

The Anarchist Library (Mirror)

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Anarchy

David Andrew Andrade

February, 1889

Anarchy! There is no word which conjures up such feelings of terror to so many who hear it; nor is there one which so raises the hopes of those who ever see so little to hope for. It makes their eyes glisten, their blood course a little faster than usual, and they once more clutch at that almost forlorn hope of a “good time coming.”

Never in modern times has an idea, of such revolutionary nature and such weighty import, so seized upon the mind of man, as that which the great French philosopher first promulgated less than a half century ago. Never have humanity’s oppressors been so bewildered as to the course to adopt to shut out this light which has so suddenly burst on the mental vision of the world’s proletariat. Armies cannot rout its adherents; spies cannot distort its open secrets; exile cannot banish the hopes it brings; courts and tribunals, laws and special commissions, cannot combine to check its enormously extending popularity; and even the hanging of its adherents cannot silence their sympathizers, but only adds to their numbers and stimulates their courage.

And what is Anarchy?

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Professional liars of every station, and fools of every bias, have been telling the people that Anarchy is destruction, rapine, and murder, and that the Anarchist is the most dangerous foe to all that is good in civilisation. But even these perjurers are losing their influence as instructors of the people, and the multitude are beginning to enquire of the ideas of the Anarchists from the Anarchists themselves.

Anarchy is nothing more nor less than human liberty. It is that principle in humanity for which man has been striving, but has seldom perceived. We Anarchists contend that life without liberty is slavery, and that slavery is wrong and must be banished from the earth. Why should man seek to govern his fellow? Why seek to restrict his liberty and make him hate his brief existence? Why add to the inequalities of nature, the harsher inequalities which spring from man made law? We say, and say again, that "the government of man by man is oppression." We appeal to history, to science, to reason, to every-day experience, for testimony in support of our position; and everywhere we are successful. Do our opponents do likewise? Do they appeal to fact, to reason, to argument, to show that we are wrong? No! they denounce us unheard, and cry as of yore, "Crucify him!" They appeal to the bullying State—that low disgraceful institution, which never reasons with its victims, but silences and then destroys them—and ask that we be suppressed.

Ye who ask for our suppression, learn what it is ye vainly hope to suppress.

To be an Anarchist is to believe that no man has a right to govern another, that is, to arbitrarily restrict his liberty; that the robbery of another is wrong, no matter what the pretext or the method may be; that discord, warfare, and strife of every kind are not essential to human intercourse; that the world is wide and fruitful enough for us to live together harmoniously, and that we should do so did we but cease to aggress upon each other, and we accordingly affirm that every individual must be

sovereign over his own personality; that he shall have equal opportunity with every other man to work out his own salvation without begging for existence at the feet of privilege; that he shall enjoy that which his labor brings him; and that recognizing there is room in the world for all, he shall be free to voluntarily perform those actions which are most conducive to his comfort, and to live on terms of equity, peace, and fraternity with his fellow-men. In short the Anarchist does not wail for ever, "Is life worth living?" but sets about to make it worth living.

No man can suppress Anarchism. They may kill off its adherents one after another but only to find their places filled with others, who have reached the same mental elevation. All the studies of the greatest thinkers are strongly marked with the Anarchistic tendency. No one can study the writings of the most advanced sociological writers without coming to the general conclusion that the only social solution is the freedom of every individual.