

# **Society on the Morrow of the Revolution**

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1889

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# I. Authority and Organisation

Some Anarchists allow themselves to be led into confounding these two very different things. In their hatred of authority, they repel all organisation, knowing that the authoritarians disguise under this name the system of oppression which they desire to constitute. Others whilst avoiding falling into this error, go to the other extreme of extolling a thoroughly authoritarian form of organisation, which they style anarchist. There is, however, a fundamental difference to be made clear. That which the authoritarians have baptised with the name of 'organisation' is plainly enough a complete hierarchy, making laws, acting instead of and for all, or causing the mass to act, in the name of some sort of representation. Whereas what we understand by organisation is the agreement which is formed, because of their common interests, between individuals grouped for a certain work, Such are 'the mutual relations which result from the daily intercourse the members of a society are bound to have one with the other. But this organisation of ours has neither laws nor statutes nor regulations, to which every individual is forced to submit, under penalty of punishment. This organisation has no committee that represents it; the individuals are not attached to it by force, they remain free in their autonomy, free to abandon this organisation, at their own initiative, when they wish to substitute another for it.

We are far from having the pretentious idea of drawing a picture of what society will be in the future, far from having the presumption to wish to build a complete plan of organisation and put it forward as a principle. We merely wish to outline the main features and broad lines which ought to enlighten our propaganda, reply to objections which have been raised to the Anarchist idea, and demonstrate that a society is very well able to organise itself without either power or delegation if it is truly based on justice and social equality.

Yes, we believe that all individuals ought to be left free to seek for, and to group themselves according to, their tendencies and their affinities. To claim to establish a single method of organisation by which everybody will have to be controlled, and which will be established immediately after the Revolution, is utopian, considering the diversity of the temperaments and characters of individuals; and to wish already to prepare a frame, more or less narrow, in which society will be called upon to move, would be to play the part of doctrinaires and conservatives, since nothing assures us that the ideal which fascinates us to-day will respond to-morrow to our wants, and above all to the wants of the whole of society. The powerlessness to sterility, with which the Socialist schools up to the present time have been stricken, is due precisely to the fact that in the society they wished to establish all was foreseen and regulated in advance, nothing was left to the initiative of individuals; consequently that which responded to the aspirations of some was objectionable to others, and thence the impossibility of creating, anything durable.

We have to refute here the affirmation of the reactionaries, who pretend that if Anarchy was triumphant it would be a return to the savage state and the death of all society. Nothing is more false. We recognise that it is association alone which can permit man to employ the machinery which science and industry put at his service; we recognise that it is by associating their efforts that individuals will succeed in increasing their comfort and their freedom. We are, then, parti-

sans of association, but, we repeat it, because we consider it as a means to the well-being of the individual, and not under the abstract form in which it is presented to us even now, which makes of it a sort of divinity by which those who ought to compose it are annihilated.

Then if we do not wish to fall into the same errors and to meet with the same obstacles we ought to guard ourselves against believing that all men are cast in the same mould, and to recognise that what may agree very well with the disposition of one individual may very indifferently accord with the feelings of all. This, it may be said in passing, applies equally to association in the period of propaganda and to the future society. If we desire to make a revolution which will come up to our ideal, to prepare this revolution we ought at once to organise ourselves according to our principles, to accustom individuals to act of themselves, and to be careful not to introduce into our organisation the institutions that we attack in the existing society, lest we relapse into the same condition as before. Anarchists ought to be more practical than those they fight against, they ought to learn from the mistakes which are made, so as to avoid them. We ought to appeal to all those who wish to destroy the present society, and, instead of losing our time in discussing the utility of such or such means, to group ourselves for the immediate application of the means we think best, without preoccupying ourselves with those who are not in favour of it; in the same way that those who are in favour of another means should group themselves to put in practice that other means. After all what we all wish is the destruction of the present society; and it is evident that experience will guide us as to the choice of means. We should do practical work, instead of wasting our time at committee meetings, which are mostly sterile, where each wishes to make his own idea prevail, which very often break up without anything being decided, and which almost always result in the creation of as many dissentient factions as there are ideas put forward-factions which, having become enemies, lose sight of the common enemy, the middle-class society, to war upon each other.

