

WHAT ANARCHISTS FIGHT FOR.

The men in authority—the judge, the magistrate, the member of Parliament, etc.—are unanimous. “The Anarchists,” they say, “would dethrone the King, overthrow the power of the Houses of Lords and Commons and all their allies, corporations, mayors, councils, armies, and prisons. Thus, destroying the central Government, upon which the existence of society depends, they annihilate all forms of organisation and substitute Anarchy, which is universal murder, mutual destruction, chaos, and desolation. As a theory, it is madness; as practice, it is dynamite and death.”

The Anarchist replies: “The destruction of government means the abolition of exploitation, not of society. Anarchy therefore means universal peace, mutual aid, co-operation, and prosperity. As a theory, it is sound; and as practice, it is revolution and liberty.”

Here are two statements entirely contradictory to each other. Which is correct? To be honest, before condemning either side as wrong, it is necessary to understand fully how the opinions of that side were formed. It is necessary to follow along the path of thought which has been chosen, until the point is reached where it appears to turn off from the true direction. Our purpose, then, is to briefly trace the road by which we reached our opinions, so that the reader with an open mind may judge if we are right or where we are wrong.

First, we are sceptics; that is to say, we doubt those things which are generally accepted as facts, and continue to doubt them until we have collected evidence and are able to see by the light of our own reason if they be true or false.

Considering, then, from this standpoint our own circumstances, those of our friends, and the whole of society, we see that we toil long hours and have small share in the fruits of our labour. We have accomplished much in science, poetry, art, and philosophy, yet we live in fear of destitution and starvation. While possibilities grow greater, our labour grows heavier. Those who labour longest and hardest, live in the most abject poverty; while the idle wish and it is granted to them, wealth waits on them, the achievements of the human race are

their property, the energy and vitality of the people are absorbed in granting their wishes.

We do not believe that this is the necessary form of society, we do not believe this is peace; for these reasons we will fight it; we are, in fact, revolutionists.

The opposite of this system of poverty and property, worker and owner, is suggested to us at once, and is summed up in the words "Liberty and Equality."

All who have claimed the word "Socialism" have appealed to the people with these words and have proclaimed the abolition of property. We Anarchists, being Socialists, are in agreement with all this; but instead of trusting the authority of the State to regulate society on these principles, we point out that authority of any kind is opposed to equality; that equality, in fact, means simply that which is left when privilege and authority have been abolished. Property, moreover, is simply a privilege enforced by the State—the privilege "to use and abuse one's own within the limits of the law." We find, further, that the State and its administrative organ, the Government, are founded upon robbery, depend upon robbery, and exist merely for purposes of robbery. Therefore do we deny that the State and the Government should organise society, whatever party of politicians may be in power. And moreover it is true that we wish to destroy the power of the King, the Lords, the Commons, corporations, in short, of all privileged men, all men in authority. We wish to destroy the State and the Government because they are opposed to our liberty. But it is not true that in doing this we annihilate society, or that we oppose organisation.

Now we come to the constructive side of our policy.

Taught by every-day experience and natural science, we believe that it is necessary to organise in order to live, and that therefore it is the struggle for existence on the part of individuals which causes them to co-operate, and the organisation so formed is society.

A free people will produce and distribute and organise all things which they believe to be necessary for the full realisation of their life, from bread-making to cricket matches, from freethought societies to churches. Individuals by free agreement will associate to form institutions; by free disagreement they will divide and form a variety of institutions, such as factories, universities, and football clubs.

These institutions will be forced to co-operate (just as the heart and lungs and brains, etc., co-operate to form our personalities), since one cannot exist without the others, and the organised whole thus formed is called society.

We now see, then, that the State and Government are not necessary for purposes of organisation. To overthrow this central power in society, and organise a free society springing from our co-operation as free individuals, is our object.

As to methods, it will be seen from the above that we do not look to Government for reform. We believe with Buckle, the historian, that "whenever politicians attempt great good they invariably inflict great harm," and that "it is absurd, it would be a mockery of sound reasoning, to ascribe to legislators any share in the progress, or to expect any benefits from future legislators, except that sort of benefit which consists in undoing the work of their predecessors. This is what the present generation claims at their hands; and it should be remembered that what one generation solicits as a boon, the next generation demands as a right. And when the right is pertinaciously refused, one of two things has always happened: either the nation has retrograded, or else the people have risen."

We ask nothing of the legislators. We want freedom, and we shall go the straight way for it—Direct Action. Realising, to quote Buckle again, that "reforms which would have been refused to argument have been yielded from fear," we know that if there are palliatives worth having to be gained from the capitalist class, these will be conceded as our instinct of liberty develops and renders us dangerous. The influence of government will retrench only so far as we, a conscious people, demand our freedom. We therefore welcome all acts of direct rebellion against oppression, whether on the part of individuals or of industrial organisations. To no one method are we pledged, realising that there is no short cut to the establishment of liberty, that this struggle dates back to the early history of the human race; and the final triumph of the people against government can only come when we have thrown off our superstition and servility.

First, then, it is our wish to make Anarchists. We do not *trust* in organisations, but we will organise to develop and propagate our ideas. We do not *place our faith* in the General Strike, but we will use this weapon as an instrument to fight the master class. We will

refuse to pay rent, we will resist the taxes, we will not sit on juries, we will adopt every method of Direct Action, until finally we make this system of force and starvation unworkable, and organise free society—Anarchy.

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