Peter Kropotkin

Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles

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Anarchist Communism: Its Basis and Principles

Peter Kropotkin

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PAMPHLETS EDITION

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SOURCES

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https://pzacad.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/kropotkin/SciBasis.pdf

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I. The Scientific Bases of Anarchy

ANARCHY, (ἀν-ἀρχὴ) the No-Government system of Socialism, has a double origin. It is an outgrowth of the two great movements of thought in the economical and the political fields which characterize our century, and especially its second part. In common with all Socialists, the anarchists hold that the private ownership of land, capital, and machinery has had its time; that it is condemned to disappear; and that all requisites for production must, and will, become the common property of society, and be managed in common by the producers of wealth. And, in common with the most advanced representatives of political Radicalism, they maintain that the ideal of the political organisation of society is a condition of things where the functions of government are reduced to a minimum, and the individual recovers his full liberty of initiative and action for satisfying, by means of free groups and federations–freely constituted–all the infinitely varied needs of the human being. As regards Socialism, most of the anarchists arrive at its ultimate conclusion, that is, at a complete negation of the wage-system and at communism. And with reference to political organisation, by giving a further development to the above mentioned part of the Radical programme, they arrive at the conclusion that the ultimate aim of society is the reduction of the functions of government to *nil*–that is, to a society without government, to An-archy. The anarchists maintain, moreover, that such being the ideal of social and political organisation, they must not remit it to future centuries, but that only those changes in our social organisation which are in accordance with the above double ideal, and constitute an approach to it, will have a chance of life and be beneficial for the commonwealth.

As to the method followed by the anarchist thinker, it differs to a great extent from that followed by the Utopists. The anarchist thinker does not resort to metaphysical conceptions (like the ‘natural rights,’ the ‘duties of the State,’ and so on) for establishing what are, in his opinion, the best conditions for realizing the greatest happiness of humanity. He follows, on the contrary, the course traced by the modern philosophy of evolution–without entering, however, the slippery route of mere analogies so often resorted to by Herbert Spencer. He studies human society as it is now and was in the past; and, without either endowing men altogether, or separate individuals, with superior qualities which they do not possess, he merely considers society as an aggregation of organisms trying to find out the best ways of combining the wants of the individual with those of co-operation for the welfare of the species. He studies society and tries to discover its *tendencies*, past and present, its growing needs, intellectual and economical; and in his ideal he merely points

out in which direction evolution goes. He distinguishes between the real wants and tendencies of human aggregations and the accidents (want of knowledge, migrations, wars, conquests) which prevented these tendencies from being satisfied, or temporarily paralysed them. And he concludes that the two most prominent, although often unconscious, tendencies throughout our history were: a tendency towards integrating our labour for the production of all riches in common, so as finally to render it impossible to discriminate the part of the common production due to the separate individual; and a tendency towards the fullest freedom of the individual for the prosecution of all aims, beneficial both for himself and for society at large. The ideal of the anarchist is thus a mere summing-up of what he considers to be the next phase of evolution. It is no longer a matter of faith; it is a matter for scientific discussion.

In fact, one of the leading features of our century is the growth of Socialism and the rapid spreading of Socialist views among the working classes. How could it be otherwise? We have witnessed during the last seventy years an unparalleled sudden increase of our powers of production, resulting in an accumulation of wealth which has outstripped the most sanguine expectations. But owing to our wage system, this increase of wealth–due to the combined efforts of men of science, of managers, and workmen as well–has resulted only in an unprevented accumulation of wealth in the hands of the owners of capital; while an increase of misery for the great numbers, and an insecurity of life for all, have been the lot of the workmen. The unskilled labourers, in continuous search for labour, are falling into an unheard-of destitution; and even the best paid artisans and skilled workmen, who undoubtedly are living now a more comfortable life than before, labour under the permanent menace of being thrown, in their turn, into the same conditions as the unskilled paupers, in consequence of some of the continuous and unavoidable fluctuations of industry and caprices of capital. The chasm between the modern millionaire who squanders the produce of human labour in a gorgeous and vain luxury, and the pauper reduced to a miserable and insecure existence, is thus growing more and more, so as to break the very unity of society–the harmony of its life–and to endanger the progress of its further development. At the same time, the working classes are the less inclined patiently to endure this division of society into two classes, as they themselves become more and more conscious of the wealth-producing power of modern industry, of the part played by labour in the production of wealth, and of their own capacities of organisation. In proportion as all classes of the community take a more lively part in public affairs, and knowledge spreads among the masses, their longing for equality becomes stronger, and their demands of social reorganization become louder and louder: they can be

ignored no more. The worker claims his share in the riches he produces; he claims his share in the management of production; and he claims not only some additional well-being, but also his full rights in the higher enjoyments of science and art. These claims, which formerly were uttered only by the social reformer, begin now to be made by a daily growing minority of those who work in the factory or till the acre; and they so conform with our feelings of justice, that they find support in a daily growing minority amidst the privileged classes themselves. Socialism becomes thus *the* idea of the nineteenth century; and neither coercion nor pseudo-reforms can stop its further growth.

Much hope of improvement was laid, of course, in the extension of political rights to the working classes. But these concessions, unsupported as they were by corresponding changes in the economical relations, proved delusory. They did not materially improve the conditions of the great bulk of the workmen. Therefore, the watchword of Socialism is: 'Economical freedom, as the only secure basis for political freedom.' And as long as the present wage system, with all its bad consequences, remains unaltered, the Socialist watchword will continue to inspire the workmen. Socialism will continue to grow until it has realized its programme.

Side by side with this great movement of thought in economical matters, a like movement was going on with regard to political rights, political organisation, and the functions of government. Government was submitted to the same criticism as Capital. While most of the Radicals saw in universal suffrage and republican institutions the last word of political wisdom, a further step was made by the few. The very functions of government and the State, as also their relations to the individual, were submitted to a sharper and deeper criticism. Representative government having been experimented on a wider field than before, its defects became more and more prominent. It became obvious that these defects are not merely accidental, but inherent to the system itself. Parliament and its executive proved to be unable to attend to all the numberless affairs of the community and to conciliate the varied and often opposite interests of the separate parts of a State. Election proved unable to find out the men who might represent a nation, and manage, otherwise than in a party spirit, the affairs they are compelled to legislate upon. These defects became so striking that the very principles of the representative system were criticized and their justness doubted. Again, the dangers of a centralized government became still more conspicuous when the Socialists came to the front and asked for a further increase of the powers of government by entrusting it with the management of the immense field covered now by the economical relations between individuals. The question was asked, whether a government, entrusted with the management of industry and trade,

would not become a permanent danger for liberty and peace, and whether it even would be able to be a good manager?

The Socialists of the earlier part of this century did not fully realise the immense difficulties of the problem. Convinced as they were of the necessity of economical reforms, most of them took no notice of the need of freedom for the individual; and we have had social reformers ready to submit society to any kind of theocracy, dictatorship, or even Cæsarism, in order to obtain reforms in a Socialist sense. Therefore we saw, in this country and also on the Continent, the division of men of advanced opinions into political Radicals and Socialists–the former looking with distrust on the latter, as they saw in them a danger for the political liberties which have been won by the civilized nations after a long series of struggles. And even now, when the Socialists all over Europe are becoming political parties, and profess the democratic faith, there remains among most impartial men a well-founded fear of the *Volksstaat* or 'popular State' being as great a danger for liberty as any form of autocracy, if its government be entrusted with the management of all the social organisation, including the production and distribution of wealth.