Another advantage resulting from this is, that individuals habituating themselves to join the group which accords best with their own ideas, will accustom themselves to think and to act of their own accord, without any authority among them, without that discipline which consists in destroying the efforts of a group or of isolated individuals because the others are not of their opinion, Yet another advantage which results is, that a revolution made on this basis could not be other than Anarchist, for individuals who had learned to act without any compulsion would not be silly enough to establish a power on the morrow of victory.

For some Socialists the ideal is to gather the workers in a party such as exists in Germany. The chiefs of this party on the day of the revolution would be carried into power, would thus form a new government who would decree the appropriation of machinery and property, would organise production, regulate consumption, and suppress—that goes without saying—those who were not of their opinion. We Anarchists believe that this is a dream. Decrees to take possession after the struggle will be illusory; it is not by decrees that the appropriation of capital will be accomplished, but by facts at the time of the struggle, by the workers themselves, who will enter into possession of houses and workshops by driving away the present possessors, and by calling the disinherited and saying to them, “This belongs to nobody individually; it is not a property that can belong to the fast occupant, and by him be transmitted to his descendants. No, these houses are the product of past generations, the heritage of the present and future generations. Once unoccupied, they are at the free disposition of those who need them, This machinery is put at the free disposition of the producers who wish to use it, but cannot become individual property.”

Individuals will be so much the more unable to personally appropriate it, because they will not know what to do with machinery which they cannot utilise by means of wage-slaves. No one will be able to appropriate anything which he cannot work himself; and as the greater part of the present machinery can only be worked by the association of individual forces, it will be by this means that individual will come to an understanding. Once the appropriation has been made, we see no necessity for it to be sanctioned by any authority whatsoever.

We cannot foresee the consequences of the struggle in which we are engaged. In the first place, do we know how long it will last? What will be the immediate result of a general overthrow of the existing institutions? What will be the immediate wants of the people on the morrow of the revolution! Certainly we do not.

We ought, then, not to waste our time in establishing in our imagination a society the wheels of which will all be prepared in advance, and which will be constructed, so to speak, like one of those boxes of play-things, all the pieces of which are numbered, and which, when placed together, start working directly the mechanism is wound up. All that we can do from the theoretical point of view of Organisation will never be other than dreams, more or less complicated, which invariably prove to be without basis when it is a question of putting them into practice. We certainly have not this ridiculous pretention, but we ought to guard ourselves also from that other mistake common to many revolutionaries, who say: Let us occupy ourselves first of all with destroying, and afterwards we will see what we ought to construct. Between these two ideas there is a *Mattis*. We certainly cannot say what the future society will be, but we ought to say what it will not be, or at least what we ought to prevent it from being.

We cannot say what will be the mode of Organisation of the producing and consuming groups; they alone can be judges of that; moreover, the same methods are not suitable to all. But we can very well say, for instance, what we would do personally if we were in a society in which all the individuals had the opportunity to act freely, what we must do now, in fact, the revolution being only the complement of evolution. We can tell how a society might evolve without the help of those famous "commissions of statistics," "labour-notes," etc., etc., with which the Collectivists wish to gratify us; and we believe it is necessary to say this because it is in the nature of individuals not to wish to engage themselves to follow a certain course of action without knowing where it will take them, and besides, as we have already said, it is the end we ourselves propose to attain that ought to guide us in the employment of means of propaganda.

## II. The Medium of Exchange and the Commissions of Statistics

The belief that we must continue to value the efforts of individuals and permit them to enjoy only according to what they have produced is another prejudice giving rise to the objection that it is impossible to, establish a communist society.

