

“IT IS THE CLASH OF IDEAS THAT CASTS THE LIGHT!”

The  **MUTUALIST**
A Journal for Free Absolutes.



**'TWO-GUN
MUTUALISM'**

AND THE

GOLDEN RULE.

NUMBER 1—MARCH 2010

"The Multiplication of Free Forces is the True Contr'un."

CORVUS EDITIONS
GRESHAM, OR.

The MUTUALIST

IT IS THE CLASH OF IDEAS THAT CASTS THE LIGHT!

'TWO-GUN MUTUALISM' and the GOLDEN RULE.

Issue One.—March, 2010.

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A CORVUS EDITION

TWO-GUN MUTUALISM & THE GOLDEN RULE

WORKERS, THIS LITTLE BOOK CONTAINS YOUR FREEDOM. READ IT. YOU WILL FIND HERE IDEAS COMPLETELY APART FROM RECEIVED OPINIONS. IF THEY APPEAR TO YOU UNENFORCEABLE AND INTOLERABLE AT FIRST VIEW, SUSPEND YOUR JUDGMENT. CLOSE THE BOOK AND SAY TO YOURSELF: THAT WHICH APPEARS TO ME THE MOST IMPRACTICABLE IS PERHAPS EASIER TO APPLY THAN I FIRST BELIEVE: FOR OFTEN THE EXTREMES TOUCH. THEN, TAKE UP THE BOOK AGAIN; AND THIS SECOND TIME READ IT WITH THE INTENTION OF FINDING THERE SOMETHING PRACTICAL AND EASY TO APPLY; I AM CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL GRASP THE RELATIONS OF THE DETAILS OF THE ORGANIZATION OF A SOCIETY BASED ON THE EQUALITY AND SOLIDARITY OF CONDITIONS, WITH ITS ENSEMBLE.—CLAUDE PELLETIER, *THE SOCIALIST SOIREES OF NEW YORK, 1873.*

OUT OF THE LABYRINTH

This first issue of *THE MUTUALIST* continues the work begun in the two issues of *LEFTLIBERTY*, but with significant difference in context and approach. The earlier works were part of a tentative, exploratory phase of my work, a kind of preliminary mapping of the “Libertarian Labyrinth,” where the focus was really on establishing the radical diversity of our anarchist/libertarian heritage. There is certainly much, much more exploring to do, but I’ve come to feel that the argument about diversity has pretty well been made. There are plenty of folks out there willing to deny the legitimacy of some or all of the lesser-known varieties of anti-authoritarian thought, but their existence is hardly in question. And among the historically-minded radicals that I meet, it appears that there is actually an emphasis on these previously marginal figures and schools.

Barring unforeseen problems, we should see anthologies this year of the works of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (from AK Press, edited by Iain McKay) and Josiah Warren (from Fordham University, edited by Crispin Sartwell), two anarchist pioneers more often cited than actually read. With a little luck, my Corvus Editions project will have made all of William Batchelder Greene’s major works available in pamphlet form by year’s end. Translators working on the Proudhon anthology and at the Collective Reason site have

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already made this a banner year for new “classical anarchist” material available in English, and there’s a lot of year left. At the pace they have been producing things, I would expect some more Ukrainian material from Black Cat soon as well. Anarchist/libertarian bibliography seems to have sprung back into very healthy life, with important work being done by Ernesto Longa and John Zube—and I’m gearing up to focus on bibliographic work for much of the remainder of the year. New digital archives, such as the Anarchist Library and the various online sites inspired by the Proudhon anthology, are making historical material increasingly easy to access. I hope the Corvus Editions project is contributing to that as well.

That’s a lot of progress, but even if we were able to suddenly make all the “lost classics” and fascinating ephemera available, there remains the labor of making sense of it all and applying it to present-day concerns. Acknowledging the vast extent and imposing complexity of our heritage has been a necessary step—a useful antidote to certain over-simplistic understandings of our histories—but to the extent that it changes our understanding of the anarchist and libertarian traditions, it also presses on us the need to rethink the whole application-of-tradition part of anarchist practice. To the extent that our sense of theoretical and practical alternatives has been expanded, the complexities involved in our present choices have been increased. And, given the exigencies of the present day, we probably need to get to it. For myself, after some years of (very useful) wandering “In the Libertarian Labyrinth,” it feels very much like time to get out. There is undoubtedly no straight-and-narrow path, out there beyond the exit signs—and certainly not for an advocate of the mutualist “anarchism of approximations”—but there’s a different kind of complexity to deal with.

The change in title, from LEFTLIBERTY to THE MUTUALIST, marks, on the one hand, a narrowing of focus, from the nominally “big-tent” approach of the first issues—which never really panned out anyway—to a much more programmatic attempt to elaborate a roughly “neo-Proudhonian” mutualism adapted to contemporary issues. LEFTLIBERTY was named, in part, as a tribute to Benjamin R. Tucker and his magnificent paper, LIBERTY, at a time when I was very deeply involved in market-anarchist coalitions very similar to the theoretical alliances Tucker sought to establish. Tucker remains an important touchstone for me, and the preservation and dissemination of the work published in LIBERTY remains a top priority. Tucker’s broad interests

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have influenced my own, and his example has been one of my key inspirations as a translator. But, ultimately, having compared Tucker to his influences, he comes up wanting—in my mind, at least. In many ways, the “plumb-line” approach that he advocated was a rejection of the central principles of Proudhon and Greene, and is arguably not the most faithful adaptation of Warren’s thought. Though Tucker sometimes spoke of “mutualism,” and while his various approaches to the question of liberty emphasized reciprocity in one sense or another, he was almost certainly not a “mutualist” in the same sense as any of his predecessors. THE MUTUALIST is not an organ of Tuckerite individualist anarchism, nor of the broad “mutualism” which makes no distinction between Proudhon and Warren and Tucker—and a host of others—nor even of the modern “Carsonian synthesis”—despite the great respect and admiration I have for Kevin Carson’s work. It is, as I have said, “neo-Proudhonian” in its emphases, and hopes to demonstrate both the sense of Proudhon’s social philosophy and its application to the present.

But—and here is the “on the other hand,” so inevitable for anyone involved with Proudhon’s antinomies—refocusing on the work of Proudhon immediately gives us pressing reasons to engage with all sorts of other figures—influences, followers, colleagues, antagonists, etc.—who impose themselves on us as we try to understand that work and its context. Indeed, almost everyone and everything excluded with the first move rushes back in with the second, but the work is not a matter of mere gestures. What I hope to accomplish in THE MUTUALIST, and related works, is a reexamination of the broad mutualist tradition, including the works of Proudhon himself, but with a sort of “neo-Proudhonian eye.” Indeed, this is what I have already been attempting in works like “The Gift Economy of Property,” where it has been a question of completing Proudhon’s stated projects and exploring alternate routes to his stated ends. There is no question that Proudhon’s work was unfinished and unevenly developed, and then adapted by a variety of followers and intellectual heirs in an equally uneven manner. Those adaptations included significant advances, as well as significant misunderstandings—and they inform large portions of the spectrum of anarchisms and libertarian philosophies, in one way or another.

That’s probably the way Proudhon—or our speculative “neo-Proudhon”—would have wanted it. He understood progress as a matter of

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“approximation” and adaptation, of conflicts between more-or-less absolutist projects. And he understood liberty as growing out of more and more complex associations—in the realm of thought, as well as in the social realm. One of the goals of *THE MUTUALIST* will be to “open up” Proudhon’s own writings, to show his influences, to engage with criticisms in a way that he never did, and to attempt to make explicit and useful that history of choices, adaptations and approximations that is marked by the changing nature of “mutualism,” from the pre-anarchist friendly societies to the various modern variants. I’m starting with a fairly well-researched intuition about the mutualist “big picture”—none of which will be particularly new, probably, to readers of my blogs and of *LEFTLIBERTY*—and we’ll see how the details work themselves out. But expect, in general, that while I have narrowed my focus with regard to what I will call “mutualism,” the result is likely to be a considerably broadening of what I consider related to the discussion of it.

TWO-GUN MUTUALISM?

I’m starting in this issue with what may seem a classic mutualist provocation. The tradition that has given us “property is theft” and “free market anti-capitalism” may perhaps be excused for dressing up the Golden Rule in wild-west drag. But there’s more at stake than just a family tradition or a dubious gag. There’s frankly very little point in going to all this trouble reimagining mutualism if readers persist in thinking of it as a kind of squishy place midway between social anarchism and market anarchism—when, in fact, its original project, the “synthesis of community and property,” was intended to encompass all the ground ultimately covered by those schools, along with all of the complications that come from tackling both individual and social emphases all at once.

That’s a pretty big project, and, let’s face it, even the mutualist tradition itself has not managed to remain focused on it—gravitating instead towards particular approximations, like the mutual bank, in some instances long after those particular institutions offered much in the way of promise.

But, big project or not, it appears to be mutualism’s project, the “solution of the social problem” or, as Claude Pelletier put it, the workers’ freedom. (Talk about your “big f***ing deals”...) The trouble for us seems to be that we are a little jaded about this sort of thing, and, frankly, we’re also pretty

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seriously out of practice at tackling the sort of complexities involved. Mostly, we live in a much simpler—if not *simplist*—world, where the established relation between individualism and socialism is pretty close to “never the twain shall meet,” and where embracing both looks like a sort of intentional folly.

I hope, in the pages of *THE MUTUALIST*, to demonstrate a number of reasons why the full mutualist project is neither as daunting nor as foolish as it may appear. But I have no intention of suggesting that something like “the solution of the social problem” is going to be easy—and I’m going to have to spend some time, at this stage in the investigation, focusing on the very antagonistic forms in which we have inherited individualism and socialism. Taking up our tools where, and in the condition in which we find them, there will undoubtedly be some initial dangers, even mishaps perhaps. Hence “two-gun” mutualism, picking up a metaphor from Pierre Leroux’s “Individualism and Socialism,” in which the two *isms* are likened to, among other things, “charged pistols.” After all these years, let’s acknowledge that they are *old* pistols, and that perhaps we have not taken as good care of them as we might have, so that picking *them* up poses all sorts of potential hazards.

“Two-Gun Mutualism” is intended as a sort of *transitional* engagement. Ultimately, our goals are of a relatively peaceful sort, the sort where pistols will be of little use to us. But one of the shared assumptions of virtually all of the early anarchists seems to have been that real peace arises only from the “perfection” of conflict. We will have to really take up these two “charged” concepts, and engage with them as they come to us, before we can transform them into tools more suitable to an anarchist future. When it comes right down to it, snake-handling might be safer, and more fun. But here we go...

IN FUTURE ISSUES

The goal for the year is to put together a set of essays introducing most of the key aspects of a “neo-Proudhonian” mutualism. The second issue will most likely be built around the conclusion of “Two-Gun Mutualism and the Golden Rule” and an essay called “Owning Up,” about mutualism, egoism and Walt Whitman. Beyond that, future issues will contain the remainder of “The Anarchism of Approximations: Philosophical Issues” (which began in

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LeftLiberty), more on “the gift economy of property,” a discussion of value theories, thoughts on ecology, micro-enterprise, and the relationship between mutualism and syndicalism, plus notes towards a comprehensive history of the mutualist tradition. By the time 2011 rolls around, I hope to have the cards pretty well on the table—at which point it should be possible to talk much more seriously and concretely about what comes *after* the “two-gun” transition.

—SHAWN.

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"Thus one remains in perplexity and uncertainty, equally attracted and repulsed by two opposite attractors. Yes, the sympathies of our era are equally lively, equally energetic, whether it is a question of liberty or equality, of individuality or association. The faith in society is complete, but the faith in individuality is equally complete. From this results an equal impulse towards these two desired ends and an equal increase of the exclusive exaggeration of one or the other, an equal horror of either individualism or of socialism.

"That disposition, moreover, is not new. It already existed in the Revolution. The most progressive men felt it. Take the Declaration of Rights of Robespierre: you will find formulated there, in the most energetic and absolute manner, the principle of society, with a view to the equality of all; but, two lines higher, you will find, also formulated in the most energetic and absolute manner, the principle of the individuality of each. And nothing which would unite, which harmonizes these two principles, placed thus both on the altar; nothing which reconciles these two equally infinite and limitless rights, these two adversaries which threaten, these two absolute and sovereign powers which both [together] rise to heaven and which each [separately] overrun the whole earth. These two principles once named, you cannot prevent yourself from recognizing them, for you sense their legitimacy in your heart; but you sense at the same time that, both born from justice, they will make a dreadful war. So Robespierre and the Convention were only able to proclaim them both, and as a result the Revolution has been the bloody theater of their struggle: the two pistols charged one against the other have fired.

"We are still at the same point, with two pistols charged and [pointed] in opposite directions. Our soul is the prey of two powers that are equal and, in appearance, contrary. Our perplexity will only cease when social science will manage to harmonize these two principles, when our two tendencies will be satisfied. Then an immense contentment will take the place of that anguish."—PIERRE LEROUX, "INDIVIDUALISM AND SOCIALISM." (1834)

We have understood finally that the opposition of two absolutes—one of which, alone, would be unparadonably reprehensive, and both of which, together but working separately, would be rejected—is the very cornerstone of social economy and public right: but it falls to us to govern it and to make it act according to the laws of logic.—PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON, *THE THEORY OF PROPERTY*. (1864)

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MÊLÉE

In 1834, when Pierre Leroux wrote “Individualism and Socialism,” the immediate occasion was “the massacres on the Rue Transnonain,” a particularly brutal and senseless slaughter of civilians by soldiers during a brief insurrection against the July Monarchy in Paris. After a soldier was killed by sniper fire in the street, members of the guard killed nearly all the inhabitants of No. 14 Rue Transnonain, in a room-to-room spree.¹ The

¹ “Madame d’Aubigny: At five o’clock the soldiers came from the Rue de Montmorency; after a sustained fire they got possession of the barricade.

“A short time after, another party of voltigeurs came down the Rue Transnonain, preceded by sappers; they endeavoured, but in vain, to break open the door of our house, which is unusually solid.

“‘It is the line!’ exclaimed the people in the house; ‘Ah, there are our liberators! We are saved!’

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incident is now perhaps best remembered because of Daumier's depiction of it, but for many years, until more horrifying massacres displaced it, it occupied a very important place in the catalog of crimes by authority against the people.

Leroux's response to the events was interesting. For him, the horror of the crime was not that it is in any way unprecedented. Far from it—history has witnessed no shortage of massacres. Human beings have murdered one another for any number of reasons, not least because they believed it was

“M. Guitard, my husband, and myself went downstairs, in all haste, to open the door. Being quicker than the two gentlemen, I ran before them to the porter's lodge, pulled the rope, and the door opened. The soldiers rushed into the passage, and, turning half round to the right, shot my husband and M. Guitard, at the moment they had reached the last step of the staircase. They fell amidst a shower of balls. The explosion was so great that the windows of the lodge, which I had not had time to shut before the soldiers ran in, were all broken to pieces. A giddiness seized me for a moment, and when I came to myself, it was to see the lifeless body of my husband stretched near that of M. Guitard, whose head was nearly separated from the neck by the numerous shots he had received. Quick as lightning the soldiers, headed by an officer, ran up to the second floor. A folding door soon gave way before them; a second door, one with glass windows, presented itself; they knocked at it furiously, and it was immediately opened by an old man, M. Breffort, senior. ‘We are,’ he said to the officer, ‘peaceable people here; we have no arms of any sort. Do not assassinate us.’ The words had scarcely passed his lips ere he fell, pierced with three bayonet wounds. He uttered a cry: ‘You old ragamuffin,’ exclaimed the officer, ‘if you don't hold your tongue, I'll finish you.’ Annette Besson rushed from an adjacent room to assist him. A soldier turned round, plunged his bayonet into her neck just beneath the jaw, and then, firing his musket at her, blew her head to pieces, the fragments sticking against the opposite wall. A young man, Henry Larivière, was following her. He was fired upon so close that the powder set his clothes in flames; the ball was buried deep in his lungs. As he was falling, mortally wounded, a bayonet stroke cut open his forehead deeply, and exposed the skull; twenty other wounds were added to dispatch him. The room was already a mere pool of blood; M. Breffort, senior, notwithstanding his wounds, had managed to crawl to an alcove; he was pursued by soldiers, when Madame Bonneville came forward, and covering him with her body, her feet in the blood on the floor, her hands raised to Heaven, exclaimed: ‘All my family are stretched at my feet, there remains only myself to kill, only myself.’ And five bayonet wounds cut open her hands. On the fourth floor, the soldiers who had just killed M. Lepere and M. Robiquet, said to their wives: ‘My poor souls, you are sadly to be pitied, as well as your husbands. But we are ordered to do this, we are compelled to obey, though it makes us as wretched as you can be.’—from LOUIS BLANC, *THE HISTORY OF TEN YEARS*, pp. 279-280.

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the will of some god or gods, or of some god's earthly representative. Such killing is criminal, but, Leroux suggests, it may at least retain a certain "grandeur."

Our century is, it seems, quite vile, and we have degenerated even from the crimes of our fathers. To kill in the manner of Charles IX or Torquemada, in the name of faith, in the name of the Church, because one believes that God desires it, because one has a fanatic spirit, exalted by the fear of hell and the hope of paradise, this is still to have in one's crime some grandeur and some generosity. But to be afraid, and by dint of cowardice, to become cruel; to be full of solicitude for material goods that after all death will carry away from you, and to become ferocious from avarice; to have no belief in eternal things, no certainty of the difference between the just and the unjust, and, in absolute doubt, to cling to one's lucre with an intensity rivaling the most heated fanaticism, and to gain from these petty sentiments energy sufficient to equal in a day the bloodiest days of our religious wars—this is what we have seen and what was never seen before.

Crime, murderous crime, may even be "generous," by Leroux's reading—at least by comparison to the sort of petty, senseless murder which took place in the Rue Transnonain. "[W]e are ordered to do this, we are compelled to obey, though it makes us as wretched as you..." And what is it that is behind the "pitiless orders" that the soldiers are compelled to follow? "Business is bad, and it is the innovators, it is said, that stand in its way: war then against the innovators." The rationale for slaughter is "neither an idea nor a principle," but simply "material interests." This is a "base" motivation—Leroux makes his opinion in this regard quite clear. Like so many other radicals of his time, he was a strong believer in progress, not just in the perfectibility of humanity, but in a strong impulse, knit within the very fabric of human history, towards ever-increasing perfection. William B. Greene would describe that impulse in terms of a "Blazing Star," always shining in the distance, and always calling attentive human beings on to increasingly ideal projects and states. Proudhon would come to think of "the Revolution" as embodying it, not as an inevitability, but as a sort of immanent justice, with a tendency to shake up human affairs when it was ignored or thwarted. For progressives and perfectionists, the apparent senselessness or "baseness" of their age was potentially a rebuke. Strong critics of the absolutisms of the past, they were still drawn strongly to ideas and principles, and to the belief that, ultimately, there was some order

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to “universal history,” even if the responsibility for making that order real fell more and more squarely on human, rather than divine, shoulders.

It’s no great surprise, then, that a radical of Leroux’s type would up seeing in the apparent disarray and exhaustion of his era, not just the end or the failure of something, but an indication of progress-to-come. If everything now revolves around “the shops,” if we make war and sacrifices for the sake of the day’s profits, it is because all of society’s forces are focused on a problem of overwhelming importance—“if the social question presents itself in our time primarily as a question of material wealth, it is because the human sciences are very close to finding the solution.”

In 1851, Proudhon’s *Philosophy of Progress* began with a similar denunciation of French society: “France has exhausted the principles that once sustained it. Its conscience is vacant, just like its reason.” It ended by asserting the primacy of revolutionary progress against all forms of absolutism, and it pointed to the extreme disarray of the present as evidence of a potential reorganization in progress. Despite some heated debates and significant differences between them, Proudhon and Leroux shared a good deal, with regard to their philosophies of history. Their relationship was nothing if not complex. Proudhon spoke highly of Leroux, even in the midst of their conflicts, using language which one suspects he would not have been unhappy to have had addressed to himself:

We need men who, like M. Leroux, call in question social principles,—not to diffuse doubt concerning them, but to make them doubly sure; men who excite the mind by bold negations, and make the conscience tremble by doctrines of annihilation. (WHAT IS PROPERTY? p. 401.)