The evolution of the last forty years prepared, however, the way for showing the necessity and possibility of a higher form of social organisation which might guarantee economical freedom without reducing the individual to the *role* of a slave to the State. The origins of government were carefully studied, and all metaphysical conceptions as to its divine or 'social contract' derivation having been laid aside, it appeared that it is among us of a relatively modern origin, and that its powers grew precisely in proportion as the division of society into the privileged and unprivileged classes was growing in the course of ages. Representative government was also reduced to its real value–that of an instrument which has rendered services in the struggle against autocracy, but not an ideal of free political organisation. As to the system of philosophy which saw in the State (the *Kultur-Staat*) a leader to progress, it was more and more shaken as it became evident that progress is the more effective when it is not checked by State interference. It thus became obvious that a further advance in social life does not lie in the direction of a further concentration of power and regulative functions in the hands of a governing body, but in the direction of decentralization, both territorial and functional–in a subdivision of public functions with respect both to their sphere of action and to the character of the functions; it is in the abandonment to the initiative of freely constituted groups of all those functions which are now considered as the functions of government.

This current of thought found its expression not merely in literature, but also, to a limited extent, in life. The uprise of the Paris Commune, followed by that of the Commune of Cartagena–a movement of which the historical bearing seems to have been quite overlooked in this country–opened a new page of history. If we analyse not only this movement in itself, but also the impression it left in the minds and the tendencies which were manifested during the communal revolution, we must recognize in it an indication showing that in the future human agglomerations which are more advanced in their social development will try to start an independent life; and that they will endeavour to convert the more backward parts of a nation by example, instead of imposing their opinions by law and force, or submitting themselves to the majority-rule, which always is a mediocrity-rule. At the same time the failure of representative government within the Commune itself proved that self-government and self-administration must be carried on further than in a mere territorial sense; to be effective they must be carried on also with regard to the various functions of life within the free community; a merely territorial limitation of the sphere of action of government will not do–representative government being as deficient in a city as it is in a nation. Life gave us thus a further point in favour of the no-government theory, and a new impulse to anarchist thought.

Anarchists recognise the justice of both the just-mentioned tendencies towards economical and political freedom, and see in them two different manifestations of the very same need of equality which constitutes the very essence of all struggles mentioned by history. Therefore, in common with all Socialists, the anarchist says to the political reformer: ‘No substantial reform in the sense of political equality, and no limitation of the powers of government, can be made as long as society is divided into two hostile camps, and the labourer remains, economically speaking, a serf to his employer.’ But to the Popular State Socialist we say also: ‘You cannot modify the existing conditions of property without deeply modifying at the same time the political organisation. You must limit the powers of government and renounce Parliamentary rule. To each new economical phasis of life corresponds a new political phasis. Absolute monarchy–that is, Court-rule–corresponded to the system of serfdom. Representative government corresponds to Capital-rule. Both, however, are class-rule. But in a society where the distinction between capitalist and labourer has disappeared, there is no need of such a government; it would be an anachronism, a nuisance. Free workers would require a free organisation, and this cannot have another basis than free agreement and free co-operation, without sacrificing the autonomy of the individual to the all-pervading interference of the State. The no-capitalist system implies the no-government system.’

Meaning thus the emancipation of man from the oppressive powers of capitalist and government as well, the system of anarchy becomes a synthesis of the two powerful currents of thought which characterize our century.

In arriving at these conclusions anarchy proves to be in accordance with the conclusions arrived at by the philosophy of evolution. By bringing to light the plasticity of organisation, the philosophy of evolution has shown the admirable adaptivity of organisms to their conditions of life, and the ensuing development of such faculties as render more complete both the adaptations of the aggregates to their surroundings and those of each of the constituent parts of the aggregate to the needs of free co-operation. It familiarised us with the circumstance that throughout organic nature the capacities for life in common are growing in proportion as the integration of organisms into compound aggregates becomes more and more complete; and it enforced thus the opinion already expressed by social moralists as to the perfectibility of human nature. It has shown us that, in the long run of the struggle for existence, 'the fittest' will prove to be those who combine intellectual knowledge with the knowledge necessary for the production of wealth, and not those who are now the richest because they, or their ancestors, have been momentarily the strongest. By showing that the 'struggle for existence' must be conceived, not merely in its restricted sense of a struggle between individuals for the means of subsistence, but in its wider sense of adaptation of all individuals of the species to the best conditions for the survival of the species, as well as for the greatest possible sum of life and happiness for each and all, it permitted us to deduce the laws of moral science from the social needs and habits of mankind. It showed us the infinitesimal part played by positive law in moral evolution, and the immense part played by the natural growth of altruistic feelings, which develop as soon as the conditions of life favour their growth. It thus enforced the opinion of social reformers as to the necessity of modifying the conditions of life for improving man, instead of trying to improve human nature by moral teachings while life works in an opposite direction. Finally, by studying human society from the biological point of view, it came to the conclusions arrived at by anarchists from the study of history and present tendencies, as to further progress being in the line of socialisation of wealth and integrated labour, combined with the fullest possible freedom of the individual.

It is not a mere coincidence that Herbert Spencer, whom we may consider as a pretty fair expounder of the philosophy of evolution, has been brought to conclude, with regard to political organisation, that 'that form of society towards which we are progressing' is 'one in which *government* will be reduced to the smallest amount possible, and *freedom* increased to the greatest amount possible.'[1] When

he opposes in these words the conclusions of his synthetic philosophy to those of Auguste Comte, he arrives at very nearly the same conclusion as Proudhon[2] and Bakunin.[3] More than that, the very methods of argumentation and the illustrations resorted to by Herbert Spencer (daily supply of food, post-office, and so on) are the same which we find in the writings of the anarchists. The channels of thought were the same, although both were unaware of each other's endeavours.

Again, when Mr. Spencer so powerfully, and even not without a touch of passion, argues (in his Appendix to the third edition of the *Data of Ethics*) that human societies are marching towards a state when a further identification of altruism with egoism will be made 'in the sense that personal gratification will come from the gratification of others;' when he says that 'we are shown, undeniably, that it is a perfectly possible thing for organisms to become so adjusted to the requirements of their lives, that energy expended for the general welfare may not only be adequate to check energy expended for the individual welfare, but may come to subordinate it so far as to leave individual welfare no greater part than is necessary for maintenance of individual life'–provided the conditions for such relations between the individual and the community be maintained[4]–he derives from the study of nature the very same conclusions which the forerunners of anarchy, Fourier and Robert Owen, derived from a study of human character.

When we see further Mr. Bain so forcibly elaborating the theory of moral habits, and the French philosopher, M. Guyau, publishing his remarkable work on *Morality without Obligation or Sanction*; when J.S. Mill so sharply criticizes representative government, and when he discusses the problem of liberty, although failing to establish its necessary conditions; when Sir John Lubbock prosecutes his admirable studies on animal societies, and Mr. Morgan applies scientific methods of investigation to the philosophy of history–when, in short, every year, by bringing some new arguments to the philosophy of evolution, adds at the same time some new arguments to the theory of anarchy–we must recognise that this last, although differing as to its starting-points, follows the same sound methods of scientific investigation. Our confidence in its conclusions is still more increased. The difference between anarchists and the just-named philosophers may be immense as to the presumed speed of evolution, and as to the conduct which one ought to assume as soon as he has had an insight into the aims towards which society is marching. No attempt, however, has been made scientifically to determine the ratio of evolution, nor have the chief elements of the problem (the state of mind of the masses) been taken into account by the evolutionist philosophers. As to bringing one's action into accordance with his philosophical conceptions, we know that, unhappily, intellect and will are too often separated by

a chasm not to be filled by mere philosophical speculations, however deep and elaborate.

There is, however, between the just-named philosophers and the anarchists a wide difference on one point of primordial importance. This difference is the stranger as it arises on a point which might be discussed figures in hand, and which constitutes the very basis of all further deductions, as it belongs to what biological sociology would describe as the physiology of nutrition.