How strong is prejudice! People realise all the falsity of the present, commercial system; they see that we must abolish competition by destroying money, the medium of exchange which enables the capitalists, to deceive the worker so as to obtain in exchange for their money a. greater amount of labour force than they pay, for. They comprehend that all that must be destroyed, and yet most of those who see thus far quite clearly can find no better remedy than to substitute for the present medium of exchange—money—another exchange medium.

What will this change? What does it matter that the exchange medium is a metal more or less precious? That is not the danger. The danger is that if, we establish an exchange of products in the new society it will be to everyone's interest to assess his own productions at a higher value than any others, and then we shall see all the evils of the existing society reproduced. This can only be avoided by the discovery of a basis which will give the exact value of every product. But this basis is lacking as we shall endeavour to show. Most of the authoritarian Socialists for want of a better have adopted as a measure of value an hour of work! But, as there are some kinds of work which require a very much larger expenditure of labour force than others, we want to know what they will do to make everyone agree? Everybody will be interested in having his hour of work or expenditure of labour force estimated at a higher rate than the average indeed it is already admitted by many Socialists that more ought to be paid for certain work than for certain other work. We want to know, also, what sort of a dynamometer will enable them to continually measure and compare the expenditure of a man's muscular or brain force. On what basis will they establish their measure of exchange value so as to give to each, as they say, the whole product of his work, and, most important of all, who will set what the value in exchange shall be I It is in fact impossible to constitute this exchange value. It can only be arranged by friendly agreement amongst all the workers; unless, indeed, it is imposed by the commissions of statistics. But as many collectivists deny that commissions of statistics are governments, we, believe this exchange value will be established by a common agreement between the workers. This, however, implies that the workers will. have to abandon their exact claims and acquire that self-denial which. it is said they cannot have in an Anarchist society. On the other hand if labour notes are created, how will their accumulation be prevented? It has been said in reply to this question that an accumulation could only be used in the purchase of articles for consumption, and as the land and machinery would be inalienable, the dangers of such accumulations could not be great. Certainly so far as the reconstitution of private property in land and machinery is concerned, such an accumulation could not be dangerous, but it could very easily' throw the whole organisation into confusion. We will explain bow. We will suppose these individuals to

have bad intentions—this would be very easily imagined by our opponents, let us not forget, if an Anarchist society was in question—we will suppose that they are able to produce more than they need, and thus acquire an accumulation of notes. What is the result? On the one hand they deprive the market of a demand for products, whilst they increase the supply on the other. Thus not only are all the calculations of the commissions of statistics, upset, but other persons who have more wants than they have are prevented from producing according to their wants. It has been urged in reply to this objection that accumulations will be prevented by cancelling these famous labour notes at certain periods. But what will prevent anyone from exchanging them for new ones at the time when they become due, for we cannot force people to consume immediately—unless we also insert in the programme Compulsory Consumption. But if we admit that that can be avoided, there will nevertheless be some individuals who will produce more than they will consume and others who will want to consume more than they can produce. Now as each labour note—and we are supposing all the time that these have been made the medium of exchange will have to be represented in the warehouses by its equivalent in products, we shall have the anomaly of there being in a society calling itself a society of equals, through some individuals for lack of wants having allowed their labour notes to be cancelled at maturity, some goods remaining in the warehouses; whilst other individuals will be unable to satisfy their wants because they could not produce accordingly. We shall thus have arrived at a point where we shall either have to force people to consume or force them to give up their labour notes. Why not re-establish the Poor Law system? As, however, according to the collectivists, these commissions of statistics are not an authority, there will be only one thing left for them to do—to restrict production and thus create some unemployed. Where will be the difference in that society from the society of to-day? In spite of all the contradictions it is evident that it is here that appears the object of these famous commissions of statistics which will regulate the hours of work by indicating to each individual what he is to do. In other words, the individual in such a society would find himself restricted in all his sets; at each movement he would run up against a prohibitory law. That may be collectivism, but assuredly it is not liberty, still less is it equality. But beyond all these inconveniences there is still another, more dangerous than all the rest, it is that in instituting commissions of this and commissions of that, which will be nothing else but a government under another name, we shall simply have made a revolution in order to hasten the concentration of the social wealth which is taking place to-day in the higher capitalist circles, and to succeed in the end in placing the whole of the machinery and social property in the hands of a few.

