

THE FIREBRAND

For the Burning Away of the Cobwebs of Ignorance and Superstition.

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ANARCHY: A social theory which regards the union of order with the absence of all direct government of man by man as the political ideal; absolute individual liberty.—[Century Dictionary.]

THE EVOLUTION OF ANARCHISM.

From the Introduction by N. to Michael Bakounine, *Euvres* (The works of Bakunin). Paris, 1895.

William Godwin, in his *Political Justice*, published in London in 1793, was the first to carry to its logical conclusion a serious criticism of the principles of the State and of Authority. His book was the first purely Anarchist theoretical work.

The Anarchists of the first part of the present century arrived at Individualist-Anarchism in their revolt against the State as it then existed, and against that disguised but not less oppressive shape which it might be expected to assume in a society based on the authoritarian Communism of that period, as of the present day. They advocated the idea of a society in which each man was to work for himself, exchanging with others, at his own pleasure, the results of his labor, whether produced by himself alone or by an association formed for this special purpose and entered by him merely at the bidding of his own interest.

An Englishman, named Thompson, set forth these ideas in "An Inquiry into the principles of the Distribution of Wealth most conducive to Human Happiness," London, 1824. Later on, Thompson altered his views for those of Owen; but Individualist-Anarchism was accepted and more precisely expressed by the American exponents of the "Sovereignty of the Individual." By this school the logical consequences of the idea have been worked out, from the days of Joseph Warren, Stephan Pearl Andrews, Lysander Spooner and their comrades down to the present time, when the doctrine finds its expression in the *Liberty* of Mr. Benja-

min Tucker (Boston and New York) and in various other publications in the United States and in England.

In like manner Proudhon, in France, opposed his Mutualist Socialism, with its equal exchange between producers of the produce of their labor, to the Authoritarian Communism and other Socialistic theories of his time. His system was nothing new to Englishmen or Americans, but on the Continent he was a pioneer. He found numerous adherents outside of France. In Spain, for instance, his ideas of Federation were widely influential; whilst in Germany, during the year immediately preceding the revolution of 1848, Socialists like M. Hess and Charles Gruene tried to amalgamate the economic conception of Proudhon with the extremest speculations of the Hegelian school. Their success was little to boast of; and yet it was in Germany that the classic of Individualist-Anarchism appeared, in 1844. "Der Einzige und sein Eigentum" (The Single Individual and his Property), by Max Stirner, was the last great work and, as it were, the theoretical terminus of this international Individualist movement.

When, after the defeats of 1848 and the succeeding years of reaction, the labor movement resumed its progress, its character was no longer individualistic and experimental in the same sense as before. It was more Collective, if I may use the term, and it found its natural expression in the International Working Men's Association, founded in 1864. After 1848, Socialist theories were submitted to fresh examination.

Authoritarian or State Socialism, represented by Louis Blank and afterwards by Karl Marx and Ferdinand Lassalle, was definitely rejected in the more advanced localities of France, Belgium and French-speaking Switzerland. Neither was the mutualism of Proudhon received with greater favor—a ghost of it was languidly defended by the Langlois and the Tolaines in France. Only among the Belgian Proudhonians and the young staff of *La Rive Gauche* (The Left) did it retain its energy and revolutionary spirit.

Long discussions in the newspapers, in congresses and in the Sections of the International finally gave birth to the idea of

what was then called Revolutionary Collectivism, namely, Collectivist-Anarchism. Whilst accepting Proudhon's criticism of the State and of Authority, it was argued that the individualist system of production and distribution could be no safeguard against a relapse into the miseries of economic monopoly, which would inevitably bring about a restoration of the political power of the State. At the same time, much stress was laid upon the idea, which underlies all Socialism, that the gifts of Nature, and the produce of the intellectual and manual work of past generations, in so far as they serve as means of production or to satisfy a common need, ought not to be appropriated by individuals. The collective ownership of the soil, raw materials and the instruments of production, was therefore decided upon; whilst free choice as to the methods of toil was left to groups of producers and to communes consisting of federated groups. Yet the conviction that every man ought to receive the whole result of his own personal labor still remained predominant.

These views were spread by the Internationalists of Switzerland, France, Belgium, Italy and Spain and on their behalf Michael Bakounine and his Jurassian comrades in Switzerland, Varlin in France, Césaire de Pæpe in Belgium, Caffero in Italy, and many others fought many a pitched battle against every sort of foe, both in the bourgeois camp and in the International. Karl Marx himself showed, by his underground, disloyal machinations for the purpose of getting his own scheme accepted as the official doctrine of the whole International, how susceptible of abuse is authority, even when confided to an able and sincere man like Marx. By his attitude he powerfully aided in opening the eyes of a large number of the members of the International to the inherent defects of all Authoritarian organization and disposed them towards Anarchism.