Proudhon undoubtedly also learned a great deal from Leroux, although he made those lessons his own, incorporating them into a body of work in many ways superior to Leroux’s. Once the heat had died down in the debates of 1848-49, and particularly after the *coup d’état*, there were fewer reasons, either personal or practical, for Proudhon to distance himself from political rivals, fewer open debates, and with both men in exile for much of the remainder of Proudhon’s life, fewer opportunities for conflict. While he was never one to give too much credit to his influences, it seems fairly clear that his mature work benefitted from a broad range of them.

It is possible that Leroux’s influence may have been pressed on him as well. We know very little about his relations to the other anarchists of his

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time, but we know that Leroux's thought had a decisive influence on both the American mutualist William B. Greene and the libertarian communist Joseph Déjacque. And we know that Greene and Proudhon were at least acquainted. Greene had forged his own variety of mutualism by joining the work of Proudhon and Leroux. While he was among the most prominent advocates of Proudhon's system of "mutual banking" and free credit, he had obviously followed the French debates on the subject with some care, and seems to have taken Leroux's side when it came to the question of joining the mutual bank to producer and consumer cooperatives. Greene was known for his tendency to speak his mind, even when it drew ridicule from his peers in New England. If he did indeed converse with Proudhon, would he have remained silent on those questions? They were certainly potential sore points: it is quite possible that the insistence by others on a "triad" of reforms was among the factors that led Proudhon to entirely separate from the project of the Bank of the People, when his erstwhile partners attempted to revive it as the "Laborers' Mutuality." At this point, we can only speculate. In any event, the later works certainly seem more open to the idea of supplementing credit reforms with other sorts of association.

But the relationship is really more complicated than the example of Greene, or even Déjacque, suggests. From our vantage point in the present, Leroux appears not just as an influence on various anarchists, but as himself a worker in the field of libertarian radicalism—and perhaps a fairly unique one. Leroux is famous, or infamous, for the notions of the *circulus*,—a sort of proto-ecological answer to Malthus, emphasizing the *re-cycling* character of natural systems,—the *triad*,—an adaptation of Trinitarian thought to social science,—and the twin *doctrines of life* and *humanity*—which emphasized the interdependence of individuals and characterized all living beings as both *objective* and *subjective*, acting as agents and as a social environment (and source of social subsistence, even *nutrition!*) for other agents. The third set of notions was adopted in one form or another by Greene, Déjacque, and Proudhon, and enjoyed a short vogue in New England radical circles, thanks to Orestes Brownson. Its origins were in Christianity, and in Saint-Simonian neo-Christianity. The first tied Leroux to the early anarchist, or proto-anarchist, William Godwin, in the battle against Malthus. And the second, while it also had theological origins, was at the same time a response to the thought of another proto-anarchist figure, Étienne de La Boétie.

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De La Boétie's youthful anti-authoritarian tract, *De la Servitude Volontaire* (known in English as *The Discourse on Voluntary Servitude, Slaves to Duty, or Slaves by Choice*), was subtitled "Le Contr'un." One translation attempts to render the phrase as "The Anti-Dictator," which gets the gist of things, if it lacks the elegance of the original. "Contr'un" is apparently a rare construction, and it's an enormously suggestive one in many ways. It's tempting to survey all the ways in which one might be "against one" or the "counter-one," from Proudhon's theory of offsetting absolutisms to Derrida's play with the intertwined notions of "(no more one/more than one) voice." For our immediate purposes, however, it is enough to know that Leroux took this notion of the "contr'un" very seriously, making it one of the key elements of his 1846 "Discourse on the Doctrine of Humanity." Given his other preoccupations, it will perhaps come as no surprise that he believed the *counter-one* could be found in another number, in the *three* of the *triad*.

Leroux never claimed to be an anarchist, and there is no particular reason to claim him for the tradition at this point. He probably falls fairly comfortably into the category of "mutualist," which has always had connotations broader than, say, "Proudhonian" and which, in its most general form, has always, I think, leaned towards anarchism, but has never been precisely identical with it. (Even Proudhon considered the "approximation of an-archy" just one of the projects of mutualism.) What we probably can do, with some real present benefit, is to examine Leroux's thought a little more closely, specifically in the context of other early anarchists, acknowledging his unusually direct connections to figures like Godwin and de la Boétie, as well as his equally direct influence on early mutualism and libertarian communism. In particular, we can look more closely at the moment where he made the other terminological contributions for which he is remembered—the invention of the terms "individualisme" and "socialisme."

INDIVIDUALISM vs SOCIALISM

It is clear that, in all of this writing, it is necessary to understand by socialism, socialism as we define it in this work itself, which is as the exaggeration of the idea of association, or of society. For a number of years, we have been accustomed to call

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socialists all the thinkers who occupy themselves with social reforms, all those who critique and reprove individualism, all those who speak, in different terms, of social providence, and of the solidarity which unites together not only the members of a State, but the entire Human Species; and, by this title, we, who have always battled absolute socialism, are ourselves today designated as socialist. We are undoubtedly socialist, but in this sense: we are socialist, if you mean by socialism the Doctrine which will sacrifice none of the terms of the formula: Liberty, Fraternity, Equality, Unity, but which reconciles them all. (1847.)—I can only repeat here, with regard to the use of the word Socialism in all of this extract, what I said previously (pages 121 and 160 of this Volume). When I invented the term Socialism in order to oppose it to the term Individualism, I did not expect that, ten years later, that term would be used to express, in a general fashion, religious Democracy. What I attacked under that name, were the false systems advanced by the alleged disciples of Saint-Simon and by the alleged disciples of Rousseau led astray following Robespierre and Babœuf, without speaking of those who amalgamated at once Saint-Simon and Robespierre with de Maistre and Bonald. I refer the reader to the *Histoire du Socialisme* (which they will find in one of the following volumes of this edition), contenting myself to protest against those who have taken occasion from this to find me in contradiction with myself.—PIERRE LEROUX, “INDIVIDUALISM AND SOCIALISM.” (Note from 1850 *COLLECTED WORKS*.)

The debates over who coined what term are of largely antiquarian interest. We know that by 1834, some form of the word “socialism” already existed in English, in Owenite circles. But we also know that Leroux’s claim is not too far off the mark, in any language. And we do not seem to have any earlier treatment of the two terms—*socialism* and *individualism*—together.

Individualism and Socialism—these are the two rival solutions to the problem of “material interests,” and once they have been loosed on the field, their opposition threatens to become practically the whole of politics. Leroux identifies them in order to reject them both—at least individually. When Proudhon adopted roughly the same dynamic, the terms were “property” and “community,” but little else changed. Both look forward to a moment when the two tendencies will be “harmonized” or “synthesized.” Later, both would adopt a more dynamic sort of solution. Greene, tackling the problem in a different context and at a slightly later date, was able to name his third term more directly: “socialism” becomes, for him, the third, relational term, completing a triad with individualistic “capitalism” and “communism.” In some ways, of course, all of this is simply reinventing the wheel, since the three terms all seem to correspond to Fourier’s three

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“distributive passions:” centralizing Composite, decentralizing Cabalist, and alternating Papillion. And the target of the dynamic is the error Fourierists called *simplism*, “the fault of viewing a complex question from only one side, of advancing on one side by retreating on the other, so that real progress is null or negative.”

Leroux opens the debate between individualism and socialism in order to be done with it, to focus attention on a broader, more complete dynamic, which he sees as the key to solving the problem of “material interests.” But he is not prepared to offer much more than a statement of the problem, and the vaguest sketch of the solution. His analysis of individualism and socialism leads him to an affirmation of relation:

We are all responsible to one another. We are united by an invisible link, it is true, but that link is more clear and more evident to the intelligence than matter is to the eyes of the body.

But he can't move far past the intuitive rejection of social *simplism*—a double rejection, coupled with a double affirmation. He has the outline of the triad, which he will come to see as the “true contr'un,” the key to a libertarian politics which should not simply fall prey to the internecine warfare between visions of freedom, and his general project is launched, but he has also *named* these two principles, in a more definite fashion that has been done before—and this conjuration is no small matter.

These two principles once named, you cannot prevent yourself from recognizing them, for you sense their legitimacy in your heart; but you sense at the same time that, both born from justice, they will make a dreadful war.

As we know, in the intervening years, individualism and socialism indeed “made a dreadful war.” And the libertarian movement which Leroux inherited and influenced has been split every bit as decisively as the cultures surrounding it, by that warfare. In some ways, we have made very little progress from the situation described by Leroux and Proudhon: the exhaustion of ideas, the wars in the service of commercial profit, the complicity of competing visions of liberty in the continuing misery and slaughter—all of these are familiar to us. What is perhaps least familiar to us is the notion that there is an alternative, the possibility of a “synthesis of community and property” (as Proudhon put it) in a liberty which would

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extend to all, and would harmonize and socialize the conflict of interests without sacrificing individuality. Where that notion has appeared, in those intervening years, it has often been called *mutualism*. But mutualism, too, has often proclaimed its philosophy, without being able to push very far towards its realization.

If the goal of mutualism, Proudhon's "third form of society" or some timelier approximation, is *our* goal, then it's up to us to trace its history back to the roots, strengthening and clarifying where we can. If mutualism is to be more than just an indistinct third option, a constant compromise, then it is necessary to take up the tradition precisely where it is most strongly "charged"—and most potentially dangerous. What better place to start, then, than Leroux's description of those "two pistols charged one against the other"?

THE STAND-OFF

The passage, quoted at the beginning of the essay, is striking. Individualism and socialism first appear as "two opposite attractors," equally attractive and repellant," but as a magnet might attract or repulse. "Liberty and Society," Leroux claims elsewhere in the essay, "are the two equal poles of social science." The individual, like all individuals, remains "in perplexity and uncertainty," held in a complex field of forces, which pushes and pulls in every direction at once. Drawing on Leroux's work on the nature of "life," we can conclude that our magnetic uncertainty is as much related to ourselves as to our attractors. Indeed, the "objective and subjective" nature of life makes such a distinction difficult at best. We, too, are "charged," and bear at the very heart of our nature as living beings "two opposite attractors." We, too, are a sort of magnet.

Leroux moves quickly through his exposition: the disposition of charges and forces moves things quickly to crisis. Uncertainty leads to increased tension, as forces attempt to align in one direction or another. This leads rapidly to "horror." And it is fear, after all, that leads to the "base" violence of the Rue Transnonain, and to all the violent uncertainty of the present age.

It has all happened before, Leroux assures us, citing the example of the French Revolution. And suddenly the charged *poles* are charged *pistols*—and they have been fired, putting an end to the promise of the Revolution.

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And “we are still at the same point”—Leroux and his contemporaries, but also, it seems, ourselves in the present—but that “same point” seems to get richer and more highly charged every time Leroux returns to it. “We are still at the same point, with two pistols charged and pointed in opposite directions.” When the pistols appeared, in the midst of the discussion of magnetic uncertainty, they were in the hands of Robespierre and the Convention. Now “we” possess them, “pointed in opposite directions.”

Is that “we” a matter of opposed individuals? One stands with the pistol of individualism, and another with the pistol of socialism, while we reenact the standoff of the last revolution? Or is it somehow our general condition that we, each individually, bear both pistols, “pointed in opposite directions,” in order to fend off multiple foes? “Our soul is the prey of two powers,” Leroux says, but that hardly resolves things—particularly when examined in the light of Leroux’s other works. In that light, there is probably no choosing between interpretations. The individual is already social, already “prey” to two absolutist tendencies, even in conditions of relative isolation. We carry the potential for “dreadful war” in our “soul,” as we recognize the legitimacy of the antagonists in our heart, just as soon as they are named. And all of this seems entirely natural, as soon as human beings begin to seriously pursue their liberty.

“In every person-to-person encounter, either the actors recognize enough of themselves in one another to build a basic relation of mutuality (what Proudhon called “society” in his early works), which implies the reciprocal “gift” of a rough and ready equality, or they do without. This stuff stacks and scales up, and every failure to establish society is rot in the foundations of whatever we are trying to build.”—S. Wilbur, “Reality intervenes,” Dec. 04, 2009, *In the Libertarian Labyrinth* (blog).

ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Perhaps this has all taken a strangely martial turn, given mutualism’s generally peaceful reputation. Isn’t the core of mutualism the Golden Rule: “*Do unto others as you would have others do unto you?*” Yes, indeed. But there’s nothing simple about fulfilling the Golden Rule. The principle is not, for instance, *Do unto others as if they were you*. If I serve you Postum for coffee, or bake you a chocolate cake on your birthday, because, *Hey, I like Postum!—and chocolate’s my favorite!*—I haven’t acted according to a

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mutual or reciprocal principle. Instead, I have acted according to a rather narrow sort of egoism. If the terms are reversed, I certainly don't want to be treated as just another instance of a type defined by *someone else*. Respect for the individuality of each actually seems to require a move into the realm of the general, recourse to a *rule* of individuality—a rule which ultimately tells us that there isn't going to be any simple rule of thumb for how to fulfill the Golden Rule. If I assume that the way that I would like to be treated is *as an individual*—but as the *specific* individual that I am—then presumably I should treat the other as an individual (according to a fairly simple, general rule)—but also as *an-other* individual (and here all simple, general rules begin to break down.)

The individual-collective dynamic is a sort of antinomy, already pretty familiar to students of Proudhon and mutualism. No theory of the individual or society is going to be complete without constant recourse to the ways in which one influences the other. Leroux, Greene and Proudhon all embraced this particular antinomy as a key sociological insight, and Proudhon, taking cues from Leroux, gradually built his social science around the notion that not only are individuals and collectivities intimately connected, but collectivities may be themselves understood as individuals—let's say *individualities* for the moment—to the extent that they manifest a single law of organization.

There is ultimately more—much more—that needs to be said about the social theories that the early mutualists, and libertarian communists like Déjacque, elaborated, the ways in which peopling the world with collectivities and individualities at every imaginable scale—from the infinitesimal to the universal—did or did not contribute to a robust anarchist critique of hierarchy and a sustainable model for a free society. For now, it is important to simply note that in Proudhon's theory—undoubtedly, the most fully and clearly developed of the bunch—he was moving towards a vision in which our all personal individualities, and whatever social individualities emerged from their free interactions, would be allowed their fullest development, bounded only by the principle of reciprocity—the Golden Rule.

Liberty then, nothing more, nothing less. *Laissez faire, laissez passer*, in the broadest and most literal sense; consequently property, as it rises legitimately from this freedom, is my principle. No other solidarity between citizens than that which

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rises accidentally from *force majeure*: for all that which relates to free acts, and manifestations of reflective thought, complete and absolute *insolidarity*.

But:

Who does not see that the mutualist organization of exchange, of circulation, of credit, of buying and selling, the abolition of taxes and tolls of every nature which place burdens on production and bans on goods, irresistibly push the producers, each following his specialty, towards a centralization analogous with that of the State, but in which no one obeys, no one is dependent, and everyone is free and sovereign?—P.-J. Proudhon, “The Revolutionary Program” (1848).

This is the “communist ends by individualist means” that we find in his early work. In his later works, Proudhon acknowledged that even the state should be acknowledged as an *individuality*, along with all the human individuals, workshops, voluntary associations, and the like—but that all these *individualities* must be understood as *equals*. The *state-individuality*, to take the most contentious example, has its role, its law of development, and its “rights,” but they do not take trump the role or “rights” (scare-quoted here since the question of “rights” is itself contentious in this context) by virtue of belonging to a collectivity—since every individual is assumed to be a collectivity, a group, organized according to a unique law—nor by virtue of the size or scale of the individuality, nor by virtue of the participation of the constituent individuals in collective-individuality.

There are obviously some serious issues to wrestle with here. On the one hand, the approach radically levels the political playing field. If we were aiming for a democracy, it would be a *one organizing principle = one vote* sort of affair ... The radical leveling means that the mutual principle—“actors recognize enough of themselves in one another to build a basic relation of mutuality ... or they do without ... society”—ought to be applicable to essentially all relations, as long as we’re willing to allow some diversity in the means by which different sorts of *individualities* can “recognize” one another. Proudhon was hardly naïve about those sorts of differences. And, again, our current focus is on person-to-person mutuality. But what we’ve already suggested is that at least some of the radical difficulties of recognition between individualities of different scales or natures are just the *writ-large* versions of a problem we encounter in much more familiar settings.

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In attempting to work within the antinomy, we encounter an aporia. If our rule is to treat the other as an other, as a unique individual (and not just another instance of some type we can assume *we* exemplify), then our rule isn't enough. Our understanding of common human traits or shared circumstances may well be the thing that is *least* useful in addressing the other as an *individuality*.

There is, of course, no question of attempting to dispense with generalization. It is, after all, our pursuit of a general rule which brings us to the brink of this new and particularly thorny set of problems. There is a common tendency to treat any road that leads us to an aporia as the *wrong road*, no matter how rational and rigorous the process that led us there. The desire for *a priori* ethical rules that can simply be applied, once we know the details of the case, is perfectly understandable, but the notion that any alternative to this sort of ethical technology is pure dispersion and despair, ethical relativism, quietism or defeatism—or even “anti-principled, in-your-face consequentialism”²—may well be one of those effects of fear that Leroux warned against, pushing us towards one extreme or the other.

It would be easy to rail a bit here about how adherence to the principle of reciprocity, understood in this aporetic way, is transformed, in the minds of opponents, into “relativism” or “nihilism,” and countered with such unlovely beasts as the purely consequentialist defense of this or that “principle.” But, frustrating as this sort of thing is, it's not the sort of thing that a mutualist can get too high-and-mighty about. Mutualism's own history is replete with examples of how to fall short of the Golden Rule, provided by the very figures who have most powerfully advanced its doctrine. For now, we'll concentrate on those *internal* examples of how giving in to logical *simplism* can have disastrous consequences—with particular attention to Proudhon.

First, however, let's make sure we have the problem well defined: Mutualism, as understood by the figures we are examining, consisted of very little besides a commitment to the principle of mutuality—the Golden Rule—and a sense—presumably based in social science—that the individual and society were inextricably bound together, and that *individuality* and *collectivity* were neither logical nor social opposites, but instead

² Thanks to Stephan Kinsella for this lovely phrase. It's one of those labels I would almost be happy to adopt, despite its inaccuracies, for its sheer in-your-face-ness.

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characteristics of all beings, manifesting themselves at different *scales*. In Proudhon's hands, this all led to the *potential* of a radically leveled social and political playing field, with all individuals—or all those that he could recognize as full and social individuals—interacting on essentially equal terms. The uncertainties and complexities of such a system make no real argument against it, from a mutualist point of view. With no *exact* means of knowing how to treat the other *as an other like ourselves*, and with the Golden Rule as guide, the only ethical option is obviously to “aim high,” to exceed the letter of the law, to exceed tit-for-tat, etc. Proudhon was skeptical about the exchange of values anyway, seeing “equal exchange” as largely a matter of convention, and “approximation”—and such approximations are always open for improvement. As for complexity, Proudhon saw it as a key component of (positive) liberty. It might not be too much to say that it was precisely in the instances of incommensurability, uncertainty, interminable experiment and approximation, that Proudhon saw the openings—and the mechanism—for progress and perfection.

This is a sort of thought that tends to escape easy summary, and mutualists have not always been as clear as they might be. (I can only appeal to the difficulties myself.) For the progressive or perfectionist, a fair amount of ambivalence is perhaps unavoidable, and a certain messiness in exposition almost inevitable. All the evils and disarray of the present call for strong condemnation; but they may also signal, by their very intensity and vileness, at least the possibility of real change. Once again, it's not simply that social disorganization marks the collapse of an old system. The progressive faith requires a fundamental belief in the reality of collective action and collective reason—a belief which can never be uncritical or quietist, and which indeed can probably never be critical enough, since the individual must engage the collective with their individual reason; a belief that must constantly be tested with social science and historical study, and which has no very specific content or context without that study; but a belief that leads the progressive or perfectionist to at least always entertain the possibility that human institutions are sound in their aims, however flawed they may be in their implementation.

Such an approach is full of pitfalls, of course. We can see that in the uneven and opportunistic ways in which its practitioners have applied it. Proudhon, even while completing his critique of property and the state, as he found them, turned to an engagement with their ends, and the best-

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developed elements of his writings map out the twists and turns of that engagement. In the end, in *The Theory of Property*, Proudhon embraced both property and the state, but only in a particular sort of opposition, and he acknowledged explicitly that it “it falls to us to govern [that opposition] and to make it act according to the laws of logic.” Proudhon *picked up both pistols*—and it is up to us, ultimately, to decide if that was the best that can be done, or whether perhaps, in embracing the aims of the institutions, he gave too much credit to their existing forms.