There is, in fact, a widely spread fallacy, maintained by Mr. Spencer and many others, as to the causes of the misery which we see round about us. It was affirmed forty years ago, and it is affirmed now by Mr. Spencer and his followers, that misery in civilised society is due to our insufficient production, or rather to the circumstance that 'population presses upon the means of subsistence.' It would be of no use to inquire into the origin of such a misrepresentation of facts, which might be easily verified. It may have its origin in inherited misconceptions which have nothing to do with the philosophy of evolution. But to be maintained and advocated by philosophers, there must be, in the conceptions of these philosophers, some confusion as to the different aspects of the struggle for existence. Sufficient importance is not given to the difference between the struggle which goes on among organisms which do *not* co-operate for providing the means of subsistence, and those which *do* so. In this last case again there must be some confusion between those aggregates whose members find their means of subsistence in the ready produce of the vegetable and animal kingdom, and those whose members artificially grow their means of subsistence and are enabled to increase (to a yet unknown amount) the productivity of each spot of the surface of the globe. Hunters who hunt, each of them for his own sake, and hunters who unite into societies for hunting, stand quite differently with regard to the means of subsistence. But the difference is still greater between the hunters who take their means of subsistence as they are in nature, and civilised men who grow their food and produce all requisites for a comfortable life by machinery. In this last case–the stock of potential energy in nature being little short of infinite in comparison with the present population of the globe–the means of availing ourselves of the stock of energy are increased and perfected precisely in proportion to the density of population and to the previously accumulated stock of technical knowledge; so that for human beings who are in possession of scientific knowledge, and co-operate for the artificial production of the means of subsistence and comfort, the law is quite the reverse to that of Malthus. The accumulation of means of subsistence and comfort is going on at a much speedier rate than the increase of population. The only conclusion which we can deduce from the laws of evolution and of

multiplication of effects is that the available amount of means of subsistence increases at a rate which increases itself in proportion as population becomes denser–unless it be artificially (and temporarily) checked by some defects of social organisation. As to our *powers* of production (our potential production), they increase at a still speedier rate; in proportion as scientific knowledge grows, the means for spreading it are rendered easier, and inventive genius is stimulated by all previous inventions.

If the fallacy as to the pressure of population on the means of subsistence could be maintained a hundred years ago, it can be maintained no more, since we have witnessed the effects of science on industry, and the enormous increase of our productive powers during the last hundred years. We know, in fact, that while the growth of population of England has been from 16½ millions in 1844 to 26¾ millions in 1883, showing thus an increase of 62 per cent., the growth of national wealth (as testified by schedule A of the Income Tax Act) has increased at a twice speedier rate; it has grown from 221 to 507½ millions–that is, by 130 per cent.[5] And we know that the same increase of wealth has taken place in France, where population remains almost stationary, and that it has gone on at a still speedier rate in the United States, where population is increasing every year by immigration.

But the figures just mentioned, while showing the real increase of production, give only a faint idea of what our production might be under a more reasonable economical organisation. We know well that the owners of capital, while trying to produce more wares with fewer ‘hands,’ are also continually endeavouring to limit the production, in order to sell at higher prices. When the benefits of a concern are going down, the owner of the capital limits the production, or totally suspends it, and prefers to engage his capital in foreign loans or shares of Patagonian gold-mines. Just now there are plenty of pitmen in England who ask for nothing better than to be permitted to extract coal and supply with cheap fuel the households where children are shivering before empty chimneys. There are thousands of weavers who ask for nothing better than to weave stuffs in order to replace the Whitechapel rugs with linen. And so in all branches of industry. How can we talk about a want of means of subsistence when 246 blasting furnaces and thousands of factories lie idle in Great Britain alone; and when there are, just now, thousands and thousands of unemployed in London alone; thousands of men who would consider themselves happy if they were permitted to transform (under the guidance of experienced men) the heavy clay of Middlesex into a rich soil, and to cover with rich cornfields and orchards the acres of meadow-land which now yield only a few pounds' worth of hay? But they are prevented from doing so by the owners of the land, of the weaving factory, and of the coal-mine, because capital

finds it more advantageous to supply the Khedive with harems and the Russian Government with 'strategic railways' and Krupp guns. Of course the maintenance of harems *pays*: it gives ten or fifteen per cent. on the capital, while the extraction of coal does not pay–that is, it brings three or five per cent.,–and that is a sufficient reason for limiting the production and permitting would-be economists to indulge in reproaches to the working classes as to their too rapid multiplication!

Here we have instances of a direct and conscious limitation of production, due to the circumstance that the requisites for production belong to the few, and that these few have the right of disposing of them at their will, without caring about the interests of the community. But there is also the indirect and unconscious limitation of production–that which results from squandering the produce of human labour in luxury; instead of applying it to a further increase of production.

This last even cannot be estimated in figures but a walk through the rich shops of any city and a glance at the manner in which money is squandered now, can give an approximate idea of this indirect limitation. When a rich man spends a thousand pounds for his stables, he squanders five to six thousand days of human labour, which might be used, under a better social organisation, for supplying with comfortable homes those who are compelled to live now in dens. And when a lady spends a hundred pounds for her dress, we cannot but say that she squanders, at least, two years of human labour, which, again under a better organisation, might have supplied a hundred women with decent dresses, and much more if applied to a farther improvement of the instruments of production. Preachers thunder against luxury, because it is shameful to squander money for feeding and sheltering hounds and horses, when thousands live in the East End on sixpence a day, and other thousands have not even their miserable sixpence every day. But the economist sees more than that in our modern luxury: when millions of days of labour are spent every year for the satisfaction of the stupid vanity of the rich, he says that so many millions of workers have been diverted from the manufacture of those useful instruments which would permit us to decuple and centuple our present production of means of subsistence and of requisites for comfort.

In short, if we take into account both the real and the potential increase of our wealth, and consider both the direct and indirect limitation of production, which are unavoidable under our present economical system, we must recognise that the supposed ‘pressure of population on the means of subsistence’ is a mere fallacy, repeated, like many other fallacies, without even taking the trouble of submitting it to a moment's criticism. The causes of the present social disease must be sought elsewhere.

Let us take a civilised country. The forests have been cleared, the swamps drained. Thousands of roads and railways intersect it in all directions; the rivers have been rendered navigable, and the seaports are of easy access. Canals connect the seas. The rocks have been pierced by deep shafts; thousands of manufactures cover the land. Science has taught men how to use the energy of nature for the satisfaction of his needs. Cities have slowly grown in the long run of ages, and treasures of science and art are accumulated in these centres of civilisation. But–who has made all these marvels?

The combined efforts of scores of generations have contributed towards the achievement of these results. The forests have been cleared centuries ago; millions of men have spent years and years of labour in draining the swamps, in tracing the roads, in building the railways. Other millions have built the cities and created the civilisation we boast of. Thousands of inventors, mostly unknown, mostly dying in poverty and neglect, have elaborated the machinery in which Man admires his genius. Thousands of writers, philosophers and men of science, supported by many thousands of compositors, printers and other labourers whose name is legion , have contributed in elaborating and spreading knowledge, in dissipating errors, in creating the atmosphere of scientific thought, without which the marvels of our century never would have been brought to life. The genius of a Mayer and a Grove, the patient work of a Joule, surely have done more for giving a new start to modern industry than all the capitalists of the world; but these men of genius themselves are, in their turn, the children of industry: thousands of engines had to transform heat into mechanical force, and mechanical force into sound, light, and electricity–and they had to do so years long, every day, under the eyes of humanity–before some of our contemporaries proclaimed the mechanical origin of heat and the correlation of physical forces, and before we ourselves became prepared to listen to them and understand their teachings. Who knows for how many decades we should continue to be ignorant of this theory which now revolutionises industry, were it not for the inventive powers and skill of those unknown workers who have improved the steam engine, who brought all its parts to perfection, so as to make steam more manageable than a horse, and to render the use of the engine nearly universal? But the same is true with regard to each smallest part of our machinery. In each machine, however simple, we may read a whole history–a long history of sleepless nights, of delusions and joys, of partial inventions and partial improvements which brought it to its present state. Nay, nearly each new machine is a synthesis, a result of thousands of partial inventions made, not only in one special department of machinery, but in all departments of the wide field of mechanics.