The struggle within the International, between the Anarchists and the votaries of authority thus ended in favor of the former. If, after disastrous defeats and bitter persecutions, in France, Spain and Italy, the external organization of the International was dislocated, though never completely destroyed, yet Collectivist-Anarchist

continued to be spread until a period of relative quietude succeeded to all this strife. The moment of peace was employed in a fresh examination of the basis of the theory. It was more completely developed and carried further in the direction of freedom. The like took place in the sphere of tactics, which does not here concern us,

It now appeared that any system which proposed to equitably distribute to every man the produce of his own labor must necessarily be imperfect, and, consequently, unjust; for all persons are not alike and each applies to the same work a varying fraction of energy. Thus, each of the systems generally adopted was made, more or less, for the benefit of the majority which had thought well to adopt. And from such schemes must inevitably result hard-and-fast regulations, laws, the State. Further, it appeared that it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between the produce and the instruments of labor. Such things as food and clothing, which for one man are the produce of his labor, are for another what coal and oil are to a machine, the indispensable means of getting it into working order, consequently instruments of production are as needful as any tool. By way of this reasoning and the recognition of these contradictions, Communist-Anarchism was reached; a system which acknowledged that free and spontaneous Communism in production and consumption is the only solid basis for society. A society organized according to this communistic principle provides for the daily needs of each of its members, and assures him every possibility of becoming a truly free man, free according to his own personal conception, in the way he likes best.

It was in 1886, as far as I know, that these ideas were for the first time publicly broached in the International. They had been already set forth in a little abstentionist pamphlet, published at Geneva, in 1886, by the Lyons exiles. The first federation of the International to accept the new views was the Italian, which adopted them at its congress, held near Florence, in October, 1876. Later, they were put forward in the Jura district and at Geneva, in newspapers and lectures, by C. Caffero, P. Krapotkin, Elisee Reclus and others; then in "La Revolte" at Geneva and afterwards at Paris; finally they have given rise to a literature already of considerable extent.

Scattered far and wide over many countries, these new ideas were examined and sounded again and again. They are now predominant in almost every place where Anarchists are to be found. But it was many years before they were adopted by the old-fashioned Collectivists. Even in Spain, where the Anarchist International had so strongly taken root that, after seven years of underground and secret existence, it revived with all its old energy, Collectivism still prevails. It has, however, been rendered more liberal in tone by discussion and criticism. Everywhere else, except among the few Individualists of America, England and Australia, and the recruits the have recently gained in France and Germany, Anarchist-Communism is adopted in principle. There are, of course, divergences in matters of detail and special questions, such as must occur in the growth of a living idea, which regards all dogmatism with horror. For example, Anarchist-Communism

is very far from suffering from the recrudescence of Individualism. It can only profit thereby; for Communism is but the means for enabling every man to attain the highest individual development. As to the exact limits between Communism and Individualism, these cannot be fixed and invariable. On the contrary, they must vary in a thousand ways according to the special needs of each person: experience alone will resolve these endless questions. It therefore behoves Communists and Individualists alike, each in his own fashion, to hasten the advent of the time which will break the fetters that have hitherto trammelled all free experience.

POLITICAL ACTION.

The time is approaching when the sovereign citizen can exercise his franchise in choosing who shall rule over him.

Schemes, plots, plans, counterplots, bribery, promises and "influence" will be in order from now on until the next election is over.

Oregon is peculiarly unfortunate as the state election comes of June next, and the presidential election November following. This will give from now till next November that the political scourge will rage with ever increasing fury.

Many well meaning and conscientious people hope for relief from the present conditions through political action.

Is there any ground for such hope? Have we any reason to believe that relief can be obtained by such methods?

The old man described in the "Old Curiosity Shop" always lost at cards, but always thought that he would win next time. Reformers have constantly failed of their purpose through political action, but still continue to believe that they will succeed "next time". The case is analogous. The old man could not win, for he knew not the tricks of the card shark. Neither can the reformer accomplish his purpose, for he is unacquainted with the tricks of the politician. Should he become aware of the futility of political action without adopting the methods of the politician, he will either quit trying to accomplish anything through politics, or sink to the level of the schemer and corruptionist, thus disqualifying himself from accomplishing anything of a reformatory character.