In “The Gift Economy of Property” and other writings, I have suggested some alternatives to Proudhon’s final approach to property—alternatives which are no less highly charged, but are perhaps less martial in their approach. I’m not certain that there is anything in that work that clearly raises it to or above the level of *The Theory of Property*. But we can perhaps more clearly see the dangers of the progressive approach if we look at Proudhon’s response to potential changes in the institution of the family, and in gender roles. Proudhon was at once progressive and conservative when it came to most economic questions, and questions regarding institutional government. Even when he advocated the conservation of existing forms—or when he advocated a strengthening of private property, provided it was widely distributed—it was with the understanding that those forms would fulfill a substantially new function. When it was a question of changes to the family, he instead denied progress, at best bringing new justifications to bear for institutions which would ultimately pull against the general trajectory of his libertarian thought. With regard to women’s rights, his thought was worse than simply conservative. In “picking up the pistols” with regard to property, he sought to shelter individuals in such a way that liberty was preserved for all, and progressive change had a space within which to occur. When it came to women, his impulse was to *shelter them from change*. The defenses of the traditional family that he developed could just as easily have supported any number of non-traditional living arrangements. A strong case could be made—and was being made at the time—that the aims of the family could be at least as well addressed by other forms. The patriarchal rights that he ultimately defended were, like the private property rights of *The Theory of Property*, an intensification—Leroux might have said “exaggeration”—of existing rights, and we might suspect that they were driven by nothing other than “horror”—again the word is Leroux’s—of the polar alternative. Proudhon

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once again “picked up the pistols,” but because he turned against his own stated principles—affirmation of progress, opposition to the absolute, movement by an indefinite sequence of approximations—and, most seriously, quite simply denied women full participation in society, he could hardly do better than the soldiers in the Rue Transnonain. “[W]e are ordered to do this, we are compelled to obey, though it makes us as wretched as you...” Treating the traditional family and patriarchy as providential, Proudhon not only failed to balance individual and social concerns, but directly took up arms against anything—whether individualist or socialist in nature—that threatened the status quo, jeopardizing his entire project in the process.

Proudhon’s particular failure was not intrinsic to his libertarianism or his social science.⁵ Leroux did not share it, nor did Greene. But they had their own failings. Every system has its attendant hazards, and, on one level, mutualism combines those of individualism with those of extreme collectivism—and when it is not in danger of slipping to extremes it has to be careful not to settle into some comfortable rut in the middle. Faith in collective reason has to be truly a matter of faith, as opposed to knowledge—and has to be treated as such. If a mutualist thought they *knew* that a given institution was correct in its aims—that it represented a manifestation of progress in the collective reason—they would be on shaky ground. And, as the historical record pretty clearly shows, radicals are not magically shielded from all the confusions of their era, no matter how critical they may manage to be. Leroux went through some truly peculiar gyrations in his work to explain the nature and extent of his own anti-semitism; in the end, it isn’t clear if he entirely understood it himself. And he probably didn’t. His most extreme expressions are, from a more consistently logical and libertarian perspective, awkwardly grafted onto a critique of capitalism as *obstruction of the circulus* that is both perceptive, humorous, and well ahead of its time in its proto-ecological arguments. (If you were looking for the missing link between the physiocrats’ treatment of natural production and modern environmental science, this might be it.) But the seriousness of the failure is in some ways heightened—particularly for us, in an ideological environment that is very, very sensitive to such failures—by the promise of

⁵ Issue 2 will contain a more detailed analysis of the theoretical tools at Proudhon’s disposal, and the extent and nature of his failure to apply them to the questions of women and the family.

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the thought surrounding it. Proudhon's failure is colossal: it is in the very same works where he points most clearly to the possibility of a radical equality which does not efface individuality, and where he at least hints at a *contr'un* far more powerful than the *triad*, in the multiplication and association of free forces, that he excludes women from that potential promise land, denying them equality and the basic relations of society. Like Leroux, he twists and turns, but there is really no escaping the fact that he can recognize the role and rights of the (anarchist) state and the workshop, but not those of women. (*Honestly...*)

There, but for real care in our application of the one principle that drives mutualism, go we. The hard part of embracing continual progress is also embracing constant incompleteness, approximation, non-innocence. Mutualism, by emphasizing complexity and attaching itself to institutions only provisionally and experimentally, makes tremendous demands—but they are essentially anarchistic demands. The trick is to *really progress*, but *that*, as Proudhon insisted, also involves a careful sort of conservation. We can't settle solely for critique or celebration of the tradition as we have inherited it—to do so would perhaps be more comfortable, but it would also be a *simplist* betrayal of mutualism's basic approach.

The alternatives should become clearer as we move to incorporate more of the mutualist tradition into the analysis.

[To be continued in #2]

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A bridge of sorts to the second installment:

“From my perspective, the mutualist norm of reciprocity is more like a tool than a law. Even in the form of a “law of love,” it’s at most a conventional law—and conventions are just approximations, levers that may get the next work done. “Justice” is nothing more than a level, separate indeed from good consequences.... By 1858, Proudhon had pretty clearly laid out a world in which we had the justice-level, and pretty much everything else was a hammer – and the ethical choices all came down to whether or not individuals were going to hammer each other down to the same level, build the general level of human existence up, or drop the level entirely and just hammer away at each other without any other guide than the “right” of the strong. I think that the more thoroughly we attempt to understand nature, including human nature, in its evolutions, the more efficient we can be at the job of just surviving, and the more energy we can devote to experimentation (for good and ill). Potentially, at least, we also learn to deal with the deepening antinomy involved in our phenomenologically separate but physically united existence. Progress (what Proudhon and others were happy to call “The Revolution”) is driven by the recognition of new relations and new forces (new tools, and new uses, so that we start to have more than hammers, or stop using everything like a hammer), and new ethical subjects. (Slightly modified from the original post.)”—SHAWN.

THE NEW PROUDHON LIBRARY

Property is Theft!—the AK Press Proudhon anthology—is at the publisher and due out late in 2010. Between now and then, we’re going to see quite a bit of newly-translated material released on the internet. The anthology has dictated the focus of translation efforts for several of us for months now. With the collection completed, other projects can get some attention. I hope to have newly-translated volumes in the New Proudhon Library series appearing again on a regular basis—and in March and April Corvus Editions will be releasing pamphlets covering the major works already translated.

This issue’s selection is from *War and Peace*, and it treats Proudhon’s later approach to rights, and their relation to force. I’ve already hinted at the importance of this material in “‘Two-Gun’ Mutualism and the Golden Rule.” I’ll be returning to address it more directly in the second installment. I have prefaced a blog post from December, 2008, which gives some guides to understanding the passages.

War: What’s it good for?

It turns out that Proudhon’s answer to the musical question is rather interesting, and challenging. His two-volume *War and Peace* represents an further exploration of some of the ideas he had developed in *Justice in the Revolution and in the Church*. The turning point in Proudhon’s philosophy came in the 1850s, between the *Philosophy of Progress* and *Justice*, when he realized that, as he later put it, “the antinomy does not resolve itself.” The immediate consequence of this realization was a move from the emphasis on synthesis, which had dominated his work from the last sections of *What is Property?* through the *System of Economic Contradictions* and beyond, to a much more complex treatment of the role of ultimately irresolvable conflict in social evolution. One consequence of this change in his dialectical approach was that the historical accounts that made up such an important part of Proudhon’s work had to be revisited, in

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order to determine if and how this other dynamic revealed itself. Another, linked, consequence, was that the philosophy of progress and the theory of collective force and collective beings had to take what we might now consider an “anti-foundationalist” turn.

For the later Proudhon, the series (taking this term with all its Fourierist implications) of approximations of Justice, the successive balancings of more-or-less free forces, was Progress (big-P), even the Revolution, and there was something relentless about its upward climb. The theory of collective persons, what contemporaries like Pierre Leroux and William B. Greene addressed (with some variations) as a “doctrine of life” and theory of Humanity, made possible the theory of “immanent justice,” which posited at least the constant possibility of advance, in the form of improved approximation. But that same theory meant that there were lots of actors on the social-historical stage, lots of kinds of actors, to which individual persons had a variety of kinds of connections and in which they had various investments. Add to that the additional wrinkle that each “stage,” each element in the historical series, lingers. Nothing is magically “realized and suppressed” by synthesis, and each approximation ends up resting on other approximations – all the way down, really.

For Proudhon, Justice, despite its key-word status, is never in-itself anything more than that balance of free forces. “An eye for an eye” is justice, as is The Golden Rule: they simply occupy difference places in the Justice-series. Obviously, “higher” approximations of justice have their advantages, both for individuals and for collective beings like Humanity or a given society. But the existence of “higher” approximations does not necessarily invalidate the “lower,” particularly if, in the historical series, later, higher approximations are founded on those earlier and lower.

Proudhon’s *War and Peace* is one of those texts routinely cited as a forerunner to “fascism” (a term that requires scare-quoting, not because there is any question that fascism has existed, but because the critics tend to lump a lot of “stuff we don’t approve of” into the mix.) The literature on proto-fascism is a complex one, frequently involving the defense of certain models of rationality and science, as well as the particularly political and ideological forms we associate with the term. So Bergson can be blackened with Sorel’s various political indiscretions, presumably because his treatment of “intuition” is “anti-science” and “anti-rational,” rather than part of a debate about what science and rationality will be. Proudhon,

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already an undesirable for that “property is theft” stuff, gets the “insufficient degree of separation from Sorel” treatment, and his anti-semitic notebook entries are mentioned, and who would dare argue that his *War and Peace* was not an irrationalist glorification of war, even if its final line is “HUMANITY WANTS NO MORE WAR.” Hey, he was “a man of paradox.” Right?

No. But thanks, I guess, for playing...

Proudhon does, in fact, talk about war as having an important moral function. He talks about the extent to which it has been war which has driven human beings to acts of bravery, self-sacrifice and ingenuity. If he doesn't quite get to Marinetti's “war is the world's only hygiene,” he does point out that we have relied pretty heavily on war to maintain what balance of forces we have achieved. It may not be nice to say so, but it doesn't appear to be incorrect. And the critics of war don't seem to deny the basic right of force, when push comes to shove, or to class war, or General Strike, etc. What Proudhon attempts to do, in a work which is not always a comfortable read (as if we required comfort from political philosophy or history), is to demonstrate the ways in which the right of force (not a right to force, about which more a little later) has functioned in the service of Justice, has contributed to the subsequent approximations of Justice, and continues to play a narrowly delimited role in the defense of Justice.

If you want to get a taste of how Proudhon argues in *War and Peace*, I've translated 17 pages from the first volume, where Proudhon is explaining the “right of force.” A couple of things to remember, or to consider if you haven't read my other discussions of Proudhon:

- 1) He uses the French word *droit*, which can mean either “law” or “right” in a way that is most accurately translated, as far as I can see, as “right,” but which does not, or does not necessarily refer to the sort of natural or political *rights* we are accustomed to talking about. Every group, ensemble, being, etc., has its own “law” (*loi*) of organization, which determines what is “right” (appropriate, proper, logical, natural, etc) for it to do. Likewise, it participates in larger ensembles with their own laws, which condition those of the individuals. *Droit* remains something of a mix of what we might call natural law and/or right, as well as covering more strictly descriptive (rather than normative) ground. Just don't necessarily assume that Proudhon is trying to anything more than describe the normal functioning of presently-existing “bodies” of one sort or another.

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2) This is part of an explicitly historical, progressive account. The basic argument of the book is that all of our “higher-level” rights, and really all of our more peaceful institutions, as well as all those which we have yet to create, are part of a historical series which begins with relations mediated by raw force. Peace would be the end of that series, presumably, but war would always be its origin. Peace is, in a strong sense, the end product of the process of war. And, Proudhon says, we have got ourselves into some real trouble by denying this historical fact.

3) Proudhon speaks of “right of force” and “right of war,” but these, he argues, are like all true rights, equal and reciprocal. If there are, or have been, certain circumstances in which the right of the strongest has been or can be our model for justice, justice is still a restless demand for balance, and ultimately justice cannot be fulfilled at any acceptable level by silencing or excluding the weak. It is not clear that there is a “right to war,” but instead a sort of protocol for dealing with the wars that occur, and which can only justly occur in circumstances of social or political imbalance or injustice. Proudhon talks about the “right of labor” to its product, and contrasts that with the “right to work.”

The translation is somewhat rough and literal. More complete and polished treatments are in the works.

WAR AND PEACE

[EXTRACTS]

CHAPTER XI

CONTINUATION OF THE SAME SUBJECT: 3) POLITICAL RIGHT, CIVIL RIGHT, ECONOMIC RIGHT.—GAMUT OF RIGHTS.

Let us summarize some points.

RIGHT, in general, is the recognition of human dignity in all its faculties, attributes and prerogatives. There are thus as many special rights as humans can raise different claims, owing to the diversity of their faculties and of their exercise. As a consequence, the genealogy of human rights will follow that of the human faculties and their manifestations.

The right of force is the simplest of all and the most basic: it is the homage rendered to man for his strength. Like every other right, it exists only under the condition of reciprocity. Just as the recognition of the superior force in no way implies the negation of the inferior, the right which belongs to the first does not destroy that of the second. If the earth is attracted by the sun, the sun is in its turn attracted by the earth and the other planets: by virtue of this double attraction, the center of the whirl is not at the center of the sun, but at a distance proportional to the power of reciprocal attraction of the sun and the planets.

Thus, no matter what the fabulist has said, the right of the strongest is a positive right, and its reason a true reason; the wrong, in all this, comes either from the exaggeration of the right of force, or from the falsity of its application. The lion's share, in itself, is legitimate. What makes the morality of the fable of the Lion and his three associates, the Cow, the Goat and the Hind, and what constitutes the rascality of the first, is not that he appropriates a greater part because of his strength and his courage, it is that, by a procurer's trick, making of his quality of being a lion, then of his force, then again of his courage, three identical terms, so many titles to grant to himself a part of the product, and threatening with his claws the

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associate who dares make a claim to the rest, he pays himself four times for what should have only been counted once.

The right of war derives directly from the right of force. Its object is to regulate combat and determine the effects of it, when, force being denied or its right misunderstood, it becomes necessary, to resolve the difference, to proceed to conflict. This is why, as we have said, war is a form of procedure which by itself creates no right, not even that of force, but which establishes it, puts it in evidence, sanctions it by victory, and adjudges to it its conclusions by making, by the supreme reason of force, antagonism cease.

As much as it is true, however, that antagonism is the law of social life, we say even of life universally, so much can we say that bloody war is repugnant to the social sentiment of man. As bellicose as a nation may be, its first movement, in case of difficulty, is always to avoid, if it can, combat. From this rises the notion of the right of peoples.

The right of peoples has its principle in the consideration that, from State to State, and in certain circumstances, force positively makes right; it is possible, in the case of conflict between two States, to determine *à priori*, by the evaluation of forces, to which of the two parties the preponderance must belong; consequently to prevent, by an amiable transaction, the decision of war, at the very least to define the effects of victory and to render more equitable the treaty of peace.

If the conflict is of such a nature and seriousness that the solution demands the sacrifice of one of the warring sovereignties, the right of peoples teaches us,—and it is here that it is eminently distinguished from any other right, which makes of it one of the best marked categories of the science of justice,—that this sacrifice can be required by that one of the powers which is believed to be the strongest, and executed by arms. All that which, in international relations, can be reduced to a question of life or death for the State to decide by force, pertains to the right of peoples.

Let us come now to public right or political right.

Political right aims to prevent all types of aggression by the individual against the community and against other individuals, by defining, as much as possible, the rights and duties of citizens towards each other and towards the State, and placing them all under the protection and authority of one public force which is the government.

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But there is this difference between the international right and the political right, that the first implies essentially the possibility of the absorption of States by one another, and consequently in case of conflict, the legitimacy of their immolation, while by political right neither the sovereignty of the State, nor the liberty of the citizen can perish; far from that, the masterwork of the constitution is to make them increase unceasingly the one alongside the other and the one by the other. In international right, if the equilibrium of powers cannot be amiably obtained, there will be suppression, by war, of one or more of the antagonistic states; in political right, on the contrary, order is imperiously demanded without it costing the sacrifice of a single liberty or a single life: the proscription, which is, so to speak, the soul of the right of peoples, becomes contradictory here.

Thus the notion of the right of force is always present in the thought of the eternal legislator. It follows it in all of its creation, whether it founds the State or it coordinates the independent nations; and always one encounters it again, except for differences of application, in each of the metamorphoses of the law.

But it necessary to enter further into the spirit of the constitutions, and to show, by the facts, that ubiquity of right and of force. Certainly, everything is not connected, in public right, to force; but everything supposes it, not only as means of action and organ of authority, *instrumentum regni*, but as principle and source of right, which is very different.

We have seen above, in Chapter II, the patriarchy or patrician class form spontaneously from the just recognition of the right of force. One consequence of that principle has been the formation of the aristocracy or the castes. The idea that force engenders force, that the strong spring from the strong, producing the institution of hereditary nobility:—that is, as I said before, right becoming subjective in man in the name of his most visible quality, force. Thus it is always, at base, force which decides justice, except for the introduction of a new element, the family.

But nobility abuses its privileges: from one side, it is corrupted by power and wealth; from the other, it exploits the plebians well beyond what is permitted by the right force. Soon even the superiority of force, which in the beginning had created the aristocracy, passes to the side of the people; and one sees the nobles, without knowledge of their privilege, demand the

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benefit of force when they already lack the reality; to speak of their *seigneurial* rights when they no longer have anything, neither as individuals, nor as caste, of that which made the *seigneurie*.

This is then revolution, and revolution in the name of force.

Sieyès' brochure, *Qu'est-ce que le tiers État?* has no other meaning. Just as all despotism resolves itself, by virtue of force and the right that pertains to it, in aristocracy, so all aristocracy ends in its turn in the bourgeoisie and roture. That is inevitable, and it is just.

Here a new modification of the right of force is produced. By the nobiliary institution the right of force was combined with that of the family; it had become a right by birth: but with the coming of democracy, it becomes a right of numbers or of the majority. The force of collectivity is the point of departure and base of the social contract.

By virtue of that contract, at first purely fictive and tacit, each citizen is supposed to voluntarily abandon a part of his force, his liberty and his property, in order to create a public force, capable of vanquishing all individual resistances, and which insures justice and protection to all.⁴

⁴ This manner of interpreting the social contract is very different from that of Rousseau. According to the philosopher of Geneva, the sovereignty of the people proceeds from the gathering of individual wills, freely expressed; from which it follows that the right of man, origin of the right of the nation, has its seat in the will of man. But it is clear that the union of 100,000 electors could not juridically invalidate the will of one alone, nor found, consequently, despite its claims, a legitimate sovereignty. My right, expression of my will, is indestructible and inalienable; and if I refuse, there is absolutely nothing, in the agreement of my 100,000 contradictors, which drowns out my refusal. Thus a single man could, opposing his veto to the will of the majority, prevent the law from passing, paralyze the action of the government, and make the sovereign impossible. The example of the Poles, cited below, demonstrates it. The absurdity of that result proves the falsity of the purely metaphysical theory of Rousseau. I know well that in the end one will declare the right of the majority superior to that of the minority, which means simply that one will appeal to force. But, unless force has right by itself, one will only have exerted violence; that would be a usurpation, not an act of justice. Thus it is the right of force, the respectability inherent in force, as a human faculty, which forms the first foundation of right, the first echelon of the legal and political order. One will object that that which has the force, the people, cannot very well have reason at the same time: in that case, would it be necessary to always say that it is sovereign? To that I respond, always by virtue of the same principle, that force has right only insofar as it is human; that a force deprived of intelligence is nothing more than bestiality, an instrument a the

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Now, to whom will that public force be entrusted? To a magistrate, an elected representative, representing the collectivity, or the major part of the collectivity, which is to say always force. Universal suffrage is, from all points of view, only a peaceful recognition of force, and the representative system, with its law of majorities, a reasoned application of the right of the strongest. The Polish nobility could never understand that transformation of the right of force, accepted by all peoples. At each election of the prince, the Diet voted on horseback; the minority opposing its veto, there was battle, and the most numerous faction was forced to maintain the validity of the election by the defeat of the dissidents.