Our cities, connected by roads and brought into easy communication with all peopled parts of the globe, are the growth of centuries; and each house in these cities, each factory, each shop, derives its value, its very *raison d'être*, from the fact that it is situated on a spot of the globe where thousands or millions have gathered together. Every smallest part of the immense whole which we call the wealth of civilised nations derives its value precisely from being a part of this whole. What would be the value of an immense London shop or storehouse were it not situated precisely in London, which has become the gathering spot for five millions of human beings? And what the value of our coal-pits, our manufactures, our shipbuilding yards, were it not for the immense traffic which goes on across the seas, for the railways which transport mountains of merchandise, for the cities which number their inhabitants by millions? Who is, then, the individual who has the right to step forward and, laying his hands on the smallest part of this immense whole, to say, '*I* have produced this; it belongs to *me*'? And how can we discriminate, in this immense interwoven whole, the part which the isolated individual may appropriate to himself with the slightest approach to justice? Houses and streets, canals and railways, machines and works of art, all these have been created by the combined efforts of generations past and present, of men living on these islands and men living thousands of miles away.

But it has happened in the long run of ages that everything which permits men further to increase their production, or even to continue it, has been appropriated by the few. The land, which derives its value precisely from its being necessary for an ever-increasing population, belongs to the few, who may prevent the community from cultivating it. The coal-pits, which represent the labour of generations, and which also derive their value from the wants of the manufactures and railroads, from the immense trade carried on and the density of population (what is the value of coal-layers in Transbaikalia?), belong again to the few, who have even the right of stopping the extraction of coal if they choose to give another use to their capital. The lace-weaving machine, which represents, in its present state of perfection, the work of three generations of Lancashire weavers, belongs again to the few; and if the grandsons of the very same weaver who invented the first lace-weaving machine claim their rights of bringing one of these machines into motion, they will be told 'Hands off!' this machine does not belong to you!' The railroads, which mostly would be useless heaps of iron if Great Britain had not its present dense population, its industry, trade, and traffic, belong again to the few–to a few shareholders, who may even not know where the railway is situated which brings them a yearly income larger than that of a medieval king; and if the children of those people who died by thousands in digging the tunnels would gather and go–a

ragged and starving crowd–to ask bread or work from the shareholders, they would be met with bayonets and bullets.

Who is the sophist who will dare to say that such an organisation is just? But what is unjust cannot be beneficial for mankind; and *it is not*. In consequence of this monstrous organisation, the son of a workman, when he is able to work, finds no acre to till, no machine to set in motion, unless he agrees to sell his labour for a sum inferior to its real value. His father and grandfather have contributed in draining the field, or erecting the factory, to the full extent of their capacities–and nobody can do more than that–but he comes into the world more destitute than a savage. If he resorts to agriculture, he will be permitted to cultivate a plot of land, but on the condition that he gives up one quarter of his crop to the landlord. If he resorts to industry, he will be permitted to work, but on the condition that out of the thirty shillings he has produced, ten shillings or more will be pocketed by the owner of the machine. We cry against the feudal baron who did not permit anyone to settle on his land otherwise than on payment of one quarter of the crops to the lord of the manor; but we continue to do as they did–we extend their system. The forms have changed, but the essence has remained the same. And the workman is compelled to accept the feudal conditions which we call ‘free contract,’ because nowhere will he find better conditions. Everything has been appropriated by somebody; he *must* accept the bargain, or starve.

Owing to this circumstance our production takes a wrong turn. It takes no care of the needs of the community; its only aim is to increase the benefits of the capitalist. Therefore–the continuous fluctuations of industry, the crises periodically coming nearly every ten years, and throwing out of employment several hundred thousand men who are brought to complete misery, whose children grow up in the gutter, ready to become inmates of the prison and workhouse. The workmen being unable to purchase with their wages the riches they are producing, industry must search for markets elsewhere, amidst the middle classes of other nations. It must find markets, in the East, in Africa, anywhere; it must increase, by trade, the number of its serfs in Egypt, in India, in the Congo. But everywhere it finds competitors in other nations which rapidly enter into the same line of industrial development. And wars, continuous wars, must be fought for the supremacy on the world-market–wars for the possession of the East, wars for getting possession of the seas, wars for having the right of imposing heavy duties on foreign merchandise. The thunder of guns never ceases in Europe; whole generations are slaughtered; and we spend in armaments the third of the revenue of our States–a revenue raised, the poor know with what difficulties.

Education is the privilege of the few. Not because we can find no teachers, not because the workman's son and daughter are less able to receive instruction, but because one can receive no reasonable instruction when at the age of fifteen he descends into the mine, or goes selling newspapers in the streets. Society becomes divided into two hostile camps; and no freedom is possible under such conditions. While the Radical asks for a further extension of liberty, the statesman answers him that a further increase of liberty would bring about an uprising of the paupers; and those political liberties which have cost so dear are replaced by coercion, by exceptional laws, by military rule.

And finally, the injustice of our repartition of wealth exercises the most deplorable effect on our morality. Our principles of morality say: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’; but let a child follow this principle and take off his coat to give it to the shivering pauper, and his mother will tell him that he must never understand the moral principles in their right sense. If he lives according to them, he will go barefoot, without alleviating the misery round about him! Morality is good on the lips, not in deeds. Our preachers say, ‘Who works, prays,’ and everybody endeavours to make others work for himself. They say, ‘Never lie!’ and politics is a big lie. And we accustom ourselves and our children to live under this double-faced morality, which is hypocrisy, and to conciliate our double-facedness by sophistry. Hypocrisy and sophistry become the very basis of our life. But society cannot live under such a morality. It cannot last so: it must, it will, be changed.

The question is thus no more a mere question of bread. It covers the whole field of human activity. But it has at its bottom a question of social economy, and we conclude: The means of production and of satisfaction of all needs of society, having been created by the common efforts of all, must be at the disposal of all. The private appropriation of requisites for production is neither just nor beneficial. All must be placed on the same footing as producers and consumers of wealth. That would be the only way for society to step out of the bad conditions which have been created by centuries of wars and oppression. That would be the only guarantee for further progress in a direction of equality and freedom, which always were the real, although unspoken goal of humanity.

P. Kropotkin

1. *Essays*, vol. iii. I am fully aware that in the very same *Essays*, a few pages further, Herbert Spencer destroys the force of the foregoing statement by the following words: ‘Not only do I contend,’ he says, ‘that the restraining power of the State over individuals and bodies, or classes of individuals, is requisite, but I have contended that it should be exercised much more effectually and carried much

farther than at present' (p.145). And although he tries to establish a distinction between the (desirable) negatively regulative, and the (undesirable) positively regulative functions of government, we know that no such distinction can be established in political life, and that the former necessarily lead to, and even imply, the latter. But we must distinguish between the system of philosophy and its interpreter. All we can say is that Herbert Spencer does not fully endorse all the conclusions which ought to be drawn from his system of philosophy.