The revolutionist may think: "Capture the government and hold the infernal machine still until the people take possession of the earth," as G. C. Clemens puts it. But can a revolutionist with courage enough to "hold the infernal machine still" be elected? If the people are revolutionary enough to elect a full set of revolutionary officers they are unquestionably revolutionary enough to take possession without running the risk of electing some men who can be bought, bribed, cajoled or scared in acting as other officers do.

Governments, since their earliest inception have always been the protectors of the privileged classes and the oppressors of the wealth-producers. Never, in all the history of the world, can an instance be pointed out of government being anything else than organized force, bent upon plundering the useful people in the name of tribute, tithes and taxes. Government is organized tyranny, systematized, so as to make its power the more potent, and its designs the more irresistible. Many guileless individ-

als, seeing the tremendous power of government, think to turn this power into production rather than to destruction; into blessing rather than harm, forgetting, that its very organization makes such things impossible. As well might they try to gather oranges from the cactus or try to induce the Hyena to lead a useful and sociable life.

Wendell Phillips tells us: "Government, commenced in usurpation and oppression; liberty and civilization, at present, are nothing else than the fragments of rights which the scaffold and stake have wrung from the strong hands of the usurpers. Every step in progress the world has made has been from scaffold to scaffold, and from stake to stake. It would hardly be exaggeration to say, that all the great truth relating to society and government have first been heard in the solemn protest of murdered patriotism, or the loud cries of crushed and starving labor. The law has always been wrong. Government began in tyranny and force, began in the feudalism of the soldier and bigotry of priest; and the ideas of justice and humanity have been fighting their way like a thunderstorm against the organized selfishness of human nature. It is no argument to my mind, therefore, that the old social fabric of the past is against us."

This statement is unquestionably correct. That being the case, what hope can any candid thinker have of gaining better conditions through political action?

To support government, is to aid tyranny. To become a part of it, is to join hand with organized murder.

Political action is for the ignorant, the deluded and the knave. HENRY ADDIS.

The Letter-Box.

H. L., City. — Comrade Addis is in Tacoma.

J. H., San Francisco. — Many thanks for back-numbers and pamphlets. We can use all you can spare.

N. P. L., St. Helen, Ore. — Your address is changed and No. 31 sent.

RAD. ARB. BUND, New York City. — We will send 10 cop. regularly to J. S., and if you have use for any more just tell us so. We are glad to hear the comrades in New York like the contents of THE FIREBRAND. We are trying to do our best under the existing circumstances.

MRS. H. C. DE M., Glennis Ferry, Ida. — You sent 30 cts. twice.

Liberty, London. — Thanks for your kind remarks, but the "Altrurian" has never been issued from our office, it was published by comrade Fulton, at Columbus Junction, Iowa; the comrade discontinued the paper for lack of support and turned his subscription list over to us.

To several Inquirers. — Comrade Emma Goldmann is at present on a propaganda tour in England. She is making heroic efforts to gather the necessary means to make an appeal for commutation of the sentence on comrade Berkman — of whom, we are sorry to say, we cannot give any definite news. From reports we receive from across the water, her various meetings are largely attended, and she desires us to say, that the reception she has met with in England and Scotland fills her with hope and energy for the strenuous continuance in the future of her labors for the cause of liberty.

Comrades, agitate for THE FIREBRAND!

THE 11. OF NOVEMBER.

By common consent of the Anarchists of all countries the 11th of November has been set apart as a memorial day of all those who have suffered for the cause of freedom.

We give through it our oppressors fair warning that we have not forgotten, that we are far from being cowed by their brutality which they have shown towards our comrades. On the contrary, it is one of the strongest incentives to overthrow by any and all means the existing system which makes such deeds possible.

Freedom will conquer in spite of hangman, guillotine and tortures. Theories of social progress cannot be stamped out by killing a few men, or torturing and persecuting others. "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church," applies to our cause as well.

Spies, Parsons, Fisher, Engels and Lingg died like men; death had no terror to them; until the very last minute did they show defiance in every word and gesture to their oppressors, who were able to chain their bodies but not their mind. They knew that some time in the near future the seeds which they had sown with a lavish hand, would spring up and bear fruit a thousandfold.

Others have followed in their steps, undeterred by the fate of their predecessors. With a courage, born only of the conviction that Anarchy will eventually benefit all mankind, have our comrades everywhere jeopardized their lives and liberty to carry this new gospel of liberation from tyranny to the oppressed in all climes. Young and old, the educated and the common laborer alike, have willingly laid down their life in order to further the cause.

It are the Anarchists whom our oppressors fear, because they touch the real cause of our misery, and believe with Louis Lingg: "If you get at us with gatling guns, we will dynamite you."