Certainly, in the law of the majority there is something other than numerical force. There is that principle of common prudence that, in doubtful cases, the opinion of the greatest number is more probable than the opinion of some few, the conscience of the nation than that of one sect. But the majority of opinions will be, it is necessary to note, not very respectable, if they did not express at the same time those of the majority. Now, interests are forces, and, in supposing the opinions of the majority and those of the minority of equal value, it will remain always, in favor of the first, that, in cases of doubt, the most considerable interest must be preferred.

What is it then which, in a republic or a representative monarchy, can motivate insurrection? It is certainly not the consideration, very sustainable in itself, that in matters of right or science numbers mean nothing, and that twenty-five can be right against five hundred. I do not believe that an insurrection ever rested on a grievance of that sort. One has never reproached, that I know of, in the name of the people, a government which had the multitude in favor of it, of having used the right that it held from that multitude, of the right of force. One rises up when the government, like that Charles X, after having lost the majority, wants to act against the majority, to be right against force; or while having the majority

disposition of the intelligent power that knows how to seize it, and with which that power will contain and enslave the people. This is what has been seen at all times, it is this that happened in 1848, when the people, convened in electoral assemblies, named reactionary assemblies, and what is evidenced in a more sensible manner still since the coup d'État. Force, I repeat, only has right if it is human, which is to say intelligent, moral and free. From the moment that it is reduced to the raw state, it belongs to that which seizes it, and will count to its profit.

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it violates the law, lies about the constitution, and calls for more, as a consequence, than it is accorded to it by the right of force.

One observation to enter here is that relative to the choice of the prince, above all to the increase what his power rarely fails to take, despite the resistance of the friends of liberty. At all times the sages have dreamed of placing a sage at the head of affairs and of ruling so well his attributions that, though sufficiently armed to maintain order, he could not act against the rights and liberties of the citizens. We know how rarely this hope has been fulfilled. If the power is elective and the election is left to the multitude, it will most often be a military man, a general illustrious for his feats at arms, who will carry off the votes. Let us suppose that the prince belongs to the civil order, as in the case of heredity: it will suffice that the prince, making war by his generals, triumphs in some campaigns, in order to count the victory his own, as if he had triumphed in person. Then, and in this case as in the first, the victorious chief does not fail to assume more extended powers, higher prerogatives, that nobody dreams of disputing, and that one would challenge in vain.

Such is the prestige of force that, where it exists, the vulgar are included to accept that there is an authority, and consequently a right.

One conceives now how war, which exerts such great action on ideas, exerts one no less strong on public liberties and the constitution of the State. A nation at war is a nation gathered on itself, formed in battalions, and which no longer obeys anyone but the military chief, lives only a governmental and central life. The man who leads the war is a being so highly placed that all involuntarily obey him; he becomes the judge of others, representing right as well as force, at once legislator, judge and general. If he beats the enemy, everyone adores him; the power that he has been given by combat remains with him: there is the master.

What of the precautions taken, in Rome, in order to prevent the usurpation of the dictator, sovereign for fifteen days, for one year at most! Yet Marius and Sulla knew how to make themselves masters; Caesar became one in his turn: there have been masters for six hundred years. In our times, one escapes military dictatorship by constitutional and hereditary monarchy; but that is on the condition, in addition, of reserving to the bourgeoisie the exercise of political rights. As soon as the plebs enter the arena, they make a chief for themselves according to his genius, that is

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according to his force. After a republican interregnum, Cromwell succeeds, by puritan democracy, to Charles I; Bonaparte, Jacobin plebs, to Louis XVI.

Under the Roman emperors, heredity, somewhat favorable to the soldiers and the people, failed to establish itself. The reason was that in Rome there was not the quality of being an heir which served to make the emperor recognized, it was, on the contrary, the title of emperor, earned or already obtained, which came to consecrate the filiation. Titus and Marcus Aurelius succeeded without difficulty, one to his father Vespasian, the other to his stepfather Antoninus Pius. But Titus and Marcus Aurelius, before being associated with the empire, were illustrious from their services; parentage served only to give to their military title one more illustration. Every victorious general was, among the Romans, by fact and by right emperor; if Augustus had only his birth, it was rare that he did not succumb sooner or later before an emperor more real. That is what happened to Caligula, Nero, Commodus, Elagabal, Alexander Severus, Gordien the younger and others.

There are truly only two ways for a country to shield public liberties from the encroachments of force and ward off despotism. It is to organize, as in England, a hereditary monarchy, acting by agents responsible before a Parliament, and to reserve the electoral privilege to the bourgeoisie; or else, if the constitution of the country is established on universal suffrage to confer to the multitude, with the enjoyment of political rights, that of economic rights, which means equality of education and fortune.

If it was permitted to speculate on the future according to analogies with the past, I would say that Napoléon III having been made emperor, not by military fortune, but by heredity, and the French nation rejecting praetorianism, it seems inevitable, for that double reason, that the present empire becomes a parliamentary monarchy. But, on the other hand, that same head of State holds his right from universal suffrage, and his government having thus far had for its principal object to suppress the economic revolution, it appears equally impossible, for that double reason, for the parliamentary monarchy to reestablish itself; and it is exactly that which makes the originality of the situation. *Fata viam invenient*.

Just as the political constitution rests, in the last analysis, on force, it also has force for sanction: in which public right comes to be confused with international right. Every nation, indeed, incapable of organizing itself politically, and in which power is unstable, is a nation destined to be

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consumed by its neighbors. As those who do not know how or do not want to make war, or who would be too weak to defend themselves, have not a right to occupy a place on the map of States; ... it is necessary that they submit to a suzerainty. Neither religion, nor language, nor race, are anything here; the predominance of force dominates all and makes law. Right of force, right of war, right of peoples, and political right thus become synonyms: where force is lacking, government does not hold, and nationality still less. A terrible right, you say, regicidal right, in which we hesitate to recognize a form of justice. Eh! no; no vain sensibility. Remember that the death of the State does not lead to that of the citizens, and that there is no worse condition for them than a crumbling State, torn by factions. When the homeland is resistant to liberty, when public sovereignty is in contradiction with that of the citizen, nationality becomes an opprobrium, and regeneration by an outside force a necessity....

A few words only about civil right and economic right.

Civil right is made up of the ensemble of rights of man and of citizen: right of family, rights of property, of inheritance, of labor, or exchange, or habitation, etc., which are all placed under the protection of the public authority, subordinated to the public interest, and have their sanction in the right of force.

Property, for example, as it tends more and more to be legitimated by labor and by the just relation between land-rent, interest on capital and wages, does not come down less obviously to the right of force, founded as it is originally on the right of first occupation or conquest, and subordinated the condition, by the proprietor, to exploit in that of good father, to the better of the interests of his family and the State. If a proprietor, said Napoleon I, could not cultivate or make cultivated his lands, if he left them wild and abandoned them, I will repossess them by authority and give them to the most capable and best deserving. Whoever cannot exploit, thought the conqueror, is not worthy to possess; in other words, whoever has no force has no right. Such is, indeed, the principle for property in land. It is also only by a subsequent convention, a kind of legal fiction, supported by the State, that the proprietor can possess nominally and exploit by the intermediary of a tenant farmer. The nature of right, like that of things, does not allow that abstract property; society makes effort against it; and every day we see property fall again from the hand of the rentier into those of the cultivator.

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Thus, from citizen to citizen, from family to family, from corporation to corporation, from society to society, is transformed, by the mutuality of guarantees, the right of force. It is necessary, in some way, to uncover it in order to make it reappear. It is no longer sense except now and then, in an indirect manner, in the work for hire contract, in the sponsorship, etc., where the superiority force, of labor, of capital, of industry, leads to the superiority of wages. As if force, animal thing, disgraced intelligent and free humanity, the legislator disguises it as much as possible; one says that, reached to that height, he judges the right of force as little worthy of the well brought up man as wrestling and boxing. It is the fleur-de-lis which renounced the bulb from which it has come. But that which seems improper to the citizen is glorious to the prince. The right of force is the prerogative of sovereignty, the symbol of justice. In this regard, forbidden to anyone to claim it and to take advantage of it: Be careful if you touch it! Under the feudal system, the right of force had been confiscated only in part; part was left to the baron, who, by virtue of that right of force, also enjoyed the right of war and the right of justice. The Revolution has completed the work begun by the kings by imposing an eternal silence on feudal quarrels, and by putting, under the relation of the right of force, the great feudal lords on a level with their serfs.

Moreover, in the same civil order, the right of force is far from having said its last word. It alone can end the debate raised some years ago between the class called the bourgeoisie which will go ... and the working and salaried class which comes always. It matters little if that will be by a battle or by consent to a constitution: it is necessary that the regime of labor, of credit and of commerce, change; that wages and value, which are the freest in the world, come to police themselves. Certainly, one will not deny that muscular force be happier and more dignified before justice than the metal which serves as an intermediary in exchange; labor more honorable than traffic, lending and agio; the working masses, preserved by labor and frugality, more moral than the parasitism which exploits them. Force, and right with it, are to the arms, to labor, to the masses; yet, neither the arms, nor labor, nor the masses, have their account.

It is when the citizens, making an assessment of their interests as laborers, and comparing those with the interests of the privileged, of entrepreneurs and capitalists, will have recognized the superiority of the first to the second; when the petit bourgeois, small proprietor, the small

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industrialist, like the peasant, the clerk and the laborer, will find that they have more to gain by work than by rent and agio; it is then that the people, the industrial democracy, will destroy, in the name of right of force, synonym of the right of labor, synonym of the right of intelligence, la suzerainty or money, will balance rent and tax, will restore property to its just limit, change the relations of labor and capital, and will create, as the crowning of the edifice, economic right. And that will be justice; force, once more, will make right.

If, now, from the point of view of force, so new in jurisprudence, we consider the development of right in its principle categories, we discover there a series or that would have filled with joy the heart of Fourier:

1. Right of force;
2. Right of war;
3. Right of peoples;
4. Political right;
5. Civil or domestic right;
6. Economic right, which subdivides into two branches, like the things that it represents, labor and exchange;
7. Philosophical right, or right of free thought;
8. RIGHT OF LIBERTY, or humanity, formed by war, by politics, by institutions, by labor and commerce, by the sciences and the arts, is no longer governed by anything but pure liberty, under the single law of reason.

In that gamut of rights, force makes the bass note, and liberty is the octave. The dominant varies according to the character of the race and the degree of civilization: patriarchal or family right among the nomads; right of property, or landed patricians, among the ancient Romans; right of labor, in the industrial towns of the Middle Ages, in Italy and Flanders; mercantile right at Tyr, Carthage, Athens, Corinth, Marseille, and in modern England.

The tendency is for pure liberty to become the synonym of pure right: it is the ideal of civilization, the most elevated expression of force.

CONCLUSION

We said in the first book:

War animates society. Its thought, its influence, are present everywhere. It is war which has given the impetus and the form to all our powers, to religion, to justice, to philosophy, to the liberal and the useful arts. War has

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made society what it is, to such an extent that, if one left aside war, from his ideas and his work, one could no longer imagine what civilization would be, what the human race would be.

These propositions, broadly presented, although in a small number of pages, have acquire in this second book, a mean serious in other ways. In discovering that war contains a moral element; that it implies, in its notion, in its motives and its aim, an idea of right; that this it resolves into a veritable judiciary mandate; that such is the opinion of all people, the intimate faith of the human race; we have understood the key to that mysterious and gigantic phenomenon and the more that formidable apparition had seemed to us hitherto to swallow our species, the more we have sensed that it suddenly lifted us up.

Thus all of our efforts have tended to determine, in a precise manner, that moral element. For that, we have had to triumph over the universal disapproval of the authors, in the eyes of whom war is purely and simply an evil, not to say the evil, and the right of force the negation of all right and all justice. We have demonstrated that on that hypothesis, inherent in the idea of war, of the reality of a right and the legitimacy of a jurisdiction of force, all the authors, jurists and publicists, philosophers and poets, divide radically, and unanimously, from the faith of nations. Those who have recourse to force, as a necessary sanction of right, do it only unwillingly, by invoking a principle foreign to right, the principle of utility, or by implying that justice having its sanction, like its principle, only in God, humanity being fallen, the sanction of force is the sign of our meanness and the instrument of our punishment. The right of force, they all say, is not a right; it is the negation of right. From which it results, if the authors speak true, that war had in its turn nothing juridical, to which they willingly agreed; but also, which they have not realized, that the right of peoples would be a vain phrase, political right a fiction, and, finally, civil and economic right conventions without guaranties as without principles.

An opposition so marked between universal sentiment and the authority of the school, the disastrous consequences entailed by the theory of the jurists, as much for the certainty of principles as for the conduct of societies, demand that we take up again at its base the examination of the problem. Now, the result of that examination has been, contrary to the talk of the school, but in agreement with the belief of the nations, in accord with the hopes that have given rise in us to that grandiose phenomenology of

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war, that as much as it is certain that justice is a real faculty and positive of man, so much is it true that there exists a real and positive right of force; that that right is subject to the same conditions of reciprocity as the others; that it has, like all others, its specialty, and consequently its limits, its competence and its incompetence; that its most ordinary application, since the formation of the first societies, takes place between States, whether it acts for their formation and enlargement, or for their division and their balancing; finally, that war is the form of action of the right of force, since it along has for aim, in the determined cases, to pursue the claim of the prerogatives of force, by rendering, through combat, force itself manifest. Like the right of property and the right of labor, like the right of intelligence and that of love, the right of force is one of the rights of man and of the citizen, the first of all in the order manifestation; only, by the effect of the social, the citizen is delivered into the hands of the prince, who alone finds himself invested, in the name of all, with the right of war and the right of justice.

The right of force, hence that of war, once recognized as real rights, restored in legislation and in science, the deduction of other rights no longer poses the least difficulty. The right of peoples aims to legalize, so to speak, war; to predict and to regulate its effects, if need be to prevent it, by defining in advance the relations of powers and their prerogatives. Political right rises from the substitution of a public force, acting for all, by force scattered to individuals. Civil right and economic right have for their point of departure the equality of persons before the law, and the mutual recognition of all the rights which can result from their respective attributes and from the free exercise of their faculties, as these attributes and faculties serve in the deployment of their forces.

All is then soon perfectly coordinated; everything is in order, everything holds, follows and makes a body. We have a principle, a base of operations, a perspective, an aim and a method. No more schism either in the home or in society; force and right, mind and matter, war and peace, are based on a homogeneous and indissoluble thought.

We know now what causes the enthusiasm of nations for battles. We can say by what mystery religion and war are two expressions, one in the real and the other in the ideal, of one single nature and law; why the thought of war breathes in all poetry and all love, as in all politics and all justice; how it has come to be that the virile ideal, among all peoples, is a composite of

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magistrate, priest and warrior; how it comes, finally, when societies are corrupted by a long jouissance, that they are regenerated by war. It is that, as we presented it at the beginning of the first book, there exists in war a moral element; it is that war is the upholder of the law, and of all the forms of justice the most sublime, the most incorruptible, the most solemn.

It remains to see at present in what manner war, which seems to us so normal, so glorious, so fruitful, fulfills its mandate; how it behaves in its summons, in its enforcements, let us say the word, in its proceedings; how far extends its remit, its competence; what is the value of its judgments; what guarantee of its justice does it offer to the nations; in what abuses it can fall through the immoderate use of force, and what consequences can result, for the universal order, from its prevarications. For we still possess only half the truth; after having found the principle of the sublimities of war, it remains for us to discover the reason for its horrors.

It is this that we propose to investigate in the next book.

TRANSLATION: Shawn P. Wilbur

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Email shawn@corvusdistribution if you would like to get involved.

Aside from a lot of material by Proudhon that was done for the upcoming anthology, the Collective Reason crew has been working on writings by some of the earliest anarchist figures. A couple of translations of Anselme Bellegarrigue's work are in the final stages, and here are a pair of translations of Joseph Dejacque.

**TO THE
CI-DEVANT DYNASTICS**

**TO THE TARTUFFES OF THE PEOPLE
AND OF LIBERTY.**

March 1848.

Like a stone in the hands of a vigorous Alcide
Crosses far off the space where revolt guides it;
That I can't do the same, pains me to my heart,
To make my verse bound at the brow of the impostor,
With the stone of my hate to bloody his face;
And, eyes blazing with an ardent menace,
Like a phantom wandering in the night of complots,
With my civic torch to light up the battlefield;
And with my breath finally, like a lightning-bolt of flame,
To pulverize with a blow their vile politics!

Ah! you preach war, O Girondist bastards!
You come to be an insult to the work of the Montagnards
In the trough of scorn when our just angers
Leave to stagnate in peace your unpopular names
When on so many crimes young liberty
Casts the great mantle of fraternity;
And, from the height of power, when our Republic,
That child of Heaven, of the political code
Wipes away with its hand the torture of death.
You regain courage and forget remorse;
You believe that the people, forgetful of your crimes,
No longer have a pillory to avenge the victims,
That the moment has come, tartuffes of July,
To try anew your argot de banquet;

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That of Ledru-Rollin the noble circular
Can under your venom, that viper's weapon,
Serve to give birth still to Scipios!
—Miserable man-servants of your own ambitions,
We see you each day by your polemic
Seek to disunite from our Republic
The best citizens, the glorious tribunes.
You praise these, you pet these ones,
You play at terror, alarm with the others.
—Disciples of the past, of egoism apostles,
No, you have at heart no generous impulse.
And more than the likes of Guizot, you are the lepers;
Of the liberal poison, gangrenous to the very soul,
You still preserve the moth-eaten program?
And, bourgeois by nature and by instinct bourgeois,
You have learned nothing of the lessons of the past,
Listen!... And look, men of the prison and the rope,
If you want from us war or mercy;
As in '89 a solemn oath
In February last, mounted up to Heaven.
On the bloody cobblestones the great public voice
Has proclaimed this: France as a Republic!
What it proclaimed to the echoes of Paris,
It is not a vain word: the people have understood it.
What they want from now on, they whom hunger racks,
It is bread, a shelter for the one who labors;
It is labor for all, for all liberty;
It is government of brotherhood;
It is equal rights, and common responsibilities,
Light for the arms, heavy for the fortunes;
It is that each of us, artisans from necessity,
Be honored for themselves, for what they can bring,
And not for their gold, their idle opulence;
What it wants, and wants very much! is that at the heart of France
All those vile apostates tremble at its very name,
And that they seek in the shadows forgetfulness, grace and pardon.
Now, it is good that one knows and remembers it

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That if in the *Assembly* there proved to be certain
Judaic figure, object of our clamors,
These Thiers and these Barrots, political jugglers,
It could happen, as in 93,
That the terror goes out from its bed of fournaise;
That for people of blue the stormy horizon
With its lightning in wrath strikes the treason.
We do not want it. We think that the pikes
Much less than the iron collars serve the republics.
That is why, each day, to the post of scorn
We will fasten your names, jesuitical bandits;
It is in order to avoid bloody justices
That we unveil your crimes and your vices;
Certain that it only needs a moral gibbet
In order to stifle in you the power of evil.

People, my voice is bitter, and my heart alone inspires me;
But the lyre always supported satire.
By it sustained, I want on every road
To flog our felons with my fiber of bronze;
As well as the remorse at the bedside of the alcoves,
I want, but at the great day dragging their tawny face,
Like a prison brand emerging from the inferno,
To imprint on their flesh my ferule of steel;
On the infamous stand where my pen counts them.
To make flow all and all their shame,
And to pull on the rack with their rags
Their names and their honor torn to bits;
And, as in the last days the supreme judgments,
Make to thunder on them vengeful anathemas!
Let! as formerly the strength to Samson
God give to my voice the resonant diapason;
And with our Philistines, like the ancient Hercules,
Bury me, if necessary, under their last portico!

Joseph DÉJACQUE.

