GOD AND THE STATE.

EXTRACTS FROM UNEDITED MANUSCRIPTS OF
MICHAEL BAKUNIN.

(TRANSLATED FOR "LIBERTY" BY "K")

 Commentary from No. 8. 

What are the reasons which cause unbelief, unbelief, which so powerfully emotionalizes declamation, and which constitutes, as I think, mankind's greatest hindrance? There are many reasons for it. One of the chief causes lies doubtless in the ignorance of the masses. Being generally and systematically deprived of all scientific education through the inter- nal care of governments and the privileged classes, who think it useful to keep them as long as possible in ignorance, piety, and credulity (three nearly synonymous words)—the masses ignore both the existence and the evidence of this fact, without which there can be no complete moral and social revolution. The masses in whose interest always revolts against the established order, are still more or less attached to that order by the religion of their fathers,—the providence of the privileged classes. The privileged classes, whatever they may profess, have no longer any piety or belief, are for their part attached to the existing state of things by their own political and social interests. But it is impossible to assert that this is the only reason for which they cling passionately to the predominant ideas. However low may be my estimate of the actual intellectual and moral worth of these classes, I cannot admit that unbelief is not in the main the origin of their lights and ideas. No doubt in every class and in every party there exists a larger or smaller number of intellectually audacious and knowingly dishonest exploiters—hominis foedus (strong men)—who, void of all intellectual and moral restraints, believe that the interests of their individual being, convictions, are ready to utilise any such, on occasion, and in order to further their own ends. But these distinguished persons never, even in the most corrupted classes, form more than a very small minority. The doctrine of the existence of a supernatural being, of the providence of the state, are of course subject to the influence of their own special interests; and these make reason a condition of their existence. But it cannot be admitted that in fostering reason, they are propagated by man for himself or for the common good, or even for his own suggestion and interests; but for the interest of the state itself, which is his only real interest, or which he imagines to be. This is the only true interpretation of the word ideas, and this must be understood by every one. 

The common and fundamental error of all idealists,—an error which by the way is a perfectly logical consequence of their whole system,—consists in trying to find the basis of morals in the isolated individual, whilst it is the common interest, or the common interest of the masses, or the interest of the state, which are the only true bases of morals. For the state, the moralists of the individual school use as the basis of their political and social theories. 

It will not be difficult to show that the human individual, as held up and adored by these thinkers, is an entirely non-moral being. He is the personification of egotism, the anti-social being per excellence. Endowed with an immortal soul, he is infinite and complete within himself, in need of no other being. However much he may claim an inalienable right to his own existence, he ought not to suffer the existence of any equal or superior being,—immortal and infinite as himself, or more immortal and infinite than himself—beside him, or above him. He should be the only man on earth, and not, as is the case, the slave of another who creates him, or the slave of another who, whatever beyond itself, meets a barrier is no longer the infinite.

Two infinite meetings, annihilate one another.

Now, let us return to the practical aspect of the question. Who are otherwise such subtle logicians cannot and continue to commit this inconsistency of admitting the existence of many men all equally immortal, that is, all equally infinite, and above them a God who is live more immor- nal and infinite than himself. Sooner or later, deprived of the lead- ership of denying the real existence, the mortality as well as the mutual dependence of millions of human beings who have lived and who live on this globe.

No man could be rich, no man could be poor, in Peru; but all might enjoy, and did enjoy, a competence. Ambition, avarice, the love of change, the mental spirit of discontent, those passions which most agitate the minds of men, found me place in the bosom of the Peruvian peasantry—latitude of Peru. 

No man could be rich, no man could be poor, in Peru; but all might enjoy, and did enjoy, a competence. Ambition, avarice, the love of change, the mental spirit of discontent, those passions which most agitate the minds of men, found me place in the bosom of the Peruvian peasantry—latitude of Peru.

THE LAST GAP OF PROPERTYISM.

BY L. S. BEVINGTON.

What do the individualists mean when they talk of the right of per- sonal property as the basis of the product of labor? What is an "own" labor-product? What is "appropriation"? What is "an own"? 