2. *Idée generale sur la Révolution au XIX siècle;* and *Confessions d'un revolutionnaire.*

3. *Lettres à un Français sur la crise actuelle; L'Empire knouto-germanique; The State's Idea and Anarchy* (Russian)

4. Pages 300 to 302. In fact, the whole of this chapter ought to be quoted.

5. A.R Wallace's *Bad Times.*

II. The Coming Anarchy

The views taken in the preceding article* as to the combination of efforts being the chief source of our wealth explain why most anarchists see in communism the only equitable solution as to the adequate remuneration of individual efforts. There was a time when a family engaged in agriculture, and supported by a few domestic trades, could consider the corn they raised and the plain woollen cloth they wove as productions of their own and nobody else's labour. Even then such a view was not quite correct: there were forests cleared and roads built by common efforts; and even then the family had continually to apply for communal help, as it is still the case in so many village communities. But now, under the extremely interwoven state of industry, of which each branch supports all others, such an individualistic view can be held no more. If the iron trade and the cotton industry of this country have reached so high a degree of development, they have done so owing to the parallel growth of thousands of other industries, great and small; to the extension of the railway system; to an increase of knowledge among both the skilled engineers and the mass of the workmen; to a certain training in organisation slowly developed among British producers; and, above all, to the world-trade which has itself grown up, thanks to works executed thousands of miles away. The Italians who died from cholera in digging the Suez Canal, or from 'tunnel-disease' in the St. Gothard Tunnel, have contributed as much towards the enrichment of this country as the British girl who is prematurely growing old in serving a machine at Manchester; and this girl as much as the engineer who made a labour-saving improvement in our machinery. How can we pretend to estimate the exact part of each of them in the riches accumulated around us?

We may admire the inventive genius or the organising capacities of an iron lord; but we must recognise that all his genius and energy would not realise one-tenth of what they realise here if they were spent in dealing with Mongolian shepherds or Siberian peasants instead of British workmen, British engineers, and trustworthy managers. An English millionaire who succeeded in giving a powerful impulse to a branch of home industry was asked the other day what were, in his opinion, the real causes of his success? His answer was:---'I always sought out the right man for a given branch of the concern, and I left him full independence---maintaining, of course, for myself the general supervision .' 'Did you never fail to find such men?' was the next question. 'Never.' 'But in the new branches which you introduced you wanted a number of new inventions.' 'No doubt; we spent thousands in buying patents.' This little colloquy sums up, in my opinion, the real case of those

industrial undertakings which are quoted by the advocates of 'an adequate remuneration of individual efforts' in the shape of millions bestowed on the managers of prosperous industries. It shows in how far the efforts are really 'individual.' Leaving aside the thousand conditions which sometimes permit a man to show, and sometimes prevent him from showing, his capacities to their full extent, it might be asked in how far the same capacities could bring out the same results, if the very same employer could find no trustworthy managers and no skilled workmen, and if hundreds of inventions were not stimulated by the mechanical turn of mind of so many inhabitants of this country. British industry is the work of the British nation---nay, of Europe and India taken together---not of separate individuals.

While holding this synthetic view on production, the anarchists cannot consider, like the collectivists, that a remuneration which would be proportionate to the hours of labour spent by each person in the production of riches may be an ideal, or even an approach to an ideal, society. Without entering here into a discussion as to how far the exchange value of each merchandise is really measured now by the amount of labour necessary for its production---a separate study must be devoted to the subject---we must say that the collectivist ideal seems to us merely unrealisable in a society which would be brought to consider the necessaries for production as a common property. Such a society would be compelled to abandon the wage-system altogether. It appears impossible that the mitigated individualism of the collectivist school could co-exist with the partial communism implied by holding land and machinery in common---unless imposed by a powerful government, much more powerful than all those of our own times. The present wage-system has grown up from the appropriation of the necessaries for production by the few; it was a necessary condition for the growth of the present capitalist production; and it cannot outlive it, even if an attempt be made to pay to the worker the full value of his produce, and money be substituted by hours of labour cheques. Common possession of the necessaries for production implies the common enjoyment of the fruits of the common production; and we consider that an equitable organisation of society can only arise when every wage-system is abandoned, and when every-body, contributing for the common well-being to the full extent of his capacities, shall enjoy also from the common stock of society to the fullest possible extent of his needs.

We maintain, moreover, not only that communism is a desirable state of society, but that the growing tendency of modern society is precisely towards communism---free communism---notwithstanding the seemingly contradictory growth of individualism. In the growth of individualism (especially during the last

three centuries) we merely see the endeavours of the individual towards emancipating himself from the steadily growing powers of Capital and the State. But side by side with this growth we see also, throughout history up to our own times, the latent struggle of the producers of wealth for maintaining the partial communism of old, as well as for reintroducing communist principles in a new shape, as soon as favourable conditions permit it. As soon as the communes of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries were enabled to start their own independent life, they gave a wide extension to work in common, to trade in common, and to a partial consumption in common. All this has disappeared; but the rural commune fights a hard struggle to maintain its old features, and it succeeds in maintaining them in many places of Eastern Europe, Switzerland, and even France and Germany; while new organisations, based on the same principles, never fail to grow up as soon as it is possible. Notwithstanding the egotistic turn given to the public mind by the merchant-production of our century, the communist tendency is continually reasserting itself and trying to make its way into public life. The penny bridge disappears before the public bridge; so also the road which formerly had to be paid for its use. The same spirit pervades thousands of other institutions. Museums, free libraries, and free public schools; parks and pleasure grounds; paved and lighted streets, free for everybody's use; water supplied to private dwellings, with a growing tendency towards disregarding the exact amount of it used by the individual; tramways and railways which have already begun to introduce the season ticket or the uniform tax, and will surely go much further on this line when they are no longer private property: all these are tokens showing in which direction further progress is to be expected.

It is in putting the wants of the individual above the valuation of the services he has rendered, or might render, to society; it is in considering society as a whole, so intimately connected together that a service rendered to any individual is a service rendered to the whole society. The librarian of the British Museum does not ask the reader what have been his previous services to society, he simply gives him the books he requires; and for a uniform fee, a scientific Society leaves its gardens and museums at the free disposal of each member . The crew of a lifeboat do not ask whether the men of a distressed ship are entitled to be rescued at a risk of life; and the Prisoners' Aid Society do not inquire what the released prisoner is worth. Here are men in need of a service; they are fellow men, and no further rights are required. And if this very city, so egotistic to-day, be visited by a public calamity---let it be besieged, for example, like Paris in 1871, and experience during the siege a want of food---this very same city would be unanimous in proclaiming that the first needs to be satisfied are those of the children and old, no matter what

services they may render or have rendered to society. And it would take care of the active defenders of the city, whatever the degrees of gallantry displayed by each of them. But, this tendency already existing, nobody will deny, I suppose, that, in proportion as humanity is relieved from its hard struggle for life, the same tendency will grow stronger. If our productive powers be fully applied for increasing the stock of the staple necessities for life; if a modification of the present conditions of property increased the number of producers by all those who are not producers of wealth now; and if manual labour reconquered its place of honour in society---all this decuplating our production and rendering labour easier and more attractive---the communist tendencies already existing would immediately enlarge their sphere of application.

Taking all that into account, and still more the practical aspects of the question as to how private property might become common property, most of the anarchists maintain that the very next step to be made by society, as soon as the present regime of property undergoes a modification, will be in a communist sense. We are communists. But our communism is not that of either the Phalanstere or the authoritarian school: it is anarchist communism, communism without government, free communism. It is a synthesis of the two chief aims prosecuted by humanity since the dawn of its history--- economical freedom and political freedom.

I have already said that anarchy means no-government. We know well that the word "anarchy" is also used in the current language as synonymous with disorder. But that meaning of "anarchy" being a derived one, implies at least two suppositions. It implies, first, that wherever there is no government there is disorder; and it implies, moreover, that order, due to a strong government and a strong police, is always beneficial. Both implications, however, are anything but proved. There is plenty of order---we should say, of harmony---in many branches of human activity where the government, happily, does not interfere. As to the beneficial effects of order, the kind of order that reigned at Naples under the Bourbons surely was not preferable to some disorder started by Garibaldi; while the Protestants of this country will probably say that the good deal of disorder made by Luther was preferable, at any rate, to the order which reigned under the Pope. As to the proverbial "order" which was once "restored at Warsaw," there are, I suppose, no two opinions about it. While all agree that harmony is always desirable, there is no such unanimity about order, and still less about the "order" which is supposed to reign in our modern societies; so that we have no objection whatever to the use of the word "anarchy" as a negation of what has been often described as order.