TRANSLATION: Shawn P. Wilbur

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The Theory of Infinitesimal Humanities or System of Four Gradations

If my ignorance of many sciences is not an insurmountable obstacle to what I contemplate, I will attempt some day to develop more completely a theory which is only in germ in the preceding article (and which is not without analogy to the “Series” of Fourier and the “Triad” of Leroux, but more rational, I think.) It is the theory of “Infinitesimal Humanities” or the application, to all the beings in universality and to the universality of all beings, of the system of the three kingdoms (mineral, vegetable, animal), crowned by the fourth, the hominal, or perfectible essence of every organism, conducting agent which makes the transit from a body of an inferior species to another body of a superior species, a sort of intermediary which puts them in direct communication, and establishes exchange between them: the body of the lower species delivering to the body of higher species that which it has of the more “hominalized” and receiving in compensation what the other has of the less hominalized, or, to put it another way, more “mineralized.” – Any physical or moral sensation is the result of a contact – a shock or kiss that relates what is most pure in the lower with what is most impure among the higher – the circulation thus propagating from organism to organism and from sphere to sphere, from attraction to attraction, via the four gradations, differently and universally manifested. This system must be given a geometrical figure that I would represent in the form of a cubed triangle whose three points on the base correspond, one to minerality, the other to vegetality, and the third to animality, and the culmination, the peak of the pyramid, to hominality.

If the discovery of this law is true in relation to humans, as everything demonstrates to me, the law must be universal and be found again in the infinitely small as in the infinitely great. It is applicable to all that exists. It is an instrument that can be used to penetrate deeper into the immensities of the Unknown. Undoubtedly, this is not all, this is a key, and there is more than one door to open, more than one mystery to explore. But the key can put [us] on the road, it can clear the way to sudden clarities, and within the darkness, bring light!

... Yes, but this key, what would I make of it, myself, intelligence crippled, afflicted with paralysis and blindness, I who cannot except by trembling, by groping? ... The key ... The darkness ... Ah! Always the mantle of Alexander over the eyes of Diogenes, always a cloud between Poverty and Science, always Privilege!...

Ignorance! Ignorance! ... station of my sun!!!

Joseph DÉJACQUE.

TRANSLATION: Shawn P. Wilbur & Jesse Cohn

TWO-GUN MUTUALISM & THE GOLDEN RULE

DOCUMENTS FROM THE

HISTORY OF MUTUALISM:

EQUITABLE COMMERCE;

OR,

ASSOCIATION WITHOUT COMBINATION.

BY MARIA & THOMAS VARNEY

Having had the experience for the last two and a half years, in a community of common property, which has been a school of observation to me, and which was entered into at first as an experiment, I propose to give the result of this experiment, at least upon my own mind. The final result may be given in a few words—the idea of combination in any form is fully exploded;—and I think I now see clearly the rock on which all combinations of interest must split.

Amid the universal confusion—the breaking up of old philosophies and systems—the uncertainty of the thousand new theories—the constant revolutions and general chaos—I have no wish to establish a set of opinions,—saying to myself, “thus far shalt thou go, and no farther;” but would always be open to reason and conviction, being responsible neither for the sentiments of yesterday nor to-morrow—neither abiding by way-marks for the future, nor squaring present thoughts to yesterday’s constitution. In an article published in the first number of the *Communitist*, I said,—“We bind ourselves to no new set of opinions; what are our sentiments to-day, may not be our sentiments to-morrow.” I find myself to-day embracing the same feeling, although some of my opinions are very much changed. Amid this universe of change, I covet not that individual’s lot who boasts that he changes not. If such boasting be true, it is a most certain evidence, either of invincible stupidity, or hopeless bigotry. There are very few things indeed which we really know to be true. The principle of philosophical necessity comes as near certainty in our minds, as, perhaps, any one of the abstract theories now preached.

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I have believed, most thoroughly and ardently, that a union of interests was to be the grand panacea for all the woes of civilization. I now think the opposite of this: to wit, entire isolation will bring about the desired result. Every since commencing the community life, there have been a thousand inconveniences and jarring, which a determination that the experiment should succeed caused me to overlook, or to attribute to other causes than a defect in the principle: such, for instance, as the infancy and inexperience of the institutions; its great poverty, or bad management. Such things seemed to account for the difficulties for the time being, all of which evils I looked to time to remove. But, alas! for hopes and anticipations, and exertions expended upon a combination of interests! They are in vain, except as experiments to prove themselves false in principle. And here I will attempt to give a sort of synopsis of the defects in the principle of combination.

Laboring men find themselves constantly more and more oppressed. They have toiled century after century, with the iron of oppression drinking still deeper and deeper in to their heart's core, without knowing the cause of their sufferings. Every labor-saving machine that makes its appearance in society, inflicts a new wound upon their already lacerated spirits. They look around, and on every side behold their equal brother living in splendor and idleness. They are the producers, and their idle neighbors the consumers. They groan in spirit, but see no remedy. Every vessel from the heaving ocean, and every steam car that comes puffing through the land, are but signs to them that their ears are to be stunned with the report of the invention of some new labor-saving machine, which is to shorten their scanty pittance, lengthen out their hours or dreary toil, or throw them out of the means of living altogether. Looking upon society with its poverty and abundance, and with its inequalities of every kind—with its antagonisms, its cannibal or clashing interests, and a constant tendency to a worse condition—they concluded that isolated interests must necessarily clash,—and that there could be no way to make those interests cooperate without combining them. They therefore threw all together in one pile, hoping thereby to obtain relief from their miseries and wrongs. This they have attempted in several instances, in all of which they have failed, or will fail. I am aware that a thousand excuses for these failures may be urged: such, for instance, as poverty and bad management; and Heaven knows that in some instances there two were sufficient in themselves. But there lies an evil back of these, that works the same in all: it is a defect in the principle.

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We will just examine the workings of them; for they all have the same difficulties, as nearly as I have been informed.

These communities are generally made up of the honest laboring poor, and the devoted philanthropist. Hence, therefore, they have the very best material in society. They come together with enthusiasm, believing they have finally discovered the remedy for all the woes that affect the human family; that which is to restore their inalienable rights, a perfect equality, not only of possession, but of all that goes to make up life. For a while, this enthusiasm to accomplish the object makes every one yielding, and ready to submit to any inconvenience. The object to be attained is so absorbing in its nature that no sacrifice seems too great for its accomplishment. They can endure any fatigue, can labor under the scorching rays of a July sun, or in the Iceland breezes of a stout north-wester. From the refined circles of warm-hearted friends, they are willing to go into the rough-and-tumble of a pioneer life, amid all sorts of people, with all sorts of habits, and under all sorts of circumstances. Indeed, while their faith lasts in the enterprise, it may be said of them as of the Indians,—“they shrink from no danger, and they fear no hardship.” From wishing and determining that they will succeed, they are made to believe that they certainly shall succeed. Sometimes, even in their very worst state, their extreme desire to succeed throws a veil over the real facts in the case, and they blindly suppose they are sailing along nicely, under auspicious skies. This is just as likely to be the case on the very eve of dissolution as at any other time.

They come together with their hundred different organizations, educations, and interests; they have been in the habit of managing each their own interest separately. Now that it is combined it still must be managed. What is to be done? They have come together with the idea of the largest liberty. Their natural feelings of independence are aroused—they have no idea of being ground! each man must have his say, for all are equal, and equally interested. Of course, they must be democratic in their business. To this end, when any kind of business is to be transacted, all must be called together to talk the matter over; which generally ends, either with talk, or with adopting some one’s proposition, by which every other man was obliged to yield his opinion of what was best. In this way they jog along, every thing being every one’s business and no one’s care. After awhile they find this won’t do; they must have some system, for they find that combined interests must have some system, for they find that combined interests want managing as much as isolated interests. Well, they

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get up system after system, and constitution after constitution; but all amounts to nothing. After a long experience in this way, legislating, legislating! LEGISLATING!!—squandering property, alienating friends, and souring their own tempers,—after warring and struggling along in this way, trying by all that lies in their power to preserve their independence, they begin to see that it will not go; they must yield up their liberty, or go to destruction at once. They yield;—they select one man to govern ALL the interests, physical and mental, of some hundreds of different organizations. Of course, there must be two parties; the majority rules, and the man is selected for the office while a large minority think him unfit; perhaps they think he lacks skill in business; perhaps they doubt his honesty; or whatever be his faults, they are dissatisfied, and deeply so, for it is ALL of their interests that is committed to his charge. He knows their minds by their votes, and, consequently, a repulsive atmosphere is created, suspicion is busy in imagining faults, until those who, a few days before, were moral heroes, become selfish and cowardly persons, and this repulsion continues until the atmosphere becomes unbearable, and the disaffected party leaves, or they spread their disaffection in the ranks until they become the majority:—then the head man must be changed, and the other party becomes disaffected, and leave, perhaps one by one, until there are not enough left to sing the funeral requiem. Still, so intent are they on carrying out their object, and so sure are they that they are on the right road to felicity, that amid all these, and thousand other difficulties, they never once suspect that they arise from any defect in principle. Having the advantage of association, their social nature is gratified, and they therefore conclude that the whole matter must be right,—not once thinking it possible to obtain these social advantages by other means. Some who are thus associated have been unfortunate in business, either through a lack of worldly tact, or from excessive benevolence: these hate the very name of business; the idea of trade is horrible to them. But they find themselves still in a wrong position. What is the matter? I cannot better answer this question than by introducing a plan of society proposed by Mr. JOSIAH WARREN, of New Harmony, Indiana. I shall not expect to do this subject justice, both on account of its complexity and my want of thorough acquaintance with it. I very much fear to speak of it at all in the brief manner I shall be compelled to do, lest some will get a very indefinite idea of it, and therefore misunderstand the whole subject.

MARIA L. VARNEY.

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II.

Mr. Warren proposes just the opposite of combination, to wit: a perfect isolation of interests, which shall still cooperate. His first proposition is:—

COMPLETE INDIVIDUALITY OF ALL INTERESTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—Nothing can be more clear than that, as we all have different organizations and educations, we must have different likes and dislikes—one will necessarily be pleased with that which displeases another. And if their interests are combined, and managed by one individual, the rest must all the while be yielding their judgment, their taste; and this is unnatural. One is made happy by the very means which makes another unhappy. This is a necessary consequence of combination. Yet we are social beings, and like to live in a social capacity. Now what does our nature demand? Just this:—Association without Combination; or in other words, Isolated, Cooperating interests. Every one naturally feels that what he produces, being the expenditure of his own vital stamina, a part of himself, belongs to him, and to no one else. We feel that we belong to ourselves, individually—that we have an equal right in the natural wealth of the earth;—and hence, when our vital energy is expended in bringing some of this natural wealth into form, it is still our own. His second proposition is:—

THE PRESERVATION, AT ALL TIMES, OF INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY.—This proposition is, in reality, included in the first, that of “strict individuality of all interests and responsibilities.” Civilized man has been governed to death; and as he progresses, and comes to a better understanding of his own nature, the tendency is directly and invariably, to throw off the restraints of government. For, brutalized as low as he has ever been, his nature has ever told him it was wrong to submit to be governed by another. If the present era is peculiar for any one thing more than for its confusion, it is for the tendency every where to throw off the restraints of government. The progress of knowledge is directly favorable to this result; hence, one of the first thoughts, in coming into these combinations is, to avoid all government. The very name is opprobrious—they can put up with any inconvenience, but they must have no government:—and hence they struggle on, as I have shown in the first part of this articles—striving every way to avoid it, and at the same time entirely overlooking the cause of all government. Here is a thought worthy to be

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treasured by all who are seeking for a better social state—All governments originate in amalgamated interests.

When men's interests become entirely disunited, governments will have nothing to do. But how is it in a community of interests? State, counties, town, &c., require laws, because a part of men's interests are united. But when their interests are ALL united, as in community, "the very maximum of government is required." It is perfectly plain, that if we keep our interests entirely separate, we are left the only sovereign of our own person, time, and property; and this we cannot be if our interests are at all combined;—for an individual who governs my time and property, governs me. Hence no union of interests can take place without the sacrifice of individual liberty;—not even the partnership of two persons, for in this case, the one or the other is compelled to yield his opinions constantly—and every one feels this to be an unnatural position. It is the nature of man to be independent; his thirst for liberty is, perhaps, the strongest feeling of his nature. What has not been accomplished with the name of liberty fastened to a banner? and yet all is but for the name. For LIBERTY has no existence in any institution in the world. She lives only in name; and why? It is because man's interests are combined more or less in every form of society. The solitary hermit alone can say,

"My right there is none to dispute."

Then he, having his entire liberty, find he has a social nature that demands gratification. He finds that, as he cannot produce of every kind, it is very convenient to have neighbors to exchange his products with; and if he does this, it becomes absolutely necessary that they have some standard by which to estimate their labor. In this case, what would naturally be the first thought? He would say at once,—give me as much of your labor as I have put in my article. Hence Mr. Warren's third proposition:—

COST, THE LIMIT OF PRICE.—This needs but to be stated for every one to see and acknowledge its justice. Yet in society as now constituted, this principle is totally disregarded. The price which an article will fetch, becomes the standard of right. This opens a field for wholesale swindling. If a man discovers that his neighbor's wheat crops are cut off, he buys up all the wheat in that region, and then, taking advantage of his neighbor's necessities, he puts the price up just as high as he thinks will possibly be borne by those who are suffering for want of the wheat. This is but a specimen of every other transaction of trade, under this principle of charging for an article whatever it will fetch, without any regard to the cost

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of producing it. To carry out the principle, one might charge his famishing neighbor the services of his whole life for a single meal! It is no matter of how much real value the article which I produce is to my neighbor; all that I have any right to charge, is the amount of labor I have expended in producing it, added to the cost of the raw material. For instance,—if a certain kind of shoes costs ten hours of labor, and a hat costs twenty hours of equally disagreeable labor, then it is plain that two pairs of shoes should be exchanged for a hat, provided that the raw material in both cases costs the same. Each one is to be his own judge of the cost of his own labor per hour, compared with the production of some article to which all look as a standard or yard-stick, to measure the cost of their own labor. The production of wheat, for instance, might be regarded as one; in the same way that the chemist regards water in weighing liquors and metals. Every one is left free to make his own estimate; and if he estimate above the real cost, competition is in favor of his honest neighbor; hence competition, under this principle, compels men to be honest. By this means of labor-exchange, all opportunity for speculation is cut off, and the laborer gets the products of his own labor. How is it in society now? Does the laborer get what he produces? For otherwise. What is wealth? It is the product of labor—nothing more nor less. Whence comes all the wealth of the millionaire? If the laborers got what they produce, he would be left to starve. Who, then, produces all the wealth we now see squandered by the thousand idlers of our cities and villages? Why, the laboring men and women—the mechanic, the farmer, the seamstress, who have themselves but a bare pittance of what they produce. What would be the consequence of exchanging labor for labor? Why, every man and woman would get what they produce, and every working class would become very wealthy, provided they worked as much as they now do; while the idlers would got to work, or starve. We can just suppose the effect, by taking all the wealth of our cities, and dividing among the producers only, leaving the present owners without a copper that they did not produce.

Again: the greatest pecuniary advantage, perhaps, would arise from the use of labor-saving machinery. At present, this lever which is to overturn the world, is in the hands of a few capitalists, and made to play directly against the interest of the laborer. There is, without doubt, sufficient labor-saving machinery to produce all the comforts and luxuries of life to all the inhabitants thereof, provided every individual worked three hours at some useful employment every day. Franklin estimated it at four hours; but there

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has been labor-saving machinery enough introduced since his time to reduce it to, at least, three hours. Now, with the experience which I have had, in these glorious realms of terrestrial bliss, as pictured on paper, I would be satisfied to adopt any system which would actually throw the control of machinery into the hands of the masses, and still preserve individual freedom. Any system that will do this, will revolutionize society. Mr. Warren's system proposes this; for the man who works the machine gets pay only for his own labor, and wear of the machinery, added to the cost of the time of inventing. So that the man who invents a machine that will make fifty pairs of shoes in the time that it now takes to make one pair, will make shoes forty-nine-fiftieths cheaper to all with whom he deals. Hence, it becomes the direct advantage of all that machinery is invented, as it works for them, instead of against them, as now. At present, it is the greatest curse the laborer has to fear. Mr. Warren's third [fourth] proposition is:—

A CIRCULATING MEDIUM, OR LABOR NOTE.—What is the use of a circulating medium? Chiefly to “represent the difference in unequal exchanges of property.” For instance: I exchange a table for a bureau; the bureau costs more than the table; then it is convenient to have a labor note, which shall represent as much labor as the cost of the bureau exceeds that of the table; so that the table and the article which it will bring, will equal the cost of the bureau. Then the exchange is equal. Money, as a circulating medium, has no value. To-day, a dollar represents a bushel of grain—to-morrow, it represents but half a bushel; consequently it cannot be depended upon. A poor laborer, whose family depend upon his daily earnings for subsistence, cannot know how much money he ought to demand for his labor; for to-day his fifty cents buys him a half-bushel of wheat—to-morrow it will purchase but a peck, although he has performed the same amount of labor. It is clear, as before stated, that money has no value as a circulating medium. We must, therefore, adopt some medium which will always represent a certain quantity of labor, or produce, and which can be depended upon. The medium proposed is, that of each man's issuing his labor notes, payable on demand—each note representing a certain number of hours or minutes of labor, at a certain rate per hour. The fifth and last proposition is:—

ADAPTING THE SUPPLY TO THE DEMAND, IN ALL THINGS.—The difficulties arising from the entire neglect of this principle in common society are immense. Hence the rise and fall in the market—at one time lean

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and destitute—at another glutted and running over; and at all time as unstable as the waves of the ocean. The only remedy for this is regulating the supply to the demand. This can be done in a self-supporting village, by having hung in some public place, a roll, on which each individual writes down what he has for market, under the column headed SUPPLY, and what he wishes in return, under the column headed DEMAND. On looking over the list of supplies, one sees advertised, with the name and address of the owner, an article which he wishes to secure. He knows where to go for what he wishes, but perhaps he wants an article he does not see advertised: he then writes down his demand, and another neighbor seeing it, and having the article to spare, immediately advertises, and then the former knows at once where his demand can be supplied. We will suppose he wants ten bushels of wheat; he turns to the column of demand and writes the number of bushels of wheat of a certain quality that he wishes to purchase, with his name and address; his neighbor seeing this demand, and having the wheat on hand, knows just where to find a market for it.

In the foregoing I have attempted some first idea of the principles which Mr. Warren proposes to introduce, by commencing a “Self-Supporting Village,” which may be called a village of equity. I have much fear that in this brief way of speaking of these principles, they will be misunderstood or misapplied. If I have failed to give them correctly, I have at least given them as I understand them. The very nature of man seem to demand some such principles as the above named. His individuality and sovereignty are necessary to him as a whole human being. In this plan they are preserved to him. Making cost the limit of price, is going back to first principles of equity, when men must have first commenced to exchange with one another. It is in fact reducing the land to common property, no interest or usury being paid by the cultivator. Man has a social nature, which calls for gratification. This plan proposes to him all the advantages of combination without any of its disadvantages, by isolated cooperating interests; and will eventually reduce labor to a mere pastime. When this is the case, as there is no cost, there will be no price; and therefore the results are the same as those anticipated by Communities and Associations—the only difference being that they begin at the wrong end of the matter; they undertake a community of property at first, whereas, they should begin with individual interest.

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In a future number of the Investigator, these principles will be illustrated by showing their application to society. A periodical, principally devoted to this subject, will soon be published.

MARIA L. VARNEY.

III.

Perhaps there is no subject which more deeply interests mankind than those of the re-organization of the social system. That some thing of the kind is necessary, no argument is required to convince any one. We have only to look about us—on every hand we behold the most utter destitution and squalid want, in the very midst of every thing that could be designed to make man happy. On the one hand, we behold the idle, non-producing drone, rolling in wealth and luxury—on the other hand, hundreds of hard working, industrious poor, suffering for the absolute necessaries of life. No wonder that man should begin to inquire into the causes of all this—no wonder that a general feeling of dissatisfaction should every where pervade the human mind. That our present social system is the offspring of ignorance, and that it will be changed for a better as soon as knowledge shows to mankind what the better system is, no one can doubt. Many theories for reforming society have already been given to the world, and many experiments have been tried; but as yet, none have succeeded, nor are they like to succeed—and it is quite evident that all plans as yet proposed are impracticable, as a means of reforming society;—they are evidently not founded in the true laws of our nature, and, of course, contain within themselves the seeds of their own destruction.

Yet, after the great amount of intellect and talent which has been expended in the solution of the social problem, it would look presumptuous in any one to assert that he had solved this great problem. It is doubtless true, that any theory will have but little effect on the public mind, unless accompanied with a practical experiment, which shall illustrate and prove to the world the practicability of such theory. This will account for the reason that the subject of “Equitable Commerce”—on which an article recently appeared in this paper, has not been given to the world ere this:—the author, Mr. J. WARREN, felt that mere theory without practical proof, would amount to little or nothing.