In his letter to Liberty, on "Proudohmism and Communism," Mr. Sewing takes for granted that these three words stand for universes, or at least, fundamental things, and that there must be some relation to one another, and from a little three-legged platform so based, let us determine a power. If the man who conceives and carries out the production of a commodity has no right to consume (sic) or appropriate what he has produced, but what belongs to him, he has a right to consume it or appropriate it who has not produced it? If this is so, why are there still some open questions? In my answer to this, I follow. "Supposing you could find a man who had, all by himself, conceived and carried out the production of a commodity, and suppose you could find something other and more than his need or fitness to be the consumer or user of that commodity binding him in a perpetual manner to the producer, in order to find this extra bond to be something other or more than a legal, conventional, and remoral concession on the part of other people, then I will accept the term "right" as designating this bond. But the first step towards bringing my mind up to a level from my full knowledge of the subject, and so have a chance of disposing of the aforesaid power as it stands, is to find your individual conceiver or carrier-out of the production. (And by the way, which of these two wonderful persons, when found, is to have precedence as a model of consumption of the finished product?) I am not quibbling. It is at this very point—the supposed "right" to the supposed "owning" of supposed "individually produced" product—that we have to see for what it is that the idea of the alleged superstition in it to draw its last gasp. The air is noisy and heavy with the smoke of my thoughts. I wish for all our sakes it were over, so that economic sanity might bless us all at last, and make our planet our home instead of our prison.

That conventional "article" of a transient economic creed which binds surplus goods (consequently opportunities) to the will or whim of individual "owners" is after all is as irrelevant as it is dogmatic. It takes in mind the man who conceives, who produces, and who has and has not the legal basis in actual relations between men and things. To me it seems that there exists, to begin with, no individual produc- er. No one does, or can do more than put a finishing touch to something which a preceding multitude of human beings has prepared and done. The consummation of the production of a commodity, for his hand, having provided him also with tools to work with, to say nothing of having led, educated, and protected him up to the stage of ability to perform the required work, has already been, is a man's job every day. Say it is a specialty original and peculiar, then it is then a man's job only if it is a wild fruit gathered in a jungle. The wild fruit, too, which one himself gathers, can be consumed by the consumer of the same. But the fruit of all preceding generations and the manual work of a great crowd to bring it into existence, will create a great crowd and many generations, and will the more widely and easily fulfill its end and function of instruc- tion, less in the contamination and distribution get hitched on the thor of the property hedge.

Thinker, inventor, able mechanic or husbandman, it is not for you to say who has not had part in the making of your finished product. "Right to consume" means actual need and natural ability to consume, or it means nothing. "Right to appropriate" means law-protected ability to with- hold and sell, or give. This is a right, or a privilege, or a monopoly. But it may exist on the part of the finisher of the product, when it is good economy all round for him to put it to use as first comer, or, it may exist when it is poor economy not to let anyone have it who does need it for immediate consumption. In the case of appropriation the right is spurious, and exists nowhere. There are only three real terms—Men; goods; use. Men make goods. Goods belong where they are useful. Goods are useful as wares, not as mere commodities, not as speculations, not as instruments, for profit making or for bribing. These usage are all wasteful of wealth and of time.

Proudohmism, says Mr. Sewing, "preach Communism in relation to labor and its product, labors productivity of the labor-producer to the efforts of individuals; and emphasise the right of personal appro- priation of labor-products for the reason that they are due to personal effort." Why, reason? It seems to me that it is dogma rather than reason which speaks here. Surely the true reason for general and free access to natural products is general need. There is a positive reason for my drinking at your spring. I drink because I am thirsty, and not because I did not make the water. I do not think a new institute comes into existence when anyone makes a walking stick. I keep it instead of giving it to my brother, because he has one already, and I have none; but because I cut the stick, and I use it. All that I do is cut the stick, just as one man does and has the use of it. My work is better rewarded in his fit use of it than in my unit custody of it. Nor need he pay me "damage" for it.

No, let us all say what we mean. There is no fitness in the propo- sition, it is not good logic, it is not good politics. As day, day, day, day, difficultly, and disturbing, and dangerous, and morally des- tructive to keep it enforced, and in working-order. To take away its glib validity, and its pedantic virtue, and its business virtue, and to give a grand new nobility will alter the nature of its principle.
PEACE ON EARTH.

Peace on earth! Man recoiled
To feel that bids him be
O holy freedom! final faith!
O sacred certainties!
I sometimes think the road to it
Lies through besmear.
And yet the young are with us too.
Held from the very first
Dear ladies and gentlemen fall of all
The gold in cage to burst;
Alert to note the living springs
That shake the whole world's choir.
The very goal we touch at last,
The heaven of the free.
Ah, comrades! you who understand,
Sing in your heart with me—
"Thou Death, where now thy poisoned sting?
Where, Grace thy victory?"

L. S. Brinton.

HOW CASERO DIE?

At a quarter to four o'clock the governor of the prison, accompanied by the Provost of the Republic, the executioner and his assistants entered Casero's cell. He was fast asleep. The governor shook him and said, "Conrade, Casero, your time has come!"

Casero, suddenly awakened, and sat up on his bed, his whole body agitated by a nervous trembling.

The governor asked him if he would like a cordial, he appeared not to understand, and as soon as he had been given one the punishment was decreed; but he seemed to awake from a dream and answered, "I require nothing; I am ready." After this he required his compatriot. His demeanour was calm, and his answers prompt; he endeavoured to overcome the croubling tribulation which had seized him, but without success. He was asked again if he would like some brandy, and solemnly declined it.