By taking for our watchword anarchy, in its sense of no-government, we intend to express a pronounced tendency of human society. In history we see that precisely those epochs when small parts of humanity broke down the power of their rulers and reassumed their freedom were epochs of the greatest progress, economical and intellectual. Be it the growth of the free cities, whose unrivalled monuments---free work of free associations of workers---still testify of the revival of mind and of the well-being of the citizen; be it the great movement which gave birth to the Reformation---those epochs witnessed the greatest progress when the individual recovered some part of his freedom. And if we carefully watch the present development of civilised nations, we cannot fail to discover in it a marked and ever-growing movement towards limiting more and more the sphere of action of government, so as to leave more and more liberty to the initiative of the individual. After having tried all kinds of government, and endeavoured to solve the insoluble problem of having a government "which might compel the individual to obedience, without escaping itself from obedience to collectivity," humanity is trying now to free itself from the bonds of any government whatever, and to respond to its needs of organisation by the free understanding between individuals prosecuting the same common aims. Home Rule, even for the smallest territorial unit or group, becomes a growing need; free agreement is becoming a substitute for law; and free co-operation a substitute for governmental guardianship. One after the other those functions which were considered as the functions of government during the last two centuries are disputed; society moves better the less it is governed. And the more we study the advance made in this direction, as well as the inadequacy of governments to fulfil the expectations laid in them, the more we are bound to conclude that Humanity, by steadily limiting the functions of government, is marching towards reducing them finally to nil; and we already foresee a state of society where the liberty of the individual will be limited by no laws, no bonds---by nothing else but his own social habits and the necessity, which everyone feels, of finding co-operation, support, and sympathy among his neighbours.

Of course, the no-government ethics will meet with at least as many objections as the no-capital economics. Our minds have been so nurtured in prejudices as to the providential functions of government that anarchist ideas must be received with distrust. Our whole education, since childhood up to the grave, nurtures the belief in the necessity of a government and its beneficial effects. Systems of philosophy have been elaborated to support this view; history has been written from this standpoint; theories of law have been circulated and taught for the same purpose. All politics are based on the same principle, each politician saying to people he wants to support him: "Give me the governmental power; I will, I can, relieve you

from the hardships of your present life." All our education is permeated with the same teachings. We may open any book of sociology, history, law, or ethics: everywhere we find government, its organisation, its deeds, playing so prominent a part that we grow accustomed to suppose that the State and the political men are everything; that there is nothing behind the big statesmen. The same teachings are daily repeated in the Press. Whole columns are filled up with minutest records of parliamentary debates, of movements of political persons; and, while reading these columns, we too often forget that there is an immense body of men---man-kind, in fact---growing and dying, living in happiness or sorrow, labouring and consuming, thinking and creating, besides those few men whose importance has been so swollen up as to overshadow humanity.

And yet, if we revert from the printed matter to our real life, and cast a broad glance on society as it is, we are struck with the infinitesimal part played by government in our life. Millions of human beings live and die without having had anything to do with government. Every day millions of transactions are made without the slightest interference of government; and those who enter into agreements have not the slightest intention of breaking bargains. Nay, those agreements which are not protected by government (those of the Exchange, or card debts) are perhaps better kept than any others. The simple habit of keeping his word, the desire of not losing confidence, are quite sufficient in the immense overwhelming majority of cases to enforce the keeping of agreements. Of course, it may be said that there is still the government which might enforce them if necessary. But not to speak of the numberless cases which even could not be brought before a court, everybody who has the slightest acquaintance with trade will undoubtedly confirm the assertion that, if there were not so strong a feeling of honour to keep agreements, trade itself would become utterly impossible. Even those merchants and manufacturers who feel not the slightest remorse when poisoning their customers with all kinds of abominable drugs, duly labelled, even they also keep their commercial agreements. But, if such a relative morality as commercial honesty exists now, under the present conditions, when enrichment is the chief motive, the same feeling will further develop very fast as soon as robbing somebody of the fruits of his labour is no longer the economical basis of our life.

Another striking feature of our century tells in favour of the same no-government tendency. It is the steady enlargement of the field covered by private initiative, and the recent growth of large organisations resulting merely and simply from free agreement. The railway net of Europe—a confederation of so many scores of separate societies and the direct transport of passengers and merchandise over so many lines which were built independently and federated together, without even so

much as a Central Board of European Railways, are a most striking instance of what is already done by mere agreement. If fifty years ago somebody had predicted that railways built by so many separate companies finally would constitute so perfect a net as they do to-day, he surely would have been treated as a fool. It would have been urged that so many companies, prosecuting their own interests, would never agree without an International Board of Railways, supported by an International Convention of the European States, and endowed with governmental powers. But no such board was resorted to, and the agreement came nevertheless. The Dutch Beurden extending now their organisations over the rivers of Germany, and even to the shipping trade of the Baltic; the numberless amalgamated manufacturers" associations, and the syndicats of France, are so many instances in point. If it be argued that many of these organisations are organisations for exploitation, it would prove nothing, because, if men prosecuting their own egotistic, often very narrow, interests can agree together, better inspired men, compelled to be more closely connected with other groups, will necessarily agree still easier and still better.

But there also is no lack of free organisations for nobler pursuits. One of the noblest achievements of our century is undoubtedly the Lifeboat Association. Since its first humble start, which we all remember, it has saved no less than 32,000 human lives. It makes appeal to the noblest instincts of man; its activity is entirely dependent upon devotion to the common cause; while its internal organisation is entirely based upon the independence of the local committees. The Hospitals Association and hundreds of like organisations, operating on a large scale and covering each a wide field, may also be mentioned under this head. But, while we know everything about governments and their deeds, what do we know about the results achieved by free co-operation? Thousands of volumes have been written to record the acts of governments; the most trifling amelioration due to law has been recorded; its good effects have been exaggerated, its bad effects passed by in silence. But where is the book recording what has been achieved by free co-operation of well-inspired men? At the same time, hundreds of societies are constituted every day for the satisfaction of some of the infinitely varied needs of civilised man. We have societies for all possible kinds of studies -- some of them embracing the whole field of natural science, others limited to a small special branch; societies for gymnastics, for shorthand-writing, for the study of a separate author, for games and all kinds of sports, for forwarding the science of maintaining life, and for favouring the knowledge of how to destroy it; philosophical and industrial, artistic and anti-artistic; for serious work and for mere amusement -- in short, there is not a single direction in which men would exercise their faculties

without combining together for the prosecution of some common aim. Every day new societies are formed, while every year the old ones aggregate together into larger units, federate across the national frontiers, and co-operate in some common work.

The most striking feature of these numberless free growths is that they continually encroach on what was formerly the domain of the State or the Municipality. A householder in a Swiss village on the banks of Lake Leman belongs now to, at least, a dozen different societies which supply him with what is considered elsewhere as a function of the municipal government. Free federation of independent communes for temporary or permanent purposes lies at the very bottom of Swiss life, and to these federations many a part of Switzerland is indebted for its roads and fountains, its rich vineyards, well-kept forests, and meadows which the foreigner admires. And besides these small societies, substituting themselves for the State within some limited sphere, do we not see other societies doing the same on a much wider scale? Each German *Bürger* is proud of the German army, but few of them know how much it borrows of its force from the numberless private societies for military studies, exercise, and games; and how few are those who understand that their army would become an incoherent mass of men the day that each soldier was no longer inspired by the feelings which inspire him now? In this country, even the task of defending the territory -- that is, the chief, the great function of the State -- has been undertaken by an army of Volunteers, and this army surely might stand against any army of slaves obeying a military despot. More than that: a private society for the defence of the coasts of England has been seriously spoken of. Let it only come into life, and surely it will be a more effective weapon for self-defence than the ironclads of the navy. One of the most remarkable societies, however, which has recently arisen is undoubtedly the Red Cross Society. To slaughter men on the battle-fields, that remains the duty of the State; but these very States recognise themselves unable to take care of their own wounded: they abandon the task, to a great extent, to private initiative. What a deluge of mockeries would not have been cast over the poor "Utopist" who should have dared to say twenty-five years ago that the care of the wounded might be left to private societies! "Nobody would go in the dangerous places! all hospitals would gather where there was no need of them! national rivalries would result in the poor soldiers dying without any help, and so on," -- such would have been the outcry. The war of 1871 has shown how perspicacious those prophets are who never believe in human intelligence, devotion, and good sense.