Therefore, comrades, on with the work; let us never falter; let us arouse ourselves to do everything within our power to make an end to this hellish social system of ours, which makes slaves of the many and masters of the few. Keep the memory of all those who have suffered in the past, and who are still suffering in the bastilles of our exploiters, as Hronek, Berkmann, Nold and Bauer in this country, forever green, and the day of liberation will soon be here.

E. SLABS.

THE EIGHT HOURS WORKING DAY.

By PETER KRAPOTKIN.

[Written in 1890.]

Let us always remain ourselves. Let us say, always and everywhere when an opportunity presents itself, our opinion, our whole and full opinion, without keeping back anything, without concealing anything from the workers. Let us destroy the Spanish castles with which the legalitarian socialist try to captivate and to cheat the masses and let us repeat forever that whatever the masses want to get and shall get, they must conquer themselves outside of legislation. Wherever we speak on the eight hours day, in private conversation or at small or large meetings, let us always say our full opinion and act up to it.

Eight hours work for a master—is eight hours too much. Not only because four of these hours are to enrich a master and to help to forge weapons by which we are kept down—but also because these eight hours are not employed to produce what is useful and necessary for society but to produce what brings the largest profit to the exploiter.

In large industries an eight hours working day is nothing extraordinary. In most of the large factories of England now (in 1890) only from 50 to 53 hours are worked per week, and just where the hours of labor are shortest, the largest profits are reaped by the owners. Even the bourgeois economists understand this very well and lead public opinion this way. They quote continuously the works of Steinkopf, the man who studied very accurately the question of wages in Europe and who demonstrated that in America, where wages are highest, the engine of flesh and blood—the worker—produces most. He proves, that in all kinds of work, cotton-mills, foundries, railways, etc., England with smaller wages and longer hours, is left behind by America, and that America produces cheaper.

"High wages—increased production," becomes a common saying in the industrial world.

Thus the eight hours day with ten hours pay in no way should cause more trouble to the English manufacturer. On the first serious efforts made by the workers for the eight hours day they will grant this demand. Only the workers themselves have not yet made up their minds on the question.

But this clearly shows how wrong the Socialists are in saying to the people that the number of the unemployed will decrease if an eight hours day is introduced. When ignorants try to entrap the workers by saying that wherever eighty men work a ten hours day, one hundred shall be required to work an eight hours day, to produce the same quantity of goods,—the foolishness of this talk must be shown up.

Every day's experience makes the workers understand that this way of reasoning is perfectly wrong.

They also understand that to employ twenty men more, it is not necessary to buy new machinery, or in other words, that where more machinery is required this does not imply that more men are required to. For in place of twenty machines of an old pattern the master will buy thirty machines of a new pattern which will enable him to do the same work with seventy instead of eighty workers, as before.

The improvement of machinery continues to go on and the field for new improvements is still immense.

The newest and most perfect machinery existing is by no means in use everywhere now, but when circumstances such as the shorter hours of work will force the masters to introduce them, they are sure to be soon introduced. The inevitable consequence will be the increase in place of the decrease of the number of unemployed.

The eight hours day then will mean:

Momentary improvement for seventy workers who remain in employment and loss of work for ten others. These ten go to increase the so called reserve army which enables the capitalist to lower the wages of those who are employed.

The state of the seventy employed is thus bettered, as far as they work shorter hours, but by the increased number of the unemployed their situation has become more precarious. To-day a little more tolerable but to-morrow perhaps no work, no bread! To this the shortening of the hours of labor inevitably leads.

Each improvement in the condition of a section of the workers is followed by an increase of misery in the large masses of the people.

And this great and ever growing mass of the unemployed crowds together in the large towns, capitals, centres of industry and commerce, where they become the prey of sweaters.

For, contrary to the assertions of the Marxist theorists, the great majority of the small industries survive in all industrial countries. They are kept up by starvation wages. Only they have been transplanted from the villages, where the workers once found a support in agriculture, to the suburbs of the large centres where the starved workers are helplessly at the mercy of the small exploiters.

The whole history of England—this type of an industrial country—may be resumed thus:

Improved condition of the workers of the large industries, but less security than before; only by continuous crises the system works on, and these crises are driving it to its end.

Each improvement of machinery diminishes the number of privileged workers, diminishing the number of those employed in the large industries and those thrown out of work go on swelling the numbers of the unemployed.

The latter form the reserve army for capitalists to draw from: they are appealed to, they are their support in cases of strikes. Thus the sweating system of which we hear so much now, the system of small trades exploited by hosts of middlemen, becomes the inevitable consequence of improvement of the state of the workers in the large industries. For this price these improvements are bought.