"Would you like us to call a priest?" the governor asked, "he will give you courage."

"I want no one. I am not in need of courage."

"Have you anything to say to the Judge of Instruction."

"Nothing."

"Would you like to see your compatriot?"

"No! What would be the use? In my case —

During this time the executioner's assistants finished dressing him, the governor asked him if he had anything to reveal.

Casero replied "No! no!" then pointing with his trembling finger to a letter lying open on the seat, in a low voice, "I've only to ask you to send this letter I have written to my mother."

"Very well! but you have really nothing else to say," asked the Provost of the Republic.

Casero shrugged his shoulders and replied in Italian, "I wish you wouldn't worry me."

The governor then said, "You don't consider the pain you have caused your poor mother."

The prisoner was deeply moved at the mention of his mother, great tears rolled down his cheeks as he replied with emotion, "I hope you will send her my letter."

As he said this he seemed almost choked with emotion, but only for a moment. He became comparatively calm and said, "Now I am ready."

He was taken away in a wagon. When within four yards of the guillotine he alighted, raised his head resolutely, looked straight at the knife suspended above, and then turning towards the crowd said, "Conrade, Comrades, Vive l'Anarchie!"

He was then thrown under the knife, and as he cried, "Vive l'Anarchie!" his head fell into the basket.

(From Messageries, Rome.)

During the rise in the Missouri river a man was standing watching the drifting flood past, when he called to several coloured brethren standing by, and said he would give them half of all they fetched out. The proposition was too great to be rejected, and the able spectators went to work with a will. They realised a lot of the driftwood and divided it, the result of their labour being a good thing for all concerned, particularly good for the man who made the generous offer. The occurrence will seem extraordinary to most people, but there is a great deal of work done on what is practically the same plan. The men who stand on the bank and make heartfelt propositions are the financiers.

Bearing. St. Peter to applicant: "You say you were an editorial writer on a daily newspaper." "Yes, sir." "Step into the elevator, please." (Stops him.) "How soon does it go up?" "It doesn't go up, it goes down."

The following notice appeared in a shop window of a tailor in Hull: "Wanted, two apprentices, will be treated as one of the family."

Are Liberty and Communism Antagonistic?

It is evidently very difficult for those who have pinned their faith to some particular reform as the panacea for all ills to perceive the virtues of any other, still more to see how the two may harmonize. Thus both Democrats and Individualists think they have utterly destroyed Communism by saying it is a contradiction in terms. No doubt liberty is incompatible with compulsory Communism as with compulsory anything else. If, however, absolute individual freedom is but the means by which Anarchists aspire to arrive, naturally and voluntarily, at their ideal Communism, which, probably, all will admit to be excellent, if practicable, then all such objections fall to the ground at once. These critics evidently forget that we already have and under the greatest possible amount of individual autonomy must have, a large instatement of Communism. Air, sunshine, rain, the ocean, roads, bridges, scenery, the exterior of buildings, unique works of art, etc., are recognised as common to all, and the most selfish individual would hardly think it possible for them to be explored, even where that was possible. But the orthodox objections to Communism seem to argue a very low view of life in those who advance them. In their opinion, apparently, the real object for which bountiful efforts are to acquire material possessions for themselves. The careers of innumerable benefactors of mankind prove that such a theory is a law on human nature; and when once, by the abolition of monopoly, the struggle for existence will be the very reason to escape that material wealth will be so superabundant as to be no more an incentive to, or object of, effort than are the common bounties of Nature now.
Between Ourselves.

A correspondent calls attention to a statement in the Mazei, to the effect that Prince Kropotkin has left the ranks of the Anarchists and has "returned to rational principles," and asks whether there is any truth in it.

I see Comrade Kropotkin from time to time, and beg to assure our correspondent that there is no truth whatever in the statement. Perhaps it will be news to the spectacles and paraphernalia of the reptile that our comrade is working harder than ever to break the letters that brand humanity. He is delighted with the translation of his book, "La Commune du Pain," which I doubt most of our comrades have seen running through France.

Those who know anything of Kropotkin's life and character, what he has stood for, and the strength of his arguments with centred conviction of cooperative made against him, and will view with loathing the attempts of certain artists to exploit his name for their advantage. Kropotkin is now hard at work on his new book, which will be based on the articles which have appeared in the Nineteenth Century, and elsewhere, on Mutual Aid, and he hopes to see it published very soon.

Dragomanoff, the learned professor of the university of Sophin, is about to publish in Russian, some unpublished letters written by Bakunin from Siberia. The publication of these letters, which we hope to see translated into English soon, will undoubtedly prove a valuable aid in the understanding of Bakunin's personality and of the evolution of his mind through the great conflict of ideas and views which has resulted in the parties of the present time.