To-day when the State possesses only a very small part of the public fortune, a crowd of individual interests have sprung up around it which are so many obstacles to our emancipation. What would it be like in a State which was at one and the same time employer and proprietor of all? An all-powerful State, which would be able at will to dispose of the whole social fortune and distribute it so as to best serve its own interests. A State, in short, which would be master not only of the present generation but also of those of the future, as it would undertake the education of the children, and would be able at pleasure either to help humanity along the path of progress by a wide and varied system of education or to hinder its development by a narrow system. We recoil in fear before an authority having such powerful means of action.

We complain because the present society hinders our forward march; we complain because it restrains our aspirations beneath the yoke of its authority. But what would it be like in a society where nothing could be produced unless it was authorised by the State, represented by so-called “commissions of statistics.” In such a society, where nothing could be produced except by the

will of the State, no new idea would be able to see the light if it did not succeed in obtaining recognition by the State as being of public utility. Now, as all new ideas have to struggle against the ideas that have gone before, this recognition would never be secured as the new idea would be completely crushed out and stilled long before it had any chance of coming before the public. Thus, to take only one example, printing-which up to now has been one of the most; effective aids to progress, as it brings human knowledge within the reach of all-would be no longer available for new ideas; for however disinterested those who would form the Collectivist government might be, permit us to doubt that they would carry their self-denial to the point of allowing anything to be printed which attacked their authority; especially as they would only have to give a simple refusal, and they would be able to urge as an excuse that as all the productive forces were fully occupied with the interests of co consumption, it would not be right for them to busy themselves with what was not a part of the immediate wants of society.



### III. La Dictature de Classe

[Freedom, February, 1890]

On a répliqué, il est vrai, que les commissions de statistique ne seraient pas une autorité; elles *détermineront* la production, *répartiront* les produits, elles *établiront* ceci, *organiseront* cela, mais ça ne serait pas un pouvoir. Alors pourquoi les établir, si les groupes sont libres de les envoyer promener quand ça les embêtera où est leur utilité ? n'est-il pas plus simple de laisser les groupes s'organiser librement, régler leur production et leur consommation comme ils l'entendront ? Mais quelles que soient les dénégations des partisans de l'autorité déguisée, elles ne nous empêcheront pas de les enfermer dans ce dilemme : ou bien les groupes et individus seront libres d'accepter ou de rejeter les décisions de ces commissions, ou bien ces décisions auront force de loi? alors on sera forcé de créer une police, une armée pour les faire accepter par les récalcitrants? donc ce sera une autorité avec toutes ses attributions !

Pour prouver que c'est bien un gouvernement que l'on veut établir; nous prendrons la liberté de demander ce qu'on entend par dictature de classe. Ne serait-ce pas là un de ces mots pompeux, bien sonores, bien ronflants et tout a fait vides de sens, ne signifiant absolument rien ; mots creux que l'on jette de temps à autre en pâture à la foule pour éviter de lui donner d'autres explications? — Nous demandons donc, ce que c'est qu'une dictature de classe ?

On nous répond : ce serait la dictature des travailleurs contre la bourgeoisie ! très bien, mais comment exercera-t-on cette dictature de classe, surtout au lendemain d'une révolution qui aura du avoir pour effet de faire disparaître toute les inégalités sociales?

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Nous avons beau creuser ce problème, nous ne pouvons en tirer qu'une conclusion : on veut organiser le prolétariat en une masse aveugle et inconsciente, recevant le mot d'ordre de certaines têtes de colonnes, l'habituer à n'agir que d'après l'impulsion donnée, sans permettre la moindre initiative personnelle pour en arriver à l'établissement d'un système d'organisation que personne n'aura à discuter et que l'on imposera à tous au lendemain de la révolution.

