress; but they insist

on moving towards the ideal, not away from it. Anarchists gladly work with other reformers whenever the demand is really for an enlargement of liberty and opportunity, and for a restriction of governmental activity, but they do not mistake one plank for the entire platform, a part for the whole. Free trade is a step in advance, and the anarchists would aid in securing it. Free banking and free credit they deem one of the most vital of economic reforms, and they are ready to devote themselves to its furtherance. Land reform they regard as of great importance, and any movement tending to make occupation and use the title to land will command their warm approval. And so on. But they never permit themselves to forget that the goal, the ideal, is the abolition of all forms of compulsory co-operation, and that the progress of society has been from the principle of militarism to that of industrialism, from status to contract, "from a condition in which agreement results from authority (to use the words of G. H. Lewes) to a condition where authority results from agreement."

The second fact requiring explicit and emphatic asseveration is that the individualist anarchists are not revolutionists, and do not rely on physical force. They do, however, favor passive resistance to despotism and governmental invasion.

A refusal of the Irish tenants to pay rent would be applauded by them, as would also an attempt to disregard any law not sanctioned by equity and reason. Disregard of tariff laws or banking laws or Sunday laws meets with their indorsement, but the methods of the so-called "anarchist communists" they reject as suicidal. As far as possible they would go with Carlyle in endeavoring "to do justice justly." Dissemination of true conceptions of economic and political justice is their chief task and method.

And now descending to the specific and particular, let us deal with Mr. Preston. Anarchism, he avers, "would abolish all government, and leave individuals subject only to natural laws." This is true, though not in the sense intended. Anarchism would insist on obedience to all natural social laws, and would abolish all laws and all government not in harmony with the real laws of social life. "In a perfect state of society, the anarchists claim, men would do right without any laws. Education and self-control would rule the individual," etc. Yes, anarchists do claim all this, but their claim is not original. Philosophical Christians and evolutionists are in accord with them in this matter. But an anarchist society may be far from perfect, and hence stand in need of penal institutions and defensive organizations; and these are wholly compatible with anarchist principles. Anarchism does "not tolerate crime; it merely insists on the right of the non-criminal to ignore the defensive bodies, as we are allowed to-day to ignore insurance companies. Crime would be punished by anarchism, since courts and juries and prisons would remain. "Communities would be formed of individuals attracted to each other by a similarity of tastes and desires. If a member of one of these groups became dissatisfied, he would leave it, and join some other group, more congenial to his tastes." Communist anarchists will recognize in these descriptions a more or less faithful outline of

their system; but to individualist anarchists they have a queer, unfamiliar, and unpleasant sound. Individualist anarchists scout the notion that to work for wages is degrading, and that the wage system necessarily involves exploitation of labor. Under a system of equality of opportunity, the laborer would receive the full product of his labor in the form of wages, and the capitalist would receive nothing but proper compensation for his services as organizer and captain of industry. Really free competition (which does not exist to-day) would bring about this condition of things. The trouble with us is not that workmen are forced to work for others for wages, but that monopoly and law-created privilege place capital in a position to dictate terms to the laborer. The supply of labor exceeds the demand for it, and therefore wages are below their natural level — the total product of the laborer. Under a system of free land—or occupying ownership—and free credit, the demand for labor would exceed the supply, and wages would rise. Still, the individualist anarchists believe, with Mill and Cairnes, that association is to be the watchword of the future, and that future industrial relations will be prevalingly based on the co-operative principle. The talk about “communities” and “similarity of tastes,” however, is as irrelevant to the industrial ideal of the individualists as it is to that of the economists named. “Theoretical anarchy may thus be defined as a state of society in which every one does as he pleases without doing wrong.” No; theoretical anarchy is to be defined as a state of society in which every one is allowed to do as he pleases so long as he does not please to break the law of equal freedom. “As long as men are subject to the physical necessities of the body, . . . there will be a clash of material interests which requires regulation; and such regulation requires government.” Defining “government” as the coercion of now invasive, “such regulation” does not require government in the opinion of the anarchists. To assert that it does, is to beg the very question at issue. Institutions to protect rights and restrain aggression are not to be confounded with government. If the institutions are formed on the voluntary principle, they are not “government.” Is a fire insurance company “government”? That which is based on actual consent is not government. “The trouble with many anarchists is that they wish to bring about their system by violence,” etc. This is true of the so-called communistic anarchists, who are not really entitled to the name they usurp, since they believe in compulsory communism and violate the law of equal freedom; but it is not true of the real anarchists,—the individualist anarchists, who abjure violent methods. “In theory they simply carry out to an exaggerated absurdity the doctrine of non-interference with personal liberty.” It is manifest that this was written on the assumption that anarchists would not resist crime and would not undertake to enforce the law of justice or equal freedom. Since, however, as has been explained, only the inoffensive are to be allowed to ignore the defensive organizations, while aggressors are to be punished and coerced, the charge of exaggerated absurdity falls to the ground.

But perhaps Mr. Preston holds that it is absurd to favor voluntary taxation, “government by actual consent,” and that the attempt to carry out the law of

equal freedom would be fatal to society. If so, I can only say that anarchists differ with him.



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