From extracts from these letters which have already appeared, Bakunin seems to have held strongly to the idea, which inspired him during a portion of his life, that the revolution would originate among the working class races. These present who, even under the most adverse conditions, held steady to the view that the land should belong to the peasant, and led in their work communal life in which the State could neither destroy nor absorb.

This is no news to those who have known or studied Bakunin, Bakunin, who was a true Russian with all the qualities and defects of his race, was thoroughly imbued with that hatred of the Jews which oppression and exploitation have evoked in the minds of the Russian peasant, and that hatred led into many errors of judgment and tact. In this Bakunin fell a victim to the prejudices of his race and of all his time, a time which made it impossible for the new civilization to arise from Italy, while each retrenchment thought the same of his own country, all being patrons of a more or less absolute Bourgeois. This would affect mean example of the influence exerted on the most original personalities by dominant ideas.

M. Karl Blum, however, is not concerned with these deep problems, for in the Paul Mall Gazette of the 25th An, acts one referring to these letters of Bakunin, he fails to see in them anything but an opportunity for repeating the inanition, as foolish as it is malicious, that Bakunin was not unlikely an agent of the Czar.

Karl Blum has also maintained that Proudhon may have been an agent of the Czar, but he is wrong, and makes similar reflections upon all those who do not think as he does. This is a method of his own of which we willingly concede him the monopoly.

Bakunin spent some years in prison at Dresden, Kempten, Prague, Omuzt, and Schellach, undergoing sufferings which, as Karl Blum himself admits, seem hardly credible at the present time. He appeared undoubtedly, however, and this seems to create suspicion in M. Karl Blum, although he is still alive himself. It recalls those who in Italy, while sure of their own safety and ready to reap any personal advantage from events without incurring the slightest risk, amounted the Maximim to probably an agent of Metternich because he had never been hanged.

M. Karl Blum has only just discovered that Bakunin was on good terms with Comte Marxavach, Governor of Eastern Siberia. Though he learned it from Bakunin's own letters, a proof that Bakunin had no reason for disguising the fact, he yet sees in it only fresh ground for his inanition.

It has long been known that Bakunin had acquired some influence over Marxavach, and that, profiting by some comparatively freedom of movement he had obtained, he was enabled to effect his escape from Siberia.

M. Karl Blum, who would do well to study the men of his time instead of calumniating them, represents Bakunin as the apostle of "Fon Destruction," and it may be inferred that by his simile: "It was" of the destruction of all the artificial barriers imposed by the State in the interest of the few against the many, and represented at the Congress of the Association, Communities, and Federations of Communities. He joined the International with enthusiasm, because he saw in it the beginning of an organization to natural means of a new society of mutual cooperation and equality. The destruction of evil is not the destruction of everything.

 declarations

by Capriani

While I was in France, the bourgeoise press ascribed to me opinions and sayings to the act of Caserio, which are altogether contrary to the truth. Perhaps it was a police trick to induce me to some declaration which might afford a pretext for imprisoning me, and so get me out of the way. I protested in la petite Republique, but in mid terms, so as not to lay myself open to prosecution.

Now that I am able to do so without thereby delivering myself over to the fierce bourgeois reaction, I make a point of declaring that in my opinion the act of Caserio was an eminently political act, that it may be debated, if one wishes, from the point of view of practical utility, but that assuredly it was inspired by noble moral sentiments, and that it raises Caserio to the level of the most advanced martyrs in the cause of oppressed humanity.

Those bourgeois, moreover, who sing hymns and raise statues to the Orsina and the Agisiole Maito, and other martyrs of this order, appear somewhat ridiculous in calling Caserio an assassin, seeing that he died for the people, and not in order to open the way to new oppressions.

Is it the Police?

Manifestes have lately been published in London, in French and Italian, coinciding in absurdly violent language, and which are intended to convey the idea that they are the work of Anarchists. Le Libre Parole, of Paris, states that these publications are inspired by Melville with the object of showing that London is the centre of propaganda by deed of a certain kind, and of preparing public opinion in England for the expulsion of foreign refugees. This would be a little service which Melville would do, but it is not to render his French colleagues in return for their own contributions and hard cash. This may or may not be true, one thing is certain that it is only too easy for the police to circulate any rumour about Anarchists and even to work up the subject of Anarchy in Scotland Yard style, if the slightest importance is to be attached to anonymous publications.
WHY I AM AN INDIVIDUALIST ANARCHIST.

By J. ARMSTRONG.