Nous avouons qu'avec ce système on pourrait se passer de gouvernement officiel ayant une armée pour se faire obéir, car on aurait en main les forces même de la Révolution, habituées à exécuter les ordres leur venant d'en haut : et, au lieu d'avoir une dictature avouée à un hôtel de ville quelconque, nous en aurions une insaisissable, toujours renaissante dans nos rangs. Nous combattons de toutes nos forces une pareille dictature qui serait plus terrible que toutes les autres dans ses conséquences; car le peuple, croyant défendre ses propres intérêts, ne ferait qu'exécuter les ordres de ses nouveaux maîtres.

De plus, comme ces individus que l'on aurait arrachés à l'atelier,<sup>1</sup> ne pouvant plus produire, forcés qu'ils seraient de donner tout leur temps à l'exercice de cette dictature, ils deviendraient,

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<sup>1</sup> Nous supposons que ce soient des ouvriers que l'un aura pris pour «dictaturer.»

par ce fait même, des bourgeois. La première chose Qu'ils auraient donc à faire pour être d'accord avec leurs principes, serait de se supprimer eux-mêmes.

Mais, dira-t-on, puisqu'ils exerceront le pouvoir parla volonté de leurs camarades, ce ne serait plus la même chose, leur production, pour n'être pas matérielle, n'en serait pas moins effective, puisqu'ils contribueront à la marche de la société. Ce sont de misérables arguties. A quoi nous servirait de jeter une aristocratie par dessus bord, si nous en élevions une autre à sa place? En serions-nous plus avancés? Ah! ce qui pèse aujourd'hui si lourdement sur nos épaules, ce n'est pas le nombre des patrons ou propriétaires. Si la misère étreint aujourd'hui le travailleur, ce n'est pas tant parce que la propriété appartient seulement à quelques individus, mais c'est surtout parce que ces quelques individus ont besoin de tout un système d'organisation qui entraîne avec lui la création d'une foule d'emplois inutiles et que les travailleurs sont forcés de produire pour tout cela. Il n'en serait ni plus ni moins dans la société, où (sous des noms différents, il est vrai) nous retrouverions tous les défauts de l'organisation actuelle.

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Une dernière objection a cette dictature de classe. Si le peuple fait une révolution sociale pour s'emparer de la propriété, est-ce que les classes ne seront pas, par le fait, abolies? Il restera, dit-on, des bourgeois qui, mécontents de la situation qui leur aura été faite, pourraient être un danger, c'est à eux que l'on fera la guerre. Très bien, mais *alors vous ferez la guerre une individus mécontents de la situation par vous créée?* vous établirez un pouvoir pour faire la guerre à ceux qui voudraient ramener la société en arrière; mais, une fois ce pouvoir établi, qui est-ce qui l'empêchera de la faire à ceux qui voudraient marcher en avant? Non, non, cette dictature est trop élastique, nous n'en voulons pas. Pour, nous, partisans de la liberté *vraie*, nous considérons que le mauvais vouloir de quelques individus isolés dans la société ne peut être un danger pour personne dès qu'ils sont privés de tout ce qui fait leur force aujourd'hui : capital et gouvernement, — tandis qu'un pouvoir à la tête de cette société serait un danger pour tous.

Et puis, sérieusement, croit-on qu'une transformation sociale, devant arracher la propriété des mains de la minorité, puisse s'établir sans avoir à passer par les tâtonnements que l'on prévoit pour le communisme? Assurément non, car pendant que celui-ci irait en tâtonnant, il est vrai, mais du moins librement, en laissant à chaque caractère, à chaque tempérament, le soin de son organisation propre, une organisation centralisée, avec sa prétention d'établir un système unique, irait, heurtant de front la susceptibilité des uns, les espérances des autres, créerait immédiatement des satisfaits et des intérêts nouveaux autour d'elle, et ne laisserait aux mécontents d'autre porte de sortie qu'une révolution nouvelle. Au contraire, en laissant les groupes libres de leur organisation, tel groupe qui ne se trouverait plus en rapport avec les développements de la société pourrait se réorganiser sur de nouvelles bases; ou bien les individus qui en feraient partie, si ce groupe ne répondait plus à leurs aspirations, pourraient le quitter pour en former de nouveaux, ou bien entrer dans un autre qui répondrait mieux à leurs besoins, et cela sans amener de perturbation dans la société, car ces changements auraient lieu partiellement et par degrés. Alors la marche de l'humanité ne nous présenterait plus qu'une évolution continuelle qui nous conduirait au but que nous cherchons: le bonheur commun.