These facts -- so numerous and so customary that we pass by without even noticing them -- are in our opinion one of the most prominent features of the second half of

our century. The just-mentioned organisms grew up so naturally; they so rapidly extended and so easily aggregated together; they are such unavoidable outgrowths of the multiplication of needs of the civilised man, and they so well replace State-interference, that we must recognise in them a growing factor of our life. Modern progress is really towards the free aggregation of free individuals so as to supplant government in all those functions which formerly were entrusted to it, and which it mostly performed so badly.

As to parliamentary rule, and representative government altogether, they are rapidly falling into decay. The few philosophers who already have shown their defects have only timidly summed up the growing public discontent. It is becoming evident that it is merely stupid to elect a few men, and to entrust them with the task of making laws on all possible subjects, of which subjects most of them are utterly ignorant. It is becoming understood that Majority rule is as defective as any other kind of rule; and Humanity searches, and finds, new channels for resolving the pending questions. The Postal Union did not elect an international postal parliament in order to make laws for all postal organisations adherent to the Union. The railways of Europe did not elect an international railway parliament in order to regulate the march of the trains and the repartition of the income of international traffic; and the Meteorological and Geological Societies of Europe did not elect either meteorological or geological parliaments for scheming polar stations, or for establishing a uniform subdivision of geological formations and a uniform coloration of geological maps. They proceeded by means of agreements. To agree together they resorted to congresses; but, while sending delegates to their congresses, they did not elect M.P.'s *bons á tout faire*; they did not say to them, "Vote about everything you like -- we shall obey." They put questions and discussed them first themselves; then they sent delegates acquainted with the special question to be discussed at the congress, and they sent *delegates* -- not rulers. Their delegates returned from the congress with no laws in their pockets, but with proposals of agreements. Such is the way assumed now (the very old way, too) for dealing with questions of public interest -- not the way of law-making by means of a representative government. Representative government has accomplished its historical mission; it has given a mortal blow to Court-rule; and by its debates it has awakened public interest in public questions. But, to see in it the government of the future Socialist society, is to commit a gross error. Each economical phase of life implies its own political phase; and it is impossible to touch the very bases of the present economical life -- private property -- without a corresponding change in the very bases of the political organisation. Life already shows in which direction the change will be made. Not in increasing the powers of

the State, but in resorting to free organisation and free federation in all those branches which are now considered as attributions of the State.

The objections to the above may be easily foreseen. It will be said of course: --- "But what is to be done with those who do not keep their agreements? What with those who are not inclined to work? What with those who would prefer breaking the written laws of society, or -- in the anarchist hypothesis -- its unwritten customs? Anarchy may be good for a higher humanity, -- not for the men of our own times.'

First of all, there are two kinds of agreements: there is the free one which is entered upon by free consent, as a free choice between different courses equally open before each of the agreeing parties; and there is the enforced agreement, imposed by one party upon the other, and accepted by the latter from sheer necessity; in fact, it is no agreement at all; it is a mere submission to necessity. Unhappily, the great bulk of what are now described as agreements belong to the latter category. When a workman sells his labour to an employer, and knows perfectly well that some part of the value of his produce will be unjustly taken by the employer; when he sells it without even the slightest guarantee of being employed so much as six consecutive months -- and he is compelled to do so because he and his family would otherwise starve next week -- it is a sad mockery to call that a free contract. Modern economists may call it free, but the father of political economy -- Adam Smith -- was never guilty of such a misrepresentation. As long as three-quarters of humanity are compelled to enter into agreements of that description, force is, of course, necessary, both to enforce the supposed agreements and to maintain such a state of things. Force -- and a good deal of force -- is necessary for preventing the labourers from taking possession of what they consider unjustly appropriated by the few; and force is necessary for always bringing new "uncivilised nations" under the same conditions. The Spencerian no-force party perfectly well understand that; and while they advocate no force for changing the existing conditions, they advocate still more force than is now used for maintaining them. As to anarchy, it is obviously as incompatible with plutocracy as with any other kind of cracy.

But we do not see the necessity of force for enforcing agreements freely entered upon. We never heard of a penalty imposed on a man who belonged to the crew of a lifeboat and at a given moment preferred to abandon the association. All that his comrades would do with him, if he were guilty of a gross neglect, would be probably to refuse further to do anything with him. Nor did we hear of fines imposed on a contributor of Mr. Murray"s Dictionary for a delay in his work, or of

gendarmes driving the volunteers of Garibaldi to the battle-fields. Free agreements need not be enforced.

As to the so-often repeated objection that nobody would labour if he were not compelled to do so by sheer necessity, we heard enough of it before the emancipation of slaves in America, as well as before the emancipation of serfs in Russia; and we have had the opportunity of appreciating it at its just value. So we shall not try to convince those who can be convinced only by accomplished facts. As to those who reason, they ought to know that, if it really was so with some parts of humanity at its lowest stages -- and yet, what do we know about it? -- or if it is so with some small communities , or separate individuals, brought to sheer despair by unsuccesses in their struggle against unfavourable conditions, it is not so with the bulk of the civilised nations. With us work is a habit, and idleness an artificial growth. Of course, when to be a manual worker means to be compelled to work all the life long for ten hours a day, and often more, at producing some part of something -- a pin"s head, for instance; when it means to be paid wages on which a family can live only on the condition of the strictest limitation of all its needs; when it means to be always under the menace of being thrown to-morrow out of employment -- and we know how frequent are the industrial crises, and what a misery they imply; when it means, in a very great number of cases, premature death in a paupers" hospital, if not in the workhouse; when to be manual worker signifies to wear all life long a stamp of inferiority in the eyes of those very people who live on the work of their "hands;" when it always means the renouncement of all those higher enjoyments that science and art give to man -- oh, then there is no wonder that everybody -- the manual worker as well -- has but one dream: that of rising to a condition where others would work for him. When I see writers who boast that they are the workers, and write that the manual workers are an inferior race of lazy and improvident fellows, I am inclined to ask them, Who, then has made all you see round about you: the houses you live in, the chairs, the carpets, the streets you enjoy, the clothes you wear? Who built the universities where you were taught, and who provided you with food during your school years? And what would become of your readiness to "work," if you were compelled to work in the above conditions all your life on a pin"s head? No doubt, anyhow you would be reported as a lazy fellow! And I affirm that no intelligent man can be closely acquainted with the life of the European working classes without wondering, on the contrary, at their readiness to work, even under such abominable conditions.

Overwork is reluctant to human nature -- not work. Overwork for supplying the few with luxury -- not work for the well-being of all. Work, labour, is a physiological necessity, a necessity of spending accumulated bodily energy, a

necessity which is health and life itself. If so many branches of useful work are so reluctantly done now, it is merely because they mean overwork, or they are improperly organised. But we know -- old Franklin knew it -- that four hours of useful work every day would be more than sufficient for supplying everybody with the comfort of a moderately well-to-do middle-class house, if we all gave ourselves to productive work, and if we did not waste our productive powers as we do waste them now. As to the childish question, repeated for fifty years (who would do disagreeable work?), frankly I regret that none of our savants has ever been brought to do it, be it for only one day in his life. If there is still work which is really disagreeable in itself, it is only because our scientific men have never cared to consider the means for rendering it less so: they always knew that there were plenty of starving men who would do it for a few pence a day.