On the negative side, my reasons for being an Anarchist are very much the same as those of the Communist Anarchist. Anarchism is a philosophy. It is a generalization formed from an analysis and classification of the facts and features of history, and relates to man and his destiny. It means that a state of society which is strictly in accordance with justice is a state in which no government exists—that the government of man shall be the expression of the voluntary governors, for the benefit of the governed; government for the protection of the weak against the strong. Practically government exists for the benefit of the governed, and is a force which makes the weak, weaker, and the strong, stronger.

As we follow out the pages of our own history we can trace the dead hand of legislation in almost every line. Early in the history of society we know that governments were a combination of the stronger to rob, plunder, and enslave the weaker, and that the governors made no pretence of governing for the good of the governed. A subjected, helpless class was thus established. Being placed at the bottom of the scale they had nothing but that the governors should look upon such concessions as they did make to humanity as so much benevolence on their part? And the governed: what more natural than that they should soon be persuaded that those concessions were really from the generous motives of the governors? Seeing the tyranny of some governors, what more natural than that those who did exercise a little humanity should be looked upon as comparatively good, and, ultimately, as absolutely good. Thus the fetish of government became a psychological factor in society. To see this deeper into the nature of man came the priest with his oracles and his charlatanry. The thing was complete. All the governors had to do afterwards was to consider the best way to fleece the governed while ostensibly endeavouring to do them good. The result is that, to use the words of Throld Rogers, for centuries, "a conspiracy, connected by the law and carried out by parties interested in its success, was entered into to cheat the English workmen of his wages, to tie him to the soil, to deprive him of hope, and to degrade him into irredeemable poverty."

Blackstone says much the same thing.

We are told that matters stand differently now, however much with the existing order of things and the present system of government, payment of members, and some other delightful things will be able to see that laws are made in the interests of all. Vain hopes! Give a man power, and it corrupts both his heart and his understanding. Creates a class of legislators, governors, and they immediately look upon themselves as a superior class of men. Here is what Edward Bellamy says in "Looking Backward,": "Apart from the grand incentive to endeavour, afforded by the fact that the highest places in the nation are open to the highest class men, various incitements of a minor, but perhaps equally effective sort are provided in the form of special privileges and immunities in the way of discipline which the superior class men enjoy. There it is out. Who ever heard of a governing class whose first thought was not the creation for its special privileges and immunities? It must ever be the case. The evils and corruption of political action are inherent. Even were our governors prompted by the very best and purest motives, the governmental method of reform would give us a full crop of evils. We turn then to the anarchist, who laughs at the politician and scorns the ballot box.

We proclaim the sovereignty of the individual and his right of judgment against all government, ins, parties, or what not: and declare that all morality whether is the conventional morality of Philistinism or the scientific flats of more liberal sects must have its ultimate sanction in individual judgment. But while we proclaim this right we also wish to instruct this individual judgment so that the exercise will result in general good. To formulate principles of action for the guidance (not government) of men.

But our endeavor to formulate the principles of right action implies a belief that in society there is something wrong, and this something wrong we believe to be a matter of economic wrong. There is no need to insist upon this point. The platform, the legislature, the pulpits, and the press, all proclaim that the present economic inequality, with its attendant evils, must come to an end; and, as the case may be, somewhat modified. The Anarchist says it must come to an end, for he is a Communist or Proprietary Anarchist, he proclaims as the corner stone of his system the great principle of Equality—a principle which includes both Liberty and Fraternity.

But what are the conditions of Equality, and how shall we reach those conditions? At this point the Communist and Proprietary Anarchist part company; for they cannot agree either as to the conditions of Equality or the methods of economic reform. My objections to Communist-Anarchism are as follows:—Firstly, that human nature seems ill-adapted for anything like a general cooperative effort on a large scale, and that it is poor material with which to establish even the desirable elements of Communism. Secondly, that even if it were possible to establish Communism, there must necessarily be connected with it a certain amount of administrative despotism, which would ultimately subvert the all-important principle of individual liberty; and thirdly, that in order to reach equality it is quite unnecessary to establish Communism.

An investigation of the numerous attempts to establish co-operative colonies in America gives us the stubborn fact that only they are permanent that have been held together by some religious bond or fanaticism. I know that our Communist friends say that they will succeed where all else has failed, because, they say, they have got the exact plan; nevertheless the fact seems to me to be that human nature and large conscious co-operative efforts, such as Communists propose, will no more mix than oil and water. Communism is essentially a matter of friendship, and true friendship can grow only from the basis of justice. To ask us, with an economic imperative, to exercise friendship as a duty to everybody, is more likely to raise our enmity than our friendship. What we want is justice, and that is the demand of the individualist Anarchist.