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But as an experiment will soon be commenced, it may not be improper to give to the public all the information that it is possible to give on the subject without practical illustration. The proposition of Mr. Warren, which lies at the foundation of his system, is in direct opposition to all theories for reforming society by means of combination, or united interests. He says, "Strict Individuality must be preserved in all cases," as "no two minds are formed alike," of course, any system, when it becomes necessary for all to think alike, must be impracticable. In the words of Mr. Warren, "Society, to be harmonious, must be so formed, that every individual shall be supreme sovereign of his or her Person, Time, and Property."

That this proposition is founded in truth and justice, needs no very lengthy argument to prove, or deep reflection to convince any one. We have but to appeal to our own feelings to satisfy ourselves, whether we naturally prefer to be our own sovereign, or to yield ourselves to the management of some one else. Again: it will be perceived, that if this proposition can be carried out, poverty will disappear—no idle drones can live on the labor of the industrious. But that all may realize and enjoy their rights, as set forth in this proposition, a principle of action must be drawn from it, but which to regulate our necessary transactions of business, or exchange of commodities, "Cost must be the limit of Price"—or, in other words, Labor shall always be given for equal amounts of labor.

It will be perceived that this is a deduction from the first proposition: for it a man is supreme sovereign of his own property, or the product of his own labor, it is evident that in exchanging it for the product of another, the only just mode is, labor for equal amounts of labor. It is universally admitted by all political economists, that there is no wealth but labor or its products, (except natural wealth, to which every human being evidently has an equal right;—)hence it follows, that those who perform the greatest amount of labor, produce the greatest amount of wealth; and society will never be right until it secures to every individual the products of his labor.

In regulating our exchanges by this true proposition of Mr. Warren, we shall evidently bring about the desired result:—for it A wishes to exchange an article with B that cost ten hours' labor, he demands the same amount of equally disagreeable labor of B, and why should he not have it?—I should like to have some lawyer tell me why. To prove the above propositions requires no argument: they are self-evident, and must be readily admitted by any one. But to proceed: it will be seen that to facilitate our exchanges, a circulating medium is necessary; for instance,—suppose A is a hatter—he

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wishes to procure an article produced by B—he gives B a hat, and receives an article of equal cost. B does not want the hat for his own use; he exchanges it with C for its cost in some article of C's production; C keeps the hat for his own use, and the exchange is at an end,—all parties have their rights, and all have been accommodated. But this would be inconvenient and impracticable, for many articles could not be transferred from hand to hand;—hence it become necessary to have a representative of property. and here comes in Mr. Warren's fourth proposition,—”A Circulating Medium, representing Property according to the labor it cost.”

If every member of community could exchange the articles of his production for the articles he required, and the exchanges be equal and complete, there would be no necessity for any representative of property; but as this cannot be the case, it will be seen that the amount of the circulating medium should be in amount, “the same as the unadjusted balances;”—and that said representative of unadjusted balances should not be created by one man for another, nor by any company of men, but by the individual from whom the balance is due. If I exchange an article that cost ten hours' labor, for an article that cost thirty hours' labor, some thing is wanted to represent the twenty hours' difference. For this purpose let a note be given, printed in the manner of a bank bill, for twenty hours' labor on demand, signed by the one from who it is due. This becomes a medium of exchange, and passes from one man to another, until it is redeemed. This is, beyond a doubt, the most ingenious and philosophical plan for a circulating medium ever invented by man. It is founded on the very best bottom,—LABOR—always represents something positive, and naturally regulates itself as to amount.

The last proposition of Mr. Warren for the regulation of society, is, in all things, to “Regulate the Supply to the Demand,” That this proposition is one of great importance, must be evident to any one who has observed the workings of our present system. Let us suppose a Self-Supporting village of 500 inhabitants—it is certain there would be required a given amount of shoes, hats, clothing, etc. If a greater amount was required, it is evident it would be to the injury of the producer,—and the only rational mode would be, to first ascertain the demand, and then supply it. For this purpose, Mr. Warren proposes to have Journals kept in some public place, where each person could write their demands, and what they could supply. From self-interest people would resort to this place, and the supply would naturally regulate itself to the demand.

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Above is a brief explanation of the principles of Me. Warren for reorganizing society. The effect of these principle, in practice, will, by deep reflection, be seen previous to the experiment. I wish, however, to notice some of the results which I think must flow from them. It will be seen at a glance, that under a system of this kind, and under no other, we can live without that accursed abomination, Government;—for if we are supreme sovereign of our own person, time, and property, no Government but Self-Government should exist: the moment we yield this natural right, some one else assumes it. This right must, of necessity, be yielded, the moment we unite, combine, or amalgamate our interests. At this point, Freedom ceases, and Government and Slavery commence. Even in the simplest form, that of two persons conducting business in co-partnership—neither party is free, but must be continually yielding their opinions. If we increase the partners to any extent, it becomes impossible to do business in any way, except by the many yielding to the few. A prudent manager, agent, or leader must be appointed, who individual mind must govern the affairs of the rest. All this is the necessary result of the circumstances.

In all cases where there is Government, there is a combination of interests—where there is no combination of interests, there is no Government but Self-Government.

Had the proposed plans of Community or Association been presented to us stripped of all their ornaments and paintings,—for instance, had the inhabitants of a village who were living under the present clashing system, proposed a general co-partnership of all their citizens—proposed to combine all their interests into one general concern, in which all should be equal partners,—it is probable that the most common intellects would have foreseen that they could not succeed, from the fact that they could not agree in their views. Here has been the great mistake of social reformers: seeing that our present system of individual interest clashed in all its parts,—and seeing that cooperation was necessary to secure the greatest amount of happiness, they have vainly endeavored to bring it about by a union of interests, not perceiving that such a system contained the very seeds of discord and confusion.

The system of Mr. Warren is the very opposite extreme of combination—being founded upon the strictest individuality,—and yet it results in all the advantages anticipated from Community or Association. Let us apply these principles to society. We will begin at the first commencement of a village, and suppose a man commences farming in some suitable place to form a

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village. He is willing to exchange the products of his labor for an equal amount of the labor of any other person who produces articles which he requires; perhaps he wishes to build a house. This makes a demand for a saw-mill; a suitable person is procured to supply the demand, who is also willing to exchange on the cost principle. These two families make still further demands,—perhaps for a shoemaker and a blacksmith, which will still further increase the demand,—perhaps for a tailor, carpenter, wheelwright, &c. Perhaps by this time, there is a sufficient demand for a store, which being opened on the cost principle, necessarily draws all the surrounding neighbors there to trade from self-interest. These in their turn, exchanging the products of their labor, become in realities parties in the affair; the neighboring stores must either come down to the cost principle, or be used up. So, also, with mechanics of all kinds, farmers, lawyers, doctors, &c., &c., competition would do the work, and none could escape.

But we must not look for any magical change in human nature. We must not expect that men will become changed from extreme selfishness to extreme generosity. On the contrary, when labor shall be re-organized as capital, we must look for all kinds of schemes and devices by which to secure as much labor as possible;—hence, if we have not some moral check upon the perverted dispositions of men, we may still look for an accumulation of the capital in the hands of the more cunning. But whenever labor shall receive its rights, we have a most perfect regulator and leveller in competition. So powerful and efficient will this agent become, that the moral and virtuous class of society will have the most complete control over all designing and dishonest individuals.

Suppose a man should establish a store in one of our present villages, where there was already half a dozen stores—and that he should sell goods on the cost principle,—that is, for just the amount of money he paid for them, and an equal amount of labor for the labor expended in buying and selling? Who cannot see that competition would compel every merchant to come down to his standard? Should a mechanic adopt the same rule, and same effect would follow. In this way, a very few honest individuals could compel the whole village to come to the standard of honesty. Was society established on these principles, the average amount of labor which it took to produce an article, would soon be known through the medium of competition; and as the amount of labor required to produce an article to-day, would produce the same to-morrow, there could be no possible chance

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for a man to get an exorbitant price for an article, as the general knowledge on the subject would not allow it.

But the most beautiful feature of Mr. Warren's system consists in the fact that, notwithstanding there is no combination or union of interests, by which one is compelled to yield his individual opinions on any occasion, yet from the very nature of the circumstances, the most perfect cooperation takes place, and for the best of all reasons,—self-interest. The moment that society is established on the just and true principle of labor for labor, it becomes the interest of every one to promote the interest of his neighbor, inasmuch as that which conduces to his neighbor's interest, promotes his own. For instance: if my shoes cost me ten hours' labor per pair, it becomes my immediate interest to throw every facility in the way of the manufacturer, to enable him to make them in less time.

Again: if I were boarding at a boarding-house kept on the cost principle, I should have to pay the keeper the same amount of money that he paid out for food, and an equal amount of labor for the labor performed in cooking, &c.;—hence, it becomes my interest to inform the keeper of every cheap article of food, and to procure for him all the boarders I can, as I thereby reduce my own expenses.

By a moment's reflection, we shall easily perceive that this just principle necessarily operates through all the ramifications of society, and that it would be impossible to injure our neighbor without injuring ourselves. Again: this system most completely throws into the hands of the mass, the benefits of labor-saving machinery. If a hat cost twenty-four hours' labor, and a machine is invented by which they are produced in one hour, I, of course, get my hats for one hour's labor, instead of twenty-four, allowing something for the wear of the machinery. The capitalist will not be then, as now, the only one benefited by machinery, and that, too, at the expense of the laborer; but every member of society will be equally benefited. Of course, all will feel an equal interest in them, and this will tend to draw out all the incentive power that exists. Skill and talent of all kinds will also be drawn out through the influence of competitions. It is evident that an awkward, unskillful mechanic could not get twelve hours' labor for producing an article that one more skilful could produce in eight hours. Yet the influence of competition would only bring things to their true and natural level. Like the regulator of machinery, it only acts when the machine runs too fast or too slow.

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The idea may come in here, that those who are the least skilful may suffer by the competition of the more skilful. At first view, this appears unjust. But on reflection, we find it to be not only the strictest justice, but the strongest possible stimulant to improvement and progression; for it is evident that competition would never bring an article lower than the labor it cost an average workman to produce it:—the supply being regulated by the demand in things, it would never be necessary for a man to work under price for the sake of getting work to do. Hence, when we consider that it takes no more labor for one man to produce an article than another,—for the same number of threads drawn and pegs driven will always produce the same kind of a shoe,—of course, if a man is awkward and unskillful, and cannot produce an article in the usual time, it argues that his is in the wrong place, and others ought not to be the sufferers. But, after all, this nicety is unnecessary;—for when society is so arranged that men shall receive the whole products of their labor, the most unskillful can produce, with comparatively little exertion, all they require.

Another beautiful feature of this system is, that it puts the earth, and all natural wealth into the hands of the mass. It requires no argument to prove that the earth belongs equally to all its inhabitants; and any system of society which will redeem natural wealth and the soil for the benefit of the producers, will have, at least, one strong recommendation. It will be seen that this can be accomplished simply and effectually by Mr. Warren's theory. Suppose a man owned a farm in an "Equitable Commerce" village, where all the exchanges are made on the principle of labor for labor—what profit would his farm be to him if he did not labor? and if he did labor, he would be just as much benefited by it without a farm, as with it. It would be the same if he wished to sell it. Like the honey which the bee has laid up for the winter, it will support him until he has eaten up the amount of its cost, and no longer. Unless a man was a skilful farmer, there would be less inducement for him to cultivate his own land, even, than to labor at some other occupation. If a neighbor took me into his field to see a fine crop of grain, or into his orchard to see rich trees bending under the weight of rich fruit, I should be equally delighted with the owner, for the best of all reasons,—I should be equally interest; for the cheaper the crop, the less labor would they cost per bushel. Were the crops cut off, I should necessarily sympathize with the farmers, for I should be equally the loser.

So through all the ramifications of society, every member being just as much interested in every other department as his own, a natural

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cooperation of the most perfect kind necessarily takes place. With this universal interest and sympathy extending through all the departments of society, and binding its members together with the strong cords of self-love, those envious, jealous, and discordant feelings which now every where exist, would disappear, and in their place would arise confidence, love, and harmony. Every man being placed in a condition to exercise his inalienable rights, the right of being sovereign of his own "person, time, and property," he would naturally respect those rights in others,—and then might we see practised the golden rule, of "doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us."

THOMAS VARNEY.

SOURCE: *The Boston Investigator*. April 8, April 15, and May 6, 1846.

MUTUALISM

By DYER D. LUM.

WE often derive a coign of vantage in reviewing old scenes through the lens of a different word; though the field of vision be a familiar one, the various word-lenses we use often bring out in bolder or less relief the features of the picture. The triune formula of Hegel, used so effectively by Proudhon in his analysis of industrial relations, may here offer us such an instrument for the survey of history in the same field; for, after all, history is but the biography of the race-soul in its effort to construct a cosmos from the chaotic web of events in which it finds itself immersed. In fact, it is the ceaseless transformation and flux of social relations which create the various vestments of humanity, which we ticket in the race-wardrobe as religion, poetry, philosophy, science, politics, etc. A never-ending process which actually is “the roaring loom of time which weaves for God in the garment we see him by.”

In Hegel’s thought, which he applied to all knowledge, from the two contradictions, *is, and is not*, the “roaring loom of time” weaves for us a neutral point in *becoming*. Without accepting his ontology, his dialectical method remains a most exhaustive instrument for synthetic generalization. Nor is this neutral point by any means a compromise between opposites, for the notion returns enriched by the process, becomes the substantial union of both its terms, richer in scope and harmony. Though the writer differs widely from his logic, his method opens rich fields when applied to the philosophy of history, of which one such is my present purpose.

In the biography of the race we see this exemplified in the evolution of industrialism. From the crude, disjointed efforts of the savage, we find industrial relations marked by two opposing characterizations of human activity: the rule of personal and impersonal will. Let us briefly scan these:

1. *Slavery*, the first step towards the *solidarite* of effort, was the cradle of industry. It was in this subordination to the personal rule of others that the first lever of civilization, division of labor, lifted mankind out of the animal phase of “each scratching for himself.” Less barbarous than the

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slaughter of the captive, it made possible the development of the softer, or *human*, feelings which now are asserting mastery over the brute in man.

Excess in products became possible, and *pari passu* increased socialization. Through the first capital was born, and by this and the second slavery became modified to serfdom. But the advantage resulting rested mainly with the master. National wealth augmented, in which it is true all share somewhat, but the essential feature of this phase, personal rule, still dominated if but indirectly.

2. *Capital* supplants personal rule. It required the electric spark of the French Revolution to end the transitional agony, but since then capital has assumed a more mobile character; it has become impersonal, *in itself*, though confined yet by the leading strings of legalization to personal guidance in a large measure.

Labor has by this change become organized under capital. The essential spirit of this regime is free capital, but as it nears its maturity, to provide for the increasing surplus of labor, a surplusage dangerous to it, the economic struggle for existence finds manifestation in seeking new markets in new lands, Asia, Africa, South America. But this is but a struggle for breathing room only, and indicates that the world's activity is in another transition period; the issue being less how to doctor up a moribund system than to more clearly discern the phase toward which it leads and for which it is preparing the ground.

The rule of capital having been based, *in itself*, on freedom, it has only resulted to the benefit of those who could "corner" capital; further, that the impersonal rule of capital has too often degraded the labor it organized; that the capitalist as such is exempt from labor, and the laborer is doomed to crave as a favor the permission to use his muscles productively; all points inevitably to the conclusion that greater freedom can alone be in harmony with evolution, can meet the idea which has dominated past phases and prepared the way for each transitional change.

3. We may therefore find the third phase, the synthetic unity of the preceding ones, in *free association*, combining the necessity to labor of the first and the broader generalization of the second.

Both the personal rule of the one and the impersonal rule of the other, centered in the widened Self of social evolution, find the spirit of each materialized in mutual accord. The rivalry of excess of products and increased socialization merges self-will into the higher selfhood of interrelated humanity. And it is precisely because of this contradiction

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between the narrow self-will seen in slavery, and the broadened free-will to which capital aspires, that *free association* for mutual interests alone presents synthetic unity. Macaulay said that the remedy for the evils of capitalism will find their remedy in greater freedom to capital, which in turn preserves the economic benefit of slavery in the transformation of the egoistic self into the higher self of human interrelations.

We may again consider these phases under other terms. 1. *Authority*, the genius of the past, manifesting itself in priestcraft, statecraft, wherein "divine right" becomes personal rule entrenched in *position*. 2. *Freedom*, manifesting itself in rebellion, insubordination, the rebound to egoistic will: the negation not only of authority, but order as well. Activity, from the evils of a false cosmos, endeavoring to return to chaos, *opposition*. 3. *Mutualism*, or free association, is the synthesis wherein the race returns to enrich the union of thesis and antithesis with their harmonization in the higher self.

In other words, to use Hegel's, the formula is Position, Opposition, Composition. The *position* once entrenched in law, custom, tradition, etc., is negated by *opposition*, of which illustrations are seen on every hand; but find their *composition*, or synthesis, in the *order* which invariably follows rather than precedes progress.

As in religion the race has swung between the position of Faith, and the opposition of Doubt, Denial, so we may even now see philosophy seeking their composition in a reconciling Conviction. So in the clearer consciousness of the Greater Self, the consensus of all past activity and the Over Soul of present endeavor, the ever increasing interweaving of higher and broader thought into the warp and woof of existence, the *condition* of social life—we may already discern reason harmonizing personal and impersonal will in the richer and fuller outgrowth and ingrowth—mutual will.

Thus through the lens, *Mutualism*, we view the scene of human activity, and lo! the relations which constitute it are seen to be the same we had already grown familiar with as scanned through the lens—*Anarchy!*

Northampton, Mass.

SOURCE: *The Twentieth Century*. May 19, 1892. 7-10.

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TRANSFORMATION OF THE REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT AND THE PARLIAMENTARY POWER BY THE FEDERATIVE PRINCIPLE: COMING OF THE PEOPLE TO PROPERTY

BY
JOSEPH PERROT
1886

I speak without fear; I speak what I know, and what I believe just.

I

This small work is like the prologue or epilogue of our work entitled SOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL PROBLEM. In denying in that brochure the governmental power, we have taken care to reserve to it the power of legislation alone, thus making an agency of government; thinking that the intervention of any power in the discussion of the laws, and above all its ponderative power, was a hindrance to the advance of affairs and to the realization of progress.

What we have not said is that in a large state such as France, because of the concentration of power, universal suffrage is a rather spontaneous act, or the variable expression of some political sentiment, than a reasoned manifestation of the reforms to be accomplished. It is that idea which led us to say on page 123 that “in the spirit of the Revolution, the legislative power, in imitation of the ancient estates general, must be formed of various fractions of the labor which contribute to the production of wealth;” which will give to understand that we think to return to the vote by orders, as before 89. Such was not the basis of our thought, our intention being only to demonstrate that by the diversity of interests, presently universal suffrage was like a plebiscite, powerless to solve any question of social economy. If there was confusion or omission in the exposition of our ideas, this work is for the sole purpose of putting it right.

If, as we believe, the French nation is ripe for political and social reforms that it has still not been able to clearly define, it is that the method that must serve for their emergence and would permit their application is

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completely lacking to us; that method is not an innovation, for it exists, it is put in practice for politics, in several nations, and offers us the guarantee of experience: it is the federative principle. We hope to demonstrate that by federative politics and decentralization, the era of sterile agitations will be closed. And universal suffrage will bring the era of the powerful action of the populations, and the sovereignty of the people, which is still only a fiction, will be realized.

II

State of minds.—Critique of the political parties.

Truth is one; it is accessible to all men; and if politics divide us still, it is because it contains erroneous principles. “When Caesar came among the Gauls, he found them devoted to religions, divided between them, and given to superstitions.” If he returned today, he would find us devoted to government, divided among ourselves, and given to the authoritarian superstition,—all still waiting for a good government.

Once upon a time, the people, weary of praying and especially of hoping for its health from celestial powers, came up with the proverb: “Heaven helps those who help themselves;” which seemed much better to them than waiting. Will common sense, always so practical, soon do with government as it has done with heaven? We hope so. And if it has carried on well without the one, it will do as well without the other.

The idea that we have of politics and social economy is still so spontaneous, the reflection that enters there still so slight, that arbitrariness is the spirit which inspires all the parties, and few men know how to give an exact definition of it. Here, one claims that there is never enough liberty; there that authority is lacking everywhere.