As to the third -- the chief -- objection, which maintains the necessity of a government for punishing those who break the law of society, there is so much to say about it that it hardly can be touched incidentally. The more we study the question, the more we are brought to the conclusion that society itself is responsible for the anti-social deeds perpetrated in its midst; and that no punishments, no prisons, and no hangmen can diminish the numbers of like deeds; nothing short of a re-organisation of society itself. Three-quarters of all the acts which are brought every year before our courts have their origin, either directly or indirectly, in the present disorganised state of society with regard to the production and distribution of wealth -- not in the perversity of human nature. As to the relatively few anti-social deeds which result from anti-social inclinations of separate individuals, it is not by prisons, nor even by resorting to the hangman, that we can diminish their numbers. By our prisons, we merely multiply them and render them worse. By our detectives, our "price of blood," our executions, and our jails, we spread in society such a terrible flow of basest passions and habits, that he who would realise the effects of these institutions to their full extent, would be frightened by what society is doing under the pretext of maintaining morality. We must search for other remedies, and the remedies have been indicated long since.

Of course now, when a mother in search of food and shelter for her children must pass by shops filled up with the most refined delicacies of refined gluttony; when gorgeous and insolent luxury is displayed side by side with the most execrable misery; when the dog and the horse of a rich man are far better cared for than millions of children whose mothers earn a pitiful salary in the pit or the manufactory; when each "modest" evening dress of a lady represents eight months, or one year, of human labour; when enrichment on somebody's account is the avowed aim of the "upper classes," and no distinct boundary can be traced between

honest and dishonest means of making money -- then force is the only means for maintaining such a state of things; then an army of policemen, judges, and hangmen becomes a necessary institution.

But if all our children -- all children are our children -- received a sound instruction and education -- and we have the means of doing so; if every family lived in a decent home -- and they could under the present high pitch of our production; if every boy and girl were taught a handicraft at the same time as he or she receives a scientific instruction, and not to be a manual producer of wealth were considered as a token of inferiority; if men lived in closer contact with one another, and had continually to come into contact on those public affairs which now are invested in the few; and if, in consequence of a closer contact, we were brought to take as lively an interest in our neighbours' difficulties and pains as we formerly took in those of our kinsfolk -- then we should not resort to policemen and judges, to prisons and executions. The anti-social deeds would be prevented in bud, not punished; the few contests which would arise would be easily settled by arbitrators; and no more force would be necessary to impose their decisions than is required now for enforcing the decisions of the family tribunals of China, or of the Valencia water-courts.

And here we are brought to consider a great question: What would become of morality in a society which would recognise no laws and proclaim the full freedom of the individual? Our answer is plain. Public morality is independent from, and anterior to, law and religion. Until now, the teachings of morality have been associated with religious teachings. But the influence which religious teachings formerly exercised on the mind has faded of late, and the sanction which morality derived from religion has no more the power it formerly had. Millions and millions grow in our cities who have lost the old faith. Is it a reason for throwing morality overboard, and for treating it with the same sarcasm as primitive cosmogony?

Obviously not. No society is possible without certain principles of morality generally recognised. If everybody grew accustomed to deceive his fellow-men; if we never could rely on each other"s promise and words; if everybody treated his like as an enemy, against whom every means of warfare is justifiable -- no society could exist. And we see, in fact, that notwithstanding the decay of religious beliefs, the principles of morality retain unshaken. We even see irreligious people trying to raise the current standard of morality. The fact is that moral principles are independent of religious beliefs: they are anterior to them. The primitive Tchuktchis have no religion: they have only superstitions and fear of the hostile forces of nature; and nevertheless we find with them the very same principles of

morality which are taught by Christians and Buddhists, Mussulmans and Hebrews. Nay, some of their practices imply a much higher standard of tribal morality than that which appears in our civilised society. In fact, each new religion takes its moral principles from the only real stock of morality -- the moral habits which grow with men as soon as they unite to live together in tribes, cities, or nations. No animal society is possible without resulting in a growth of certain moral habits of mutual support and even self-sacrifice for the common well-being. These habits are a necessary condition for the welfare of the species in its struggle for life -- co-operation of individuals being a much more important factor in the struggle for the preservation of the species than the so-much-spoken-of physical struggle between individuals for the means of existence. The "fittest" in the organic world are those who grow accustomed to life in society; and life in society necessarily implies moral habits. As to mankind, it has, during its long existence, developed in its midst a nucleus of social habits, of moral habits, which cannot disappear as long as human societies exist. And therefore, notwithstanding the influences to the contrary which are now at work in consequence of our present economical relations, the nucleus of our moral habits continues to exist. Law and religion only formulate them and endeavour to enforce them by their sanction.

Whatever the variety of theories of morality, all can be brought under three chief categories: the morality of religion; the utilitarian morality; and the theory of moral habits resulting from the very needs of life in society. Each religious morality sanctifies its prescriptions by making them originate from revelation; and it tries to impress its teachings on the mind by a promise of reward, or punishment, either in this or in future life. The utilitarian morality maintains the idea of reward, but it finds it in man himself. It invites men to analyse their pleasures, to classify them, and to give preference to those which are most intense and most durable. We must recognise, however, that, although having exercised some influence, this system has been judged too artificial by the great mass of human beings. And finally -- whatever its varieties -- there is the third system of morality which sees in moral actions -- in those actions which are most powerful in rendering men best fitted to life in society -- a mere necessity of enjoying the joys of his brethren, of suffering when some of his brethren are suffering; a habit and a second nature, slowly elaborated and perfected by life in society. That is the morality of mankind; and that is also the morality of anarchy.

I could not better illustrate the difference between the three systems of morality than by repeating the following example. Suppose a child is drowning in a river, and three men stand on the bank of the river: the religious moralist, the utilitarian, and the plain man of the people. The religious man is supposed, first, to say to

himself that to save the child would bring him happiness in this or another life, and then save the child; but if he does so, he is merely a good reckoner, no more. Then comes the utilitarian, who is supposed to reason thus: "The enjoyments of life may be of the higher and of the lower description. To save the child would assure me the higher enjoyment. Therefore, let me jump in the river." But, admitting that there ever was a man who reasoned in this way, again, he would be a mere reckoner, and society would do better not to rely very much upon him: who knows what a sophism might pass one day through his head ! And here is the third man. He does not much calculate. But he has grown in the habit of always feeling the joys of those who surround him, and to feel happy when others are happy; of suffering, deeply suffering when others suffer. To act accordingly is his second nature. He hears the cry of the mother, he sees the child struggling for life, and he jumps in the river like a good dog, and saves the child, thanks to the energy of his feelings. And when the mother thanks him, he answers: "Why ! I could not do otherwise than I did." That is the real morality. That is the morality of the masses of the people; the morality grown to a habit, which will exist, whatever the ethical theories made by philosophers, and will steadily improve in proportion as the conditions of our social life are improved. Such a morality needs no laws for its maintenance. It is a natural growth favoured by the general sympathy which every advance towards a wider and higher morality finds in all fellow-men.

Such are, in a very brief summary, the leading principles of anarchy. Each of them hurts many a prejudice, and yet each of them results from an analysis of the very tendencies displayed by human society. Each of them is rich in consequences and implies a thorough revision of many a current opinion. And it is not a mere insight into a remote future. Already now, whatever the sphere of action of the individual, he can act, either in accordance with anarchist principles or on an opposite line. And all that may be done in that direction will be done in the direction whereto further development goes. All that may be done in the opposite way will be an attempt to force humanity to go where it will not go.

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