By justice, I mean more especially economic justice. If we examine the causes of economic injustice, we find they can be expressed by the trinity of Rent, Interest, and Profit. If we use the term profit, we restrict the meaning of the term interest to that of loan-interest. Now loan-interest depends wholly upon the existence of a vicious currency, a currency which makes one special commodity (gold) king of all other commodities. When this is the case, those who can hold or command this special kind of commodity can play all sorts of devilish tricks with those who hold other commodities. They can demand payment for its use and thereby rob labor, or they can restrict or expand its quantity and thereby say when, and at what, labor shall employ itself. The first demand of the Individualist-Anarchist, then, is for the abolition of the gold basis of our currency, and for the establishment of a non-metallic and non-interest bearing currency. This can be easily done by the organization of banks, so that all who possess values of any kind whatsoever may deposit their, or register them, at the bank, and receive the paper of the bank with which to make such purchases as are desirable. The extension of this system would, ultimately, entirely do away with interest, and set our financiers to rating their gold or to making ornaments with it, which might please them best.
But just look for a moment what would be the effect of the abolition of loan-interest upon the workers. Suppose, for instance a capitalist employing some hundreds of men were to find it necessary to use some labor-saving machinery, something that would turn out double the quantity of commodities with the same amount of labor.

Instead of say £30,000 worth of capital it would be necessary with the improved machinery to have £30,000 worth of capital. It is readily seen that the result of this would be that he would demand, and easily get, above half as much again interest as he formerly did, thus preventing so much of the results of improvements in production from spreading itself amongst all producers. Not only this, however, but the same principle, little by little, and step by step, by directing reward to capital instead of to labor, has widened and is continually widening those great inequalities in standard of comfort which a thriving aristocracy set up. But for this principle, economic laws would long since have produced an equality and a plenty compared with which communism would be a mere figment. The whole tendency of economic laws is to level up the standard of comfort; and to level the standard of comfort is to do away with profit and to make equal expenditures of labor equally rewarded. The whole trinity of labor-robbets, Rent Interest and Profit would disappear under Free Land and Free Currency.

Because we advocate the freedom of the individual to produce and to exchange, we are told that we do not believe in society, and that we believe in crushing the weak and upholding the strong. But what are the real economic enemies to society? Rent, Interest and Profit. Destroy those forces and the economic means by which the strong wax stronger and weak become weaker will have been destroyed. Then imagine the effusion of products which the free utilization of nature's forces must bring into existence. Under such circumstances, men would no longer live under the conditions of to-day. Our present soul-destroying scramble for wealth and position would give way to a nobler desire for peace and simplicity with beauty. When men no longer fear the demon poverty, they will no longer worship the idol of riches. Peace, Plenty, Beauty and Goodwill: that is the gospel which the Individualist-Anarchist brings to the world.

ANARCHY AND VIOLENCE.

By ERRICO MALATESTA

From their first manifestations Anarchists have nearly unanimous as to the necessity of recourse to physical force in order to transform existing society; and while the other self-styled revolutionary parties have gone floundering into the parliamentary slough, the anarchistic idea has in some sort identified itself with that of armed insurrection and violent revolution. But, perhaps, there has been no sufficient explanation as to the kind and the degree of violence to be employed; and here as in many other questions very dissimilar ideas and sentiments lurk under our common name.

As a fact, the numerous outrages which have lately been perpetrated by Anarchists and in the name of Anarchy have brought the light of day profound differences which had formerly been ignored, or scarcely foreseen.

Some comrades, disgusted at the atrocity and uselessness of certain of these acts, have declared themselves opposed to all violence whatever, except in cases of personal defence against direct and immediate attack. Which, in my opinion, would mean the renunciation of all revolutionary initiative, and the reserving of our blows for the petty, and often involuntary agents of the government, while leaving in peace the organizers of, and those chiefly benefited by, governmental and capitalist exploitation. Other comrades, on the contrary, carried away by the excitement of the struggle, embittered by the infinities of the ruling classes, and assuredly influenced by what has remained of the old Jacobin ideas permeating the political education of the present generation, have hastily accepted any and every kind of violence, provided only that it be committed in the name of Anarchy; and they have claimed hardly less than the right of life and death over those who are not Anarchists, or who are not Anarchists exactly according to their partisans.

And the mass of the public, ignoring these polemics, and deceived by the capitalist press, see in Anarchy nothing but bombs and daggers, and habitually regard Anarchists as wild beasts thirsting for blood and ruin.

It is therefore needful that we explain ourselves very clearly as regards this question of violence, and that each one of us should take a position accordingly: needful both in the interests of the relations of practical cooperation which may exist among all those who profess Anarchism, as well as in the interests of the general propaganda, and of our relations with the public.

In my opinion, there can be no doubt that the Anarchist idea, denying government, is by its very nature opposed to violence, which is the essence of every authoritarian system—the mode of action of every government.