In the name of the liberties that it calls for, the monarchical parties believe they can impose their authority on us, to govern and discipline the masses, to restore all to order, and by reason of state, to preserve their privileges. Just the same, under the banner of that liberty and in the name of human right, the communist-collectivist party claims, by imposing itself by force and violence, to decree from authority the general expropriation and to regulate all interests.

Between these two parties, there is a nation which wants the Republic and which cannot give itself to one, or go to the other. But it is varied itself

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into various fractions: intransigents, radicals and opportunists; the last of which govern the nation until a new order is established.

With the political unity and the centralization which are so dear to us, national unity is precarious⁵ and no serious progress can be realized. Indeed, do we not see all the parties of the opposition arrived at power after realizing promised reforms, condemned to retract them, shelter themselves in opportunism, and in order to sustain their power, to live only by expedients, and in their falls to disappear before the public scorn. But in the absence of principles and of necessary means, we are also condemned to raise again with one hand what we have destroyed with the other.

The legislative body is indeed the delegate of nine million electors, who, having only the sentiment of their individual interests, pay no heed to the general interest. Thus, the delegate has from this fact only a confused and indefinite mandate. One asks what it could to well represent or do before the colossus of governmental concentration, where so many interests come to lead, which is the dispenser of the general interest. From that same fact, the national representation is paralyzed and subordinated by the government formed by the same majority; it is nothing more, as Paul-Louis Courier said, than a machine for voting.

Thus the mandataire always dissatisfied with his representatives, abandons them, but for lack of better or in order not to fall into worse, they renew their mandate. It is thus that happened everywhere October 18, where the radicals have been forced to report their voices on the opportunist party. Morally, it is thus the minority which represents the nation. We call that the unity of the republicans. It will not be long before we see the fruits of it.

The development of industry, by attracting the laborer from the field to the factory, has led to the shortage of arms in cultivation, but one wards off that inconvenience, by receiving the foreign worker who invades us from every direction. By abandoning our fertile soil for fabrication, it has happened that industrial production is disproportionate to our needs, which makes us undertake distant wars in order to establish our domination and to work prospects, there where the respect for existing treaties was sufficient. The competition between nations leads to international rivalries,

⁵ Who has not heard of the Ligue du Midi for national defense in 1870 “and of the separatist rumbles”? See the Petit Journal of February 1, 1883, which related to this subject the history that M. Alphonse Esquiros made of it in a posthumous writing.

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the encumbrance of products, the lowering of wages, and finally the poverty of the worker; and the armed peace that we enjoy, being the fact of commercial antagonism, presents the perspective of the wars by which Europe is threatened.

Spirit of insolidarity.—The industrialist and the merchant for their products; the proprietor for his rents; the capitalists for their incomes, dream only of increasing their revenues without proportion to the services that they render.

The big businessmen, perverters of partnership, are irresponsible in their fraud and agiotage towards their shareholders that they ruin “because,” the advocate-general M. Oscar de Vallee said, “the magistrate is disarmed, powerless, before acts which the law could not foresee.”

Alone, the worker who has only his arms, bears the depredations of speculation and agiotage, and in his distress, has no recourse but the strikes which still turn against him.

But there is a reaction, or rather repercussion, of evil in society, for “the law of solidarity,” says George Duchene, “of which we lack consciousness, tells us that where conditions between exchanging producers are not equal, here is revealed scarcity and there glut. The proletaire, unable to buy back his product because of the prelibation taken from his wages for the profit of capital, remains there, emaciated, ragged, feet bare, before the window of the grocer, the tailor and cobbler, of which the shops overflow with merchandise without buyers, and who march to bankruptcy as surely as the other to consumption.

We believe in progress, but the reflection we would make to discover it is offended by the exorbitance of our self and our prejudices. The spontaneity of our mind does not permit us to doubt our ideas, makes us doubt social sciences that we regard as utopias. Thus it was formerly for the discoveries of genius; and the first who, in astronomy, affirmed the movement of the earth, was dismissed from opinion, and suffered the pains of the inquisition.

We periodically change the form of our government, and we shuffle in place. In rejecting social science, the democracy is without point of reference; it is only a party divided and powerless, that the people are busy abandoning; remaining authoritarian and governmental, parodying the monarchy, it would only know to stake the destinies of the nation on the political chessboard; having understood nothing of the spirit of the Revolution, its career is finished; it is nothing more than a cadaver, of

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which soon the crows and vultures gathered will argue over the scraps while waiting to devour it between them.

What then is the spirit of the Revolution?

Formerly the Roman rabble asked its masters for bread and circuses. The French people, raised by themselves to the dignity of citizen, understands that its labor makes it live, but it demands the liberty for which it has shed its blood. In its simple and colorful language, liberty is also the means of acquiring by education the bread of the mind. It has the sentiment of the just; it tells itself that it must be more than an instrument of production. It is man, it knows that all wealth comes from labor, and that, by a false division, those who produce little or nothing have the best part. It senses that the social question is no longer but a question of just accounting. There is no "vile multitude." In the name of human morals, it claims its right to instruction and individual dignity.

Such is the spirit of the Revolution. And that spirit will make mincemeat of communist despotism, monarchic authority and the bourgeois status quo, which reigns today.

I speak without fear, I say what I know and what I believe true; I seek to build on the reasoning of my opponent. Michelet has said that "the people are worth more than their leaders." However we think that good faith is found at the base of the violent passions which animate the parties. Our critique is only addressed to ideas, despite the intensity of our words, we always mean to respect persons.

III

Authority & Liberty, definition of these ideas.

That first section, the most important in this work, is the key which must serve to orient us; it is the only one which deserves a bit of the attention of the reader. The definition of principles clearly established, there can no longer be confusion; for order in ideas is the point of departure for order in society.

Politics rests on two principles which contradict one another: they are authority and liberty. Authority tends incessantly to absorb liberty, to concentrate government in a single, homogeneous power, with the sole aim of administering the interests of the different groups which make up the nation. Liberty, on the contrary, calls for independence in order to leave to the various groups the administration of their individual interests. But it

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recognizes the necessity of the union of these groups for the service of interests of the general order, in order to constitute, not political unity, but national unity. Such is the federative principle,⁶ which has decentralization for consequence. Thus political progress is accomplished inevitably by a movement of alternating agitations of liberty and authority, that is to say of federation and political concentration.

Primitive inconveniences of federations.—In Gaul, federation united the different tribes. But as in the Greek Amphictyonie, the rivalries of the groups rendered the federal link precarious, and Roman centralization incorporated them into the Empire. Centralization or political unity has been necessary, it was necessary at the origin to subdue the undisciplined tribes; to group towns isolated and opposed in interests; to found with political unity a collective force and a common right. Such has been the result of the formation of the great empires, to which we owe the first notions of right and our civic education.

Federation could not prima facie accomplish that educational mission “because it is liberty and autonomy.” But if that liberty should disappear it was never crushed; and if, originally, the drawbacks of federations have caused it momentary disappearance, history testifies also that the faults of political unity are not less and have always caused the ruin and the disappearance of great Empires.

Disadvantages of political unity.—To discipline the liberty of groups unite them, by interesting them in the general interest, allowing them independence for the respective administration of their interests, such

⁶ FEDERATION.—Union, alliance of the various groups which make up a nation, in order to guarantee to each its right and its liberty of action. Pact made between the groups in order to constitute national unity, subordinating the interest of each to the general interest, but where the deliberations of the representatives of each group can be carried out only by the ratification of the popular vote. ECONOMIC FEDERATION.—Treaty, contract, commerce between several producers-consumers mutually guaranteeing, either the sale or the purchase of products, the quality and fair price, etc. What makes the strength and prosperity of federations, is that authority and liberty clearly defined are always in equilibrium there and give a powerful spring of action and initiative to the populations. POLITICAL UNITY. Here it is just the opposite which takes place: authority constantly absorbs liberty, which creates the spirit of isolation and the powerlessness of association. The nation, always minor, makes use of the liberty that it is given only in order to destroy it; it is on the slope to a government of one alone, becomes stationary and even retreats in proportion to the sovereign power.

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should be the aim of political unity. But in the role that it still fills, it is not thus; and that which has rendered it precarious and unsteady, is that having destroyed the liberty proper to each group and killed the local life, it is obliged, not having the gift of ubiquity, to delegate power to its creatures for the administration of each region, and for the exploitation of the public services, to exercise them by itself or to concede them as today with onerous privileges to the speculation of the looters of business or *traitants*. This is what raises the vague demands of liberty, and the protestations against the waste and the enormous costs that this system engenders.

Equilibrium of authority and liberty.—If in the evolution of societies, authority and liberty cannot be destroyed by one another without danger for society, they must then, following the experience that we have acquired, cease to be antagonists and find themselves united with the force which is proper to them, thus making disappear the inconveniences of one by the advantages of the other, and vice versa; to give to the nations, with liberty, the force of cohesion and duration which they yet lack, creating thus a link of federation and unity where the liberty of the groups move according to the exact definition of their rights, but submits to the general law of federal unity.

Political truth, like philosophical truth, is not, as is commonly believed and as the syllogism teaches, in the exclusion of contraries, but rather in their deepening. Thus, to unite two contrary propositions and to draw from them, not a principle which annuls them, but a higher consequence, or, as we say, a synthesis, that is the sole method which can aid us in constituting the political, moral and economic sciences, by finishing with political machiavellianism, overcome our absolute logic, and escape from the vicious circle where we still turn.

The conclusion of this first section is that “the political order rests fundamentally on two principles: AUTHORITY and LIBERTY, the first instigating, and the second determining;” which means that the first word pertains to authority, and the last to liberty. This is the principle which serves as the base for the Swiss Federation, and which governs the constitution of the cantons.

The thinkers, the minds enlightened by experience, those who are not blinded by interest or political fanaticism, recognize today the necessity of achieving decentralization. We have before our eyes some practical examples: the United States of America and especially Switzerland, where

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the advantages of the plus large decentralization are joined with the most perfect national unity of all the cantons.

After what we have just said, the exclusive partisans of unity they could logically nous crier: “You see here our autonomous communes, put outside of every injunction and all departmental control; determining themselves their quote-part of the tax and the number of men to furnish to the military contingents; closing here the schools and the churches; displaying the black flag in Brittany, with such name on it as will please the lord of the place; proclaiming some Napoleon V in the Gers; the collectivity of the soil and sub-soil at Monceau-les-Mines. C’est là pourtant communal autonomy, where one will end by no longer knowing what it means to speak.”—[Jean MACÉ.]

This is, however, what the best minds of the democracy are reduced to, those who speak of things without looking at them, and believe, despite experience, that political order can only be found in unity. And by this simplism made in the image of their self, can only recognize that this order rests on a duality of principles or of contrary facts, and is only discovered by their relations, and not by the exclusion of the one to the profit of the others.

For the man of centralization, monarchist or republican, the word unity summarizes all: liberty is only a word, his ideal is in the hope of a strong government. “With unity,” says P.-J. Proudhon, “a physical, mathematical thing, which seems, touch and counts, one knows everything in an instant; one is even spared in the difficult cases from thinking. With unity, politics is reduced to a simple mechanization, of which he has only to turn the wheel. So much the worse for whoever is allowed to take to the spiral.”⁷

Well, dear reader, after what we have just said, without effort of logic we will see in what follows “what talking means.”

[To be continued in #2]

⁷ *Du principe fédératif*, p. 98.

TWO-GUN MUTUALISM & THE GOLDEN RULE

THE SOCIALIST SOIREES OF NEW YORK

ATERCRACY

**The social liquidation
is the order of the day.**

PRACTICAL SOLUTION OF SOCIALISM

and of the

FEDERATIONS CALLED TO FORM

THE REPUBLIC OF PEOPLES

BY

**EDUALC REITTELLEP
[Claude Pelletier]**

new edition

NEW-YORK

1873

LEFTLIBERTY: THE GIFT ECONOMY OF PROPERTY:

PREFACE.

Workers, this little book contains your freedom. Read it. You will find here ideas completely apart from received opinions. If they appear to you unenforceable and intolerable at first view, suspend your judgment. Close the book and say to yourself: that which appears to me the most impracticable is perhaps easier to apply than I first believe: for often the extremes touch. Then, take up the book again; and this second time read it with the intention of finding their something practical and easy to apply; I am certain that you will grasp the relations of the details of the organization of a society based on the equality and solidarity of conditions, with its ensemble.

This done, I would have you commit yourself cause that I serve; for if you are just and seek only truth, as I suppose, moved by the decline of the artisans, you will be on my opinion.

I have called my little book ATERCRACY, from the two Greek works ATER (*without*) and CRATOS (*government*), instead of AN-ARCHY which is taken in bad part and signifies disorder to almost everyone. I have given it this new name which means without government, without power, because I have wanted it to be well established in the mind of my reader, that I hold all the CRACIES, whether they be *demo*, *aristo*, *auto*, *pluto*, *ochlo*, *theo* or *others*, as traps, where by turns the simple have been taken, then put to work for the clever ones who have always said to them that it was for the better.

All the *cracies* are oppressive; for none, on pain of suicide, can permit man to be his own sovereign; what socialism wishes.

I have taken much care in making this little book. I fear that it will be still more difficult to read. I often repeat myself in order to be clear and better understood. I would have liked to be more concise and more complete; but each of its forces matched. Accept it as it is, since I have not been able to do otherwise or better.

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ATERCRACY

FIRST EVENING

The eternal honor of France in the eyes of future generations will be to have first, at Lyon, in 1831 and in 1834, at Paris in 1839, proclaimed the right to live by laboring; then at Paris in 1848, to have offered the national tribune to the modern socialist schools.

By this fact, the speculative socialism that has existed before then has become positive and even despite itself a political party. In the journals, on the balcony of the city hall, as in the French tribune, it has been able to speak to the world with authority, to proclaim their its origin and its future, to glorify its thinkers and its commanders; and, faithful to the revolutionary tradition, to declare that it has only one mission to accomplish: that of occupying it with the happiness of the human race.

If its avowed aim of giving instruction to all and of dividing social wealth more equitably has alarmed the silly party of the bourgeoisie and terrified the despots; in return its doctrines have carried hope and consolation in the heart of every man who thinks and cares about his dignity.

It is indeed that socialism not only brings justice in social relations; but it reverses the relations of labor and capital, so that capital will be only the servitor of labor.

It created a new social order where labor is more in demand than in supply; where credit is mutual and, consequently, gratuitous; where free exchange, far from offering any danger, naturally creates more well-being; where the division of labor which today makes man decline returns him to study and liberty; where the public expenses are no longer paid by the taxed citizens; where, finally, public wealth is equilibrated with population.

Its social laws harmonize with the nature of man. Alone it constitute the family; alone it allows man to labor when and how he wants, under his own responsibility; in a word, it is the economic science of the future, the only true, greeted with goodwill and respect by all people of merit and intelligence and misunderstood by all the mediocrities jealous of everything that they have not foolishly dreamed up, and hatched.

If the Stuarts, instead of seeking to again take absolute power and impose papism on England, had made concessions to the revolution which

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had dethroned their father; if they had taken some economic measures which would lead gradually, and even after a certain lapse of time, to the emancipation of the working classes, one of their descendants would not have died, without employment, in a house of beggars. He would have been able to gain his life by his table and perhaps to become useful to his country. I speak of one of the descendants of Charles I of England and of Henri IV king of France; but if I look around me, how often do I not see rich families today, whose descendants, within thirty years from now, will put the riffraff to shame.

The rich and powerful of the day should consider this subject well. They have certainly earned the grief.

—Thus, according to you, socialism alone can make men free and resolve the economic problem of the production and distribution of wealth for the general satisfaction. A difficult question that the economists still have not been able to resolve and which appears to me, indeed, much tangled.

—Yes, only socialism can do it, because, contrary to the political economy which only note, analyze and describe the economic facts of the present society, without occupying itself, if adapted to another milieu, their results will not be completely different, socialism has a complete doctrine; it created a new order of things, where by the substitution of a social capital to private, individual credit, which despoils the masses for the profit of some oligarchs production is done by participation, in social centers transformed or by the simple law of attraction regulated by supply and demand, all can naturally rank in all the functions, and where all are remunerated, without possible discussion, in the mathematically determined proportion of the labors they have done, of the services that they have rendered.

—This demands to be clarified: for it is the key to the problem. First, are these economic facts of which you speak practicable? Then, in admitting them possible, do they conform to justice?

—Doubtless. Where will be our strength, if in order to victoriously combat the prejudices and abuses of the old world, we would not have justice on our side.

—Let us specify the facts. It is to socialism that I address myself or rather to one of its adepts. What is your aim?

—I have told you: That of progress, which is to say, to better satisfy each day, more needs, with the least possible effort.

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—How can this happen?

—By industry.

What is industry?

—It is the application of all the faculties of man to produce; it is matter exploited, dominated by human intelligence.

—Is it only that?

—It is man made free by labor, creating utilities, values, new forces which centuple his power. Properly speaking, there is only one industry; but to better understand its evolutions in the world, to better analyze its phenomena and results, we divide it into extractive, agricultural, manufacturing, exchanging, circulating, and immaterial Industries.

—My friend, the economists have said the same thing. They have classified industry, as you did it; and if it is not the replacement of private credit by a social capital which after all will not be held in a basket without a bottom, and the functioning of which I still do not understand; I do not see in what you differ.

—How, to produce for men all that is necessary for their existence, to put capital and instruments of production at their disposition, so that land, workshops, machines, tools, raw material, etc., without the direct or indirect aid of the private fortune of some men, is it to want what the economists call for?

—Hasn't one of them said: "In order for man to be free, he must be able, not only to develop, but also that he knows how to exercise his physical, intellectual and moral faculties in the manner most advantageous for himself and his fellows."

—Charles Dunoyer spoke that day as a socialist: that is all.

—Another has also said: "That without tomorrow provided for, there is not for man home, family, or good mores."

—Michel Chevalier said it; but he had hardly said it when he hastened to add: "economics is the science of material interests, it does not pose social questions; that is politics. Now, if we consult politics, it responds to us that the great business of our times: is the birth of liberty by civilization." As if Michel Chevalier, a man of real merit, did not know better than anyone, that liberty is only the result of an organized social milieu, and consequently in the domain of political economy.

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—Nonetheless, you do not deny that the economists start from the same point as the socialists, in order to arrive at the same end; but that their means differ.

—The economists don't start from any point, in order to arrive at any end. I do not deny that several of them know many things; but their knowledge consists purely and simply in feeling the pulse of a sick society and to say to the government which often pays it for this, what it thinks of the dying oldster.

The great thinkers who have dared to go deep into the questions of wealth, like Adam Smith; of value and rent, like Ricardo; of property, like Jean-Baptiste Say, of wages and farm-rent, like Rossi; of machines and de routes, like Chevalier; of liberty, like Dunoyer; of production, revenues and population, like Sismondi, are more than economists; they are the fathers of social science. As for the guillemets writers, their compilers who are called their colleagues,—the Dupins, Garniers, Sudres, Thiers, Reybauds and other Paturôts of the same caliber,—as it is their daily work to insult the socialists and to speak of what they do not know, we will leave these gentlemen to tranquilly direct their marking up of the budget. Let us take up our question again.

—Well! my friend, the question for me is this: can men, without living under the regime of the community or of the property caste, in order to produce what is necessary for their existence and his refinement, have at their disposition capital, such as land, workshops, tools, machines, raw materials, etc., etc., without the direct or indirect aid of private credit, of the individual fortunes of a few men? The socialists affirm it. The economists deny it. Which is right?

—If you mean society as it has been in the past and as it is still, the economists are not wrong; but if you admit that what has not yet been may perhaps be tomorrow, the socialists are right.

—In order to admit that what does not exist today is possible tomorrow, it is necessary to be convinced of it. Have you only persuaded the economists of the excellence of your means?

—To persuade people who do not want to hear or to read; that would be far too naive. Isn't their opposition set, and are we not still for them the proud, wild, ignorant, ambitious, rascals, what have you?

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—Their vanity has rendered them unjust and blind towards you, I admit; but you have not been any more careful with them. You have treated them as like imbeciles and rascals.

—We have been wrong; the big words prove nothing. However, how should we describe them if they do not understand us at all or act like they don't understand us, after they have written so much against us?

—They can understand you very well and believe that you are mistaken, without being imbeciles or rascals.

—Then why don't they prove it?

—There are always things which are not proven.