Small industries, mercilessly exploited by sweaters, are the necessary counterpoise of large industries with higher wages. And another equally inevitable consequence is the replacement of adult men by women and above all by girls and boys.

Must we keep this knowledge for us? To make our meetings more bright? To give a scientific touch to our arguments?

Must we follow the steps of the bourgeois who keep their science and their knowledge for learned congresses, reviews and books without imparting it to those who require it most?

In such a case we would disgrace the name of Anarchist, for Anarchy means before all: to be with the people, to live with the people, to work with the people.

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UTOPIA.

NEARER each day to thee,
Nearer to thee,
Fair dream of love and light
And melody,
When human brotherhood
That long afar hath stood
Shall present be.

Tho' we be wanderers
In Greed's lone land,
Where each against the rest
Doth raise his hand,
We daily long to be
Nearer, sweet dream, to thee,
Nearer to thee.

We know the rule of night
Shall honored be
Only a little while;
For love of thee
Dawns on the inner sight
Of poor humanity
So cheerily.

So work we patiently
Till love shall win
The final victory
O'er woe and sin,
And want and poverty
And strife shall banished be,
Sweet dream in thee.

Then, when thou com'st at last,
Millennial day,
And all the bitter past
Is far away,
The vanished dream shall be
Mankind's long misery
Conquered by thee.

—[H. M. WILLIAMS, in

The West Coast Populist.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

THE doctors of theology which, I am certain most need a doctor, are quite reformers you know. Instead of preaching their gospel, the absurdity of which has reached its limit, as they have been doing in the past, they now speak of politics, municipal reforms and, by the way, have something to say on liberty. Not speaking of their views on politics, which, in nine cases out of ten, are ill-formed, ill-timed and foolish, I shall confine myself to their views on liberty.

"Liberty," says a reverend gentleman, "is the most priceless possession human beings can attain. Given liberty and all other possessions are possible. Liberty is not only a blessing or a jewel, but it is both. It is a blessing to those who give it and a jewel to those who have it. But it is unwise to give liberty to a people which has not proved itself capable of using it for the good of the community. He who wishes to give liberty to a people which has not established its record demonstrating the abilities to use liberty advantageously, is an Anarchist, that is to say a most dangerous person to the state and its present institutions."*)

This is an old way of getting out of a difficulty and can be seen throughout the history of mankind. Whenever a people awakes and the demands for liberty are so obvious to be denied or swept away by keeping them out of print, some old hypocrite, pretending to be a lover of liberty, steps forward to deny the people's de-

*) The reverend is right this time: liberty is dangerous to governments and our present institutions. And he also admits that liberty is monopolized and is to be given. But I say liberty never will be "given," it must be taken.

A. I.

mands, because he thinks they have not established a record demonstrating their abilities to utilize liberty. And so it appears that no people ought to get freedom till it has convinced the reverend that it can utilize it. But how is a man to demonstrate his abilities to do a certain thing till he has been at it? How is a people to demonstrate that it can utilize liberty, till it has had liberty? How could the Americans show their abilities to get along without a king till they were given a chance to be free? How could the negroes in the South demonstrate their abilities to live without being slaves till they were made free?

But admitting that the people cannot live under freedom, yet freedom, according to the reverend, is desirable, is that a reason why they should remain slaves? Admitting that one who has not seen the rays of the sun for some time cannot look at them afterwards, is that a reason why we should put him into the dark? How would one learn to walk and to talk unless he tried it? How would one learn to utilize liberty unless he is given a chance to learn, and how can one learn to be a freeman, till he has been free?—But the reverends do not mind all this. They are disciples of that fool who said: "Never go near the water till you have learned how to swim."

To almost every one our present time seems to bring discontent. One would almost conclude that the tendency of our time is to bring discontent. Some begin to doubt in the possibility of any body, even God himself, to make something out of nothing, and are not satisfied with the absurdities of the bible. Some begin to realize that it is impossible to do away with a crime by committing another crime, that is to say, they cannot see how one who has been hurt can be aided by putting the criminal to prison. While others begin to criticise the justice of our system, which enriches the idlers and robs the wealthproducers. The only classes of persons who seem to be disturbed about nothing are those whose brains have been chloroformed by priests, stupified by inheritance, wealth, or stunned by poverty, that is to say, the religionists, millionaires and abjectly poor. To the fanatics all religious questions are settled. To the raised up millionaires all social questions are settled. To the abjectly poor there are no questions to settle. The religionists are sure of going to heaven. The millionaires are sure of their steady income. The abjectly poor are sure that they can never be any worse off than they are. All these are quite content with things as they are, but nearly all others are fermenting with discontent. H. A. KOCH.

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