Anarchy is freedom in solidarity. It is only through the harmonizing of interests, through voluntary cooperation, through love, respect, and reciprocal tolerance, by persuasion, by example, and by the contagion of benevolence, that it can and ought to triumph.

We are Anarchists, because we believe that we can never achieve the combined well-being of all, which is the aim of all our efforts, except through a free and standing among men, and without forcibly imposing the will of any upon any others.

In other parties there are certainly men who are as sincere and as devoted to the interests of the people as the best of us may be. But that which characterizes Anarchists is that they do not believe in society in possession of absolute truth; we do not believe ourselves either infallible, or omniscient,—which is the implicit pretension of all legislators and political candidates whatever; and consequently we do not believe ourselves called for the direction and tutelage of the people.

We are for excellence, the party of freedom, the party of free development, the party of social experiment.

But against this very freedom which we claim for all, against the possibility of this experimental search after better forms of society, there are erected barriers of iron. Legions of soldiers and police are ready to massacre and imprison anyone who will not meekly submit to the laws which a handful of privileged persons have made in their own interests. And even if soldiers and police did not exist, yet so long as the economic constitution of society remains what it is, freedom would still be impossible, because, since all the means of life are under the control of a minority, the great mass of mankind is obliged to labour for the others, and themselves wallow in poverty and degradation.

The first thing to do, therefore, is to get rid of the armed force which defends existing institutions, and by means of the expropriation of the present holders, to place the land and the other means of production at the disposal of everybody. And this cannot possibly be done in our opinion without the employment of physical force. Moreover, the natural development of economic antagonisms, the wakening consciousness of an important fraction of the proletariat, the constantly increasing number of men.
Old Bill Haley was really down on his luck. After thirty years service with the firm of Sharp and Flint, manufacturers, at the magnificent salary of fifty pounds a year, paid weekly, he had been dismissed. No reason was assigned, but Bill was too well the cause of his dismissal. His hair was turning grey rapidly, his eye-sight was not what it used to be, and the once natural vigour was now considerably abated. That was the reason. He was now of no further use to the employers who had drained the blood of his youth and manhood, and who now cast him aside like a sucked orange. The fact of his dismissal said as plainly as fact can speak — You are only part of the great machine that is continually going, going, going, always revolving, heedless alike of the groans and improvements of strong men, as of the shrieks of innocent, tender girls, whom it catches, and crushes out of all human sound, with its strong arms. So Bill, if you break down, you are thrown into the scrap heap like a bit of old iron, broken and useless. Immediately you are no longer efficient in the work you did before, you are thrown aside, like a rejected MSS into the waste paper basket of humanity.

Bill had not been long idle when his "old woman" died, her death having been accelerated by the privations she had undergone. Even when Bill was employed, her life had been one unending struggle to make ends meet. They had brought children into the world, and reared them more or less "respectably," but at what a cost. Only those who have suffered can form any adequate idea of what such an upbringing is, to both children and parents. Bill never drank more than a glass of beer in a week, he could not afford to, he had always been more careful and economised in his mode of living, and this was the end.

The money he got from the Insurance Society paid his wife's funeral expenses, and left a little over; but soon, too soon, even that was gone.

His children had all left him, only one, a son, was in the same town, and he had to support all three children, and his old father. That was the reason. He could not possibly allow the old man any more than a shilling a week. One charity organization also allowed him half-a-crown, and on this income he was expected to thrive. He did not, and things went from bad to worse, till the landlord was about to evict him from the hovel he had paid rent for, for twenty years. When matters arrived at this pass, some of his former mates in the factory where he had worked, heard the story of plight he was in, and they resolved to get a subscription for him. They got a sheet of foolscap and headed it as follows:

"Subscription on behalf of William Haley who has fallen on evil days."

They were only ignorant, uncultured men, who had never earned the most of them, much more than Bill, but their hearts were touched, their feelings roused at the sight of their former mate's distress, and they resolved to show their sympathy in the only practical way known to them.

They went round to the factory and had collected over two pounds in sixpences and threepences, when some daring "hamb" suggested the advisability of interviewing the "boss," and anent a subscription. Three immediately volunteered to bear the lion in his den, and according to the tale for this charitable object. They wished to see Sir William, they informed the clerk, Sir William Sharp, he had been knighted for his great services to his country in supplying the Liberal party with money. They were shown into the private room. Sir William adjust his pince-nez comfortably on his nose, and wheels round his easy chair in order to confront his "hands."

"Ah!" he says, "what can I do for you, my men?"

"We deplore themepen upon you, each other in the ribs, as a gentle hint to proceed to business. No one apparently cared about making the statement regarding their visit to the office.

"Come, come," said Sir William sharply, "one of you had better speak or else clear out! What business has my business to attend to, you ought to be attending to ours."

One of them, bolder than the rest, managed to mumble something out:

"Subscription", and Bill Haley.