—In a matter of opinion, that is possible; but, one of two things must be true, either economics is a science or it is a matter of opinion; if it is a science, as its adepts say emphatically, it must prove what it asserts; if, on the contrary, it is only a matter of opinion, the socialists need not take any account of it.

—Does socialism prove all that it asserts?

—Without doubt. Where would be its power, if it was otherwise? It does not have at its service, like political economy, the *fait accompli*, the established order of things, to say to its readers: look. It must prove the truth of the economic fact that it asserts and that the proof that it gives of it is so much more clear, that the man who hears it can convince himself by seeing it applied before his eyes.

—Socialism has declared that it is of public utility to guarantee to all men their right to live and work; how will it prove it?

—In the most triumphant fashion. What is labor, it is asked? It is, in the opinion of everyone, the application of the physical and intellectual faculties of man to fashion some object or render a service.

The stronger and more intelligent a man is, the better his labor is; the larger is its quantity.

The more work that is done and the better the quality of it, the more the general wealth is augmented.

The greater the general wealth; the more easily men must live and their well-being increases.

—It is incontestable, and, I add, uncontested.

—If it is uncontested: let us conclude.

In order to augment the general well-being, it is necessary to augment social wealth.

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It order to augment the general wealth, men must labor quickly and well.

In order for labor to be good, productive and abundant, man must have his physical and intellectual faculties well developed.

In order that man be strong and intelligent, he must then be well-housed, well-clothed, well-nourished and especially well-instructed.

The conclusion of all this is thus that instruction, food, clothing and shelter should be, pour cause public utility, guaranteed to all men who want to work. Is this clear?

It is very easy to say that it must guarantee to every man his right to live and work; but how; by what means?

In 1848 the government of the Republic wanted to do it, and tried it; the Constituent Assembly composed of the most honest and wisest political men of France and I would say even the best intentioned in favor of the Republic, has voted millions in order to form workers' associations; and what was the result? The most complete failure; a fall from which Socialism has not picked itself up.

—My friend, if I did not know you to be a man of heart and intelligence, loving truth for its own sake, and incapable of sacrificing it to an opinion made in advance, or to any political party, what you say to me, would make me class you in the category of those who have never had any opinion but that of the newspaper that they read. How could you think that Socialism has had something in common with the associations founded in 1848 by the government of Cavaignac who abhorred them, or with the national workshops invented by the rector Marie who despised the workers; when we have made nothing of what Socialism has taught for forty years; when the associations had no link of solidarity between them; when instead of compensating the producers in proportion to their efforts, when instead of compensating the producers in proportion to their efforts, it used them, even a greater number of them than it employed..

Now, what is an association composed of ten, of a hundred, of a thousand persons or more gathered in a society in order to make clothes, shoes, hats or other objects, if its number is arbitrarily limited; if it employs some workers having no part in production; but which it pays by the day; if it does not establish a link of solidarity between all laborers and all industries?

That association will only be a house of industry like those which exist today, which will have ten, a hundred, a thousand masters, instead of one.

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If it succeeded and prospered, it would make some awful small proprietors devoted body and soul to the reaction, for fear of losing their four sous; and if it succumbed, instead of leaving a man on the tiles, it would leave hundreds, without resources, in a desperate situation, who would be discouraged and not for the advancement of the idea.

—Who has prevented the Socialists who have formed associations from establishing the solidarity of which you speak?

—Who? But Cavaignac; first: by the obstacles and the direction, that one must give to the associations, according to a rule made by the denigrators of socialism; then by Louis Bonaparte; when he caused to be arrested, at Paris, Rue Jean-Robert, the delegates of the associations founded freely, without the patronage of the government, which yielded at the appeal of Pauline Roland in order to insure among them and to render solidary all the free associations which had begun to develop and prosper.

After have prevented the associations from accomplishing an act of mutuality which favored their development and established equality and solidarity of conditions, between all the workers; it is perhaps in good taste to accuse Socialism of powerlessness, as it was in good taste, in the last century, to insult philosophy, in the person of Diderot, Voltaire and Rousseau. But all of that is injustice.

My friend, here is an anecdote which will explain my point better. One day the *economists* Ch. Dupin, Louis Reybaud and Joseph Garnier promenaded along the Seine. They met an eminent socialist who was fishing—it was Victor Considérant, I am told. This fisherman who had just taken a gudgeon, after having taken it off his hook, forgot to put it in his pannier and tranquilly cast his line back into the Seine; when, two minutes later, he heard a dispute behind him.

The *wise* Ch. Dupin cried: you cannot maintain the contrary; every time that a fish wiggles its tail, it dies: the experiment has been made in front of me. I will make a report on it to the Academy of Sciences.

The *spiritual* Louis Reybaud said: when a fish opens its gills, it is lost. I am convinced of it now: I have seen it, with my eyes—behold, Malvina Paturôt would write to her husband.

The *profound* Joseph Garnier said, with a satisfied air: no, gentlemen! You are mistaken! It is when a fish moves its fins three times in a row that it dies. I have noted it, gentlemen, better than you. It is now a known fact of

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science. One can draw immense results from it for the instruction of well-thinking youth. I will speak of it, when I re-redo my manual.

But what have you then to dispute thus, the socialist said to them? Each, immediately recounted to him the magnificent remark that he had come to make and asked him what he thought of his perspicacity.

“Where was the fish?” the socialist asked them. “Right there, on the sand,” responded the three savants.

Ah! Ah! Ah! and he went back to fishing.

—Which means that the three *wise men* are old imbeciles, and that socialism was on the sand in 1848.

—And their associations placed in a milieu fatal to their success and development.

—Then, according to you, socialism has still not been able to manifest itself in a normal manner, to conform to its aspirations?

—Not only have we not permitted it, but three quarters of its detractors have not even taken the time to question it, to examine it. Socialism is a fact; it has a cause; what is it? Where does it come from? Where is it going? Why? What does it want? Is it that its adversaries occupy themselves with it? Why would they? They are well fed; and socialism is occupied with abolishing poverty.

When a man has common sense, and the idea of his adversaries appears unreasonable to him; the first thing that he must do is to examine if he has understood it well; and determine if it is not his intelligence which is at fault. But to do this will be to lack pride; that would be to suppose good sense on the part of his adversaries. To admit that the idea, such as one has understood it is too crazy to interpret as one has done, and that it is necessary to seek a different and reasonable interpretation of it: that would be to recognize a bit of good sense among those that one attacks. Is it that these people in positions who pretend to be wise cannot understand? Fie then!

In ten years, if they still live, they will be considered as stupid; and if they are dead, who will dare to remind posterity that they have lived? They will have in their lifetime drawn their living from the budget. That is enough!

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SECOND EVENING

—Socialism, you have said, is a fact; it has a cause. What is it? From whence does it come? Where is it going? What does it want? That is the interesting thing. That is what I ask, and I pray you respond most simply.

—Socialism is a fact; one cannot deny it since one attacks it, not only with insults, but with cannons and assassination. It has a cause like all other facts. What is it? The ingratitude of the bourgeoisie towards the people who helped it make the revolution, and who, instead of doing its part, suppressed it and dragged it down, by making wage workers of its artisans, and, of their masters, subordinates to the caprices of the capitalists who employ them. It comes from Liberty, from the Heresies, from the Waldensians, and, since the revolution, from the three spokesmen of the committee of public safety, Billaud-Varennes, St.-Just and Robespierre, being altered by St-Simon, Fourier, Pierre Leroux, Proudhon, and others.

Where is it going? To equality and the solidarity of conditions.

What does it want? To create, I repeat it, a new order of things, where men will have the same rights;

Where credit will be mutual and free;

Where taxes will be abolished and the revenues of society supplied by that which is given freely by nature, and by which some rich capitalists alone profit today;

Where currency will be a sign representing the exchangeable wealth of the country, but not a wealth by itself;

Where free trade will be natural and advantageous to the working classes;

Where the balance of commerce will have no reason to be;

Where the division of labor and the perfection of machines will lead to the equality of the laborers before production;

Where the circulation of values will be substituted for commerce in things;

Where the markets will be disciplined and know where their outlets and places of resupply are located;

Where property will only be the remuneration of the personal efforts of the individual;

Where the increase of the population will be in relation with the increase of wealth and its equitable division;

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Where, finally, men will be free, in that which concerns their person, to do as they wish.

—That is a superb program; but programs often prove nothing. Let us enter, if you please, more deeply into the question and explain to me the particulars.

—That is my intention. I'll continue.

The aim of man living in society, we have said, being to satisfy the most of his needs with the least possible efforts, he must at all times study, labor and consult with his fellows, in order to produce, exchange and consume; manifestation which, depending on whether the laws of production and of distribution of wealth have been applied more or less unjustly, have given birth to all the political and social systems known until now.

Humanity, directed by a sentiment of justice that each of us carries within, has been gradually led to recognize that anything that costs the least effort to a man must be remunerated to him, and that labor being individual, the remuneration of the efforts of a man creates property; just as all that is given by nature is gratuitous and by right common to all.

Consequently let neither PROPERTY nor COMMUNITY, be, the one or the other, the pivot on which a society could reasonably move, but the two extremes, between which the society oscillates.

And in fact, if property is the right to apply oneself, to oneself, to one's own works, or to yield them up only in return for equivalent efforts; in order for it to disappear, it would be necessary that every human effort necessary to the satisfaction of our needs should disappear, just as, in order for community to disappear, it would be necessary that nature cease to manifest itself.

Moreover these two extremes,—one of which, property, is what defines itself; and the, community, that which is not defined,—not only touch, but cannot advance without one another; since it is noted that a mechanical invention, the discovery of an economic process can never be worth to their author a profit equal to those that they bring to society; and that the more things reduce in price, because they have been carried out by the forces that the intelligence has been able to apply to industry, the closer they come to community.

Now why are these two necessary extremes of civilization, indispensable to the development of society, fatal, excluding and destroying one another, instead of harmonizing and strengthening one another, while society has

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the misfortune to make of one or the other, its principle of construction, its basis of evolution.

Because the first, property, renders men selfish and indifferent to everything that does not increase their personal enjoyments; and the second, community, buries them under narrow and tiresome regulations and completely annihilates their individuality.

Thus, their development must take another direction in politics, if men want to free themselves from that capitalist, bourgeois and authoritarian feudalism which ruins them and makes them decline.

Between individualism and le communism, these two extremes, some men have thought that there must be a middle term, a social synthesis. They have sought it and found it; they have called it by the name of Socialism; and Socialism has made its way.

Now what it prepares for in its upward political march is the organization of a society where men will all be free and provided with all that is useful to them; a society where there would be, remember this well, neither kinds, nor government, nor priests, nor the privileged, nor merchants, nor bankers, nor servants, nor bosses, nor wage-workers, nor nobles, nor bourgeois, nor proletariat; no men, finally, living, enriching themselves at the cost of others' labor.

—But, my dear friend, you would make a blank slate of present society; you would leave nothing standing.

—You believe that I would leave nothing standing, because I proceed by elimination; I would, however, only abolish privileges.

—That is what remains for you to demonstrate.

—I am about to do so. Suppose a country where society is developed according to common sense, and ask me each fact that you want to know; I will tell you how everything will happen, or must happen there; and I am convinced that the social organization of which I speak will appear to you more just, plus sensible, more complete and more practical than you have supposed at first.

—You embarrass me considerably. In order to question you, I must suppose a utopia, and I am nothing less than I am a utopian. Nevertheless, I am going to try to do it. Thus, do not be surprised if the questions that I am going to ask sometimes relate to society, and sometimes to the individual: I will make them up as our conversation suggests them to me.

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Before entering into the details of any social organization, I believe that it is good to have an idea of its ensemble. Can't you give me a glimpse which would aid me in following you into the economic labyrinth where you are going to lead me?

—Yes, but I can only do it in a concrete manner, if I want to be brief and not bore you.

—Let us see.

—The society of which I am going to teach you has JUSTICE for its fundamental organizing principle, and the REPUBLIC for its natural social form.

Under that Republic, services are mutual and reciprocal between the producers and the consumers, in the production, exchange and distribution of wealth.

No one commands; no one obeys, each is his own pope, his own monarch, his own master, his own servant: for there is neither first nor last; and none has the right to impose himself on others, nor to govern them.

We follow there only one line: that of science, of truth.

—This is the new law that you proclaim.

—Yes.

—Well! It is the negation of everything that is accepted, and it appears so far outside of the received ideas, that nobody will follow it; or, I would ever dare say, understand it.

—That is what we will see, if you do not decide to stop on the way.

—Go, then, I am with you.

—Today the problem to be resolved being that of a new organization of production and a more equitable division of wealth, we pose it thus:

What comes together to produce and consumer wealth? Five elements: Land, Labor, Capital, Exchange and Security,

What do each of these five elements produce? What do they consume? Does the portion that each draws for its efforts or its services conform to equity? This is what we must know, for everything is there.

As labor has too small a portion, and Capital one that is too large, the more Exchange and Security do not return to it; and the more that those values that Earth gives free to all, are taken by a few privileged only; this lack of justice in distribution; must it not give rise to murmurs, recriminations, and finally struggles of every sort.

—Without a doubt, where justice is lacking, demands appear.

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—Who makes the division, today, to these five elements? Is it an economic law? No! It is caprice, force, ruse, arbitrariness, iniquity. One produces an object; one offers it to the consumer; one demands for it a certain price; he accepts or refuses. If he needs it and one perceives it, the elastic conscience of the seller says to him: raise your price; it is scarce; sell dear. If, on the contrary, it is the seller who needs to sell and the buyer has divined it, he says to himself: the article has little market; he wants to be rid of it; let us offer a lesser price; let us attempt to gain a better deal. The prize goes to the sharpest, the slyest. And each exclaims that he must be clever to succeed in business, and that one really owes his fortune only to his own genius. The word *merit* is too weak in the eyes of the dealers.

—Are you going to claim now that there is no merit in conducting a business well?

—I will be very careful not to do so; I would only observe to you that it is from genius badly employed, that the majority of all the subtleties and deviousness in transactions would be completely useless, if, instead of commerce of things which demands so much skill and cunning, the exchange of values was organized honestly and accomplished without lies. Now in order that the exchange of values is done naturally and that it returns to each of the elements of production that which is legitimately due to it; it is no longer necessary to bring it back to the conscience of each; but to find the economic law which equitably rules these relations.

There is a fact obvious to everyone; it is that with the present social order, that is a complete impossibility, and that in order to bring about equity in the relations of interests between the producers and the consumers, it is necessary to organize production, exchange and consumption on another basis.

—You always return to that.

—Certainly.

—But is it possible?

—Yes!

—If it is possible; how will we arrive there? How will it begin?

—But if the government wanted to occupy itself with it, it would only have an embarrassment of choice. Production, exchange and consumption are the three principle modes of forming, accumulating and preserving wealth. Let one begin by organizing a first one of them, no matter which, the other two will immediately follow.

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—Pardon me, but that will not suffice: for that has been tried without success. [John Francis] Bray in 1839 sought to resolve the problem of labor, beginning by organizing production. Before establishing his system of operation, he wrote an extremely remarkable book titled: *Labour's Wrongs and Labour's Remedy*, where he proved that by producing with harmony and selling products at cost-price, the proletariat was going to disappear. He created some bazaars and shops at Leeds and Sheffield, where all the products were stored. Well! even if he offered them at a price well below what they had sold for elsewhere, they were not bought. His attempt has failed with a loss for all those who had promoted it of six hundred thousand pounds sterling.

—The error of Bray was to believe that he could free individual exchange of its antagonistic elements. He hoped to find an egalitarian relation between production and consumption; but as that egalitarian relation foreseen by Bray can be found only on the condition:

1 of abandoning individual exchanges to a center of consumption which pays to the producer only the value of the labor made on an object and not the *substratum* of the object;

2 of paying it only still with bills of exchange or circulation: currency which carries with it no intrinsic value; but the certainty that the value that it represents is available and at the service of its holder; he has not succeeded.

—Then, according to you, then thing is not bad; it has only been badly begun?

—And badly maintained by those who had an interest in it. It is unfortunate. But as everything requires an apprenticeship; this has served as a lesson.

—Proudhon, ten years later, taking up again the ideas of Bray, founded his Bank of the People. He wanted to begin with exchange. How did it work out? No better than the others, however strong it was in social economy; it is not knowledge that it lacked.

—If the bank of Proudhon failed, it is because the French government imprisoned Proudhon; when it had seen that his bank had begun to have adherents who took the thing seriously. One had understood why Bray had not succeeded. Jules Lechevalier, in joining with Proudhon, had demonstrated the practical means to make his bank serve the associations of production; no one can thus claim that it would not have succeeded, if the

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government had not come to destroy it, because all of its adherents were socialists. Supposing even that one would have to modify several of its statutes and change on several points the manner in which it had first commenced its operations, Proudhon was a good enough financier to see, at the first obstacle which presented itself, what would have had to be done to surmount it. Except that here as everywhere, the idea has been crushed in the egg; then one has said: it is wrong.

—I do not speak to you of consumption. You have said that the Socialists were in 1848 like a fish out of water. However, nothing restricted those who had opened social stores. Many made themselves grocers, merchants of all sorts of things. What remains?

—The centers of consumption were not hindered in their sales? they were only closed for political reasons; but if they had been left perfectly tranquil, they would not have succeeded better than the bazaars of Bray. They were based on the same principle and, as I have already said to you, left at the mercy of individual exchanges, with all their elements of antagonism, and under the responsibility of a few guys managing who were not able to do better. Also it is the mode of resolving the problem which has still really not been tried, consequently that by which, in my opinion, it would be necessary to begin.

—Do you think that it offers more chance than the others?

—More ease.

—A center of consumption established and functioning with a certain success, how would it come to make arise the two other means to produce and exchange?

—It would only have to obey necessity, which would reveal each day what it has to do. If a center of consumption sold each day, I suppose, enough garments, enough hats, enough shoes, enough of whatever object in order to occupy a dozen laborers, in whatever industry; one would immediately establish small centers of production, where the laborers would have at their disposition and under their own responsibility, some instruments of labor and material to fashion, to transform. As soon as one of these social workshops was created; it would be necessary to debit the workers for what one furnished to them and credit them for the labor they had done; then to pay and to settle on both sides. These transfers of account, these payments for work done, these settlements for raw materials supplied would give rise

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quite naturally to the Bank of Exchange of which so many people have spoken and that so few have understood.

—I begin to see your utopia a bit more clearly. You would make of the world an immense hive where all men are producers, and equals. They would all have more than is necessary; must it is all over for the great fortunes and their magnificent dispensers., We would all be in a modest affluence; but none would be so rich as to things on a grand scale. As it is to the rich, after all, that we owe the great things that develop the intelligence and taste of the people; I fear that instead of progressing, we would return to barbarism.

—Your fear, or rather your objection is the same as that of the old Romans to whom one spoke of freeing their slave; that of the lords and clergy who did not want to allow Communes to be established on their lands; that of the nobles and emigrants that the Revolution reduced to their just value; they all said that the changes called for would surely make the people decline. Every reform, according to them, was a deplorable invention; every change a misfortune. Everything must collapse. One raced towards poverty, misery. It is the opposite that has always occurred.

But let us suppose, by extraordinary chance, that men will produce only in order to consumer soberly; well! we will have a sober people, frugal even; but it will be dignified and free. We would have no more speculators piling up millions; but no one would die of cold, nor of poverty.

As for making those great things, such as palaces, theaters, museums, gardens, parks, libraries, etc., etc., that the rich alone can build in our times by whittle away the portion of labor, society will be able to do it better than the richest of its children; and it will establish them, no longer for a few, as they are presently, but for instruction and pleasure of all.

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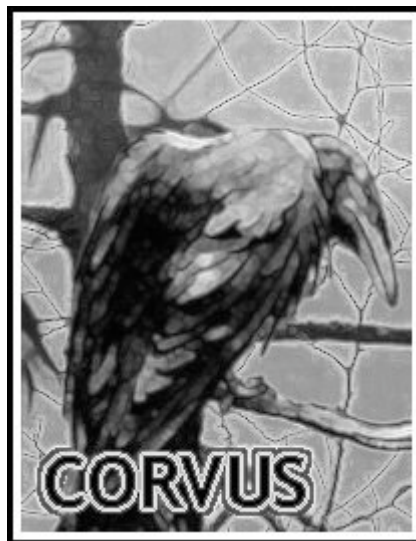
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