Sir William eyed them carefully for a moment or two through his pince-nez:

"I understand you to say, he asked, "that you are getting up a subscription for Haley who was formerly employed here?"

The deputation assented.

"And how is it that he is in such circumstances as to require a subscription?"

Jack Forrester, the one who had spoken before, explained how Bill's wife having died, his children all having left him, and himself unable to find employment at anything, and being ill besides, he had become absolutely destitute.

"And you wish me to give something?"

"Jack said, "Yes," the other two merely nodded.

"Let me see," he said, and he held out his hand for the subscription sheet. Jack held in his hand. On receiving it, he once more adjusted his pince-nez, and proceeded slowly to read the names of the contributors.

He found among them the names of men who could only contribute expense at an extra sacrifice to the members, men whose whole life was
one of privity, and to whom the withdrawal of alimony from the wife would be a moral cutting into the house. He found the names of girls, once like his own daughters innocent and tender, who worked in his factory under degrading conditions for less pay than they had lived in London, and who had to supplement their scanty earnings by prostitution. Yet, debased, degraded though they were, they still had sympathy for another’s sufferings; the love of humanity, the desire to alleviate human suffering. He saw, now, what I call criminal, that man instead of looking forward to the time when he will no longer be able to work, and saving for that time, should heedlessly, thoughtlessly spend his substance in riotous living. I have heard it stated that working people, living good thrift, were in the habit of saving on champagne and turtle soup as if they were aldermen. I am quite convinced that Hale, from the state of destitution you inform me he is in, must be a man of that stamp. He? I won’t subscribe one penny, it is simply flying in the face of providence, which has thus seen in its own, and I will punish him for the reckless, extravagant, thriftless manner in which he has lived.” And good Sir William worked himself up to such a heat that he became speechless with indignation at the criminal extravagance and gross prodigality of the working classes in general and Hale in particular. Recovering his power of speech he asked—

“Are you aware if he has any sort of income at present?”

Jack explained that he had a three-yonder per week coming in.

“Three and a six a week!” cried Jack. “You have the audacity to gather subscriptions for a man in receipt of this handsome allowance! How is it he cannot live on this? I am told the habits of extravagance, formed in early manhood, clung to him.”

Jack proceeded to explain that, owing to being very sick, the doctor had ordered him to take beef tea, and the expenditure on this item alone swelled up the major portion of his income, so consequently he had now fallen into arrears with his rent. He was stopped here by Sir William exclaiming—

“Beef tea! Ah! No wonder he requires a subscription. What insolence! What a lack of foresight! Tell me, is it usual for working men to throw away their means in such a reckless fashion?”

He was assured it was not usual, was very unusual, in fact.

“Let us hope that this is the exception. It almost paralyses me to think where Britain’s glorious commercial supremacy would be, if working men began to live on roast beef instead of liver. The idea of a working man pannering himself with beef tea! Oh! It is preposterous. Sir William told him that at the time when he was brought to his senses, he was so giddy, who would do such a subtle thing, that he positively groaned, and was on the point of shedding tears, when Jack asked if he was determined to give nothing.

“Why, giving money to that abandoned wretch would only encourage him in his wicked ways. Why, if I give something towards that subscription, he may have the cold-blooded hardihood to take port wine along with his beef tea. No! no! If I were a really desirous man, I should insist, but as it is my conscience forbids me. Good day!”

The deputation withdrew, feeling pretty much, each man, the blood almost swollen out of all their veins, and all the subscription money paid over, Jack Forrester and the other two, who had accompanied him in interviewing Sir William, were appointed to hand over the money to Bill.

They proceeded to a questionable street in a very questionable locality, and after mounting a rather rickety stair they stood at the door of old Bill’s room. Bill knocked there, but the man was not there; everything seemed unusually quiet. Without further ceremony they simply opened the door and walked in. The furniture of the room was of the meanest description, a chair, a table, a bed, a pot or two, and a stove consisting of a great number of pebbles. The sun was slanting in through a window where there were almost as many patches of paper as panes of glass, and a ray or two, which managed to get through, fell on the bed and lighted up the dark form of a man who was lying there.

“Ah!” said Jack, “He’s sleeping. Won’t this be a surprise to him?”

“| Will it?” said one of his mates “for I don’t think he expects anything of the kind.”

“Well, we’ll wake him up anyway,” said Jack, and approaching the bed Bill’s face turned round and said, his mouth twitching.

“He’s dead, Christ!”

Having been startled, but very soon assured themselves that Bill was really dead. Jack sat down on the chair, the other two occupied the table between them, and they thought out the matter for a while. Suddenly Jack sprang to his feet, his eyes flashing, and pointing to the bed and said, “This is a life of toil, and poverty, and misery ends, in an

an-