On voit par ce qui précède que, loin de vouloir faire sauter à tout moment et hors propos ceux qui ne seraient pas de notre avis, nous ne demandons, au contraire, que le droit ou plutôt les moyens d'exercer ce droit naturel inhérent à la nature humaine, de pouvoir nous organiser

comme nous l'entendons, libre à ceux qui ne penseraient pas comme nous de s'organiser comme ils l'entendent eux-mêmes. Ce que nous voulons, en un mot, c'est reprendre notre place au soleil, et si nous voulons la Révolution, c'est parce que la bourgeoisie se sert du pouvoir dont elle s'est emparée et de la situation économique qu'elle s'est faite pour nous asservir, et qu'elle ne nous a laissé d'autre alternative que de subir lâchement cette exploitation ou de lui passer sur le ventre. Mais si nous voulons déposséder la bourgeoisie de cette propriété qu'elle détient, ce n'est pas pour nous l'approprier et l'exploiter à notre tour, comme l'a fait la bourgeoisie en s'emparant, en 89, des biens du clergé et de la noblesse. Nous voulons l'en déposséder pour la remettre à la disposition de tous, afin que *tous, sans exception*, y puissent leur part de jouissance; et si, pour accomplir cette transformation, nous avons recours à la force, loin de faire acte d'autorité, comme cela a été bêtement dit, nous faisons acte de liberté en brisant les chaînes qui nous entravent.

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Un autre argument en faveur de l'autonomie des groupes et des individus dans une société vraiment basée sur la solidarisation des efforts et des intérêts de tous, c'est que l'idée sociale progresse sans cesse, tandis que l'individu, au contraire, arrivé à une période où s'arrête le développement de son cerveau, s'ankylose intellectuellement et considère j comme folles les idées neuves professées par de plus jeunes que lui. Est-ce que les idées de 48 ne nous paraissent pas, aujourd'hui, plus ou moins anodines, et les quelques survivants de cette époque qui passaient jadis pour des exaltés, dans quel camp es trouve-t-on aujourd'hui? Sans remonter aussi haut, se battraient-on aujourd'hui pour les idées de 71 ? Qu'avons-nous vu au retour des amnistiés, qui, par le fait de la déportation, se sont trouvés séparés du courant intellectuel? Ils sont revenus, pour la plupart, à peine à la hauteur des radicaux. Non, tant que l'on voudra établir un mode unique d'organisation, on créera par là une barrière contre l'avenir, barrière qui ne pourrait disparaître que par le fait d'une révolution de la génération suivante.

## IV. The Public Services

THOSE who advocate a system of division of products in the future society argue that on the morrow of the Revolution there will not be enough to meet the unlimited wants of all. We believe this to be a mistake. Even to-day, when waste is everywhere to be seen, and when through the sordid calculations of shameless speculators uncultivated land abounds, production so much exceeds consumption that the unemployed are ever increasing their numbers. What then will it be in a society where no one will have any reason for monopolising because everyone will be sure of having his wants satisfied everyday; in a society where every arm will be productive, where all those who compose the army, the bureaucracy, as well as that innumerable crowd of domestic servants, having no other work to do to-day but to satisfy the caprices of our exploiters, where, in short, all those who to-day consume I without “Doing any useful work in society, will be productive workers: moreover, when all those lands would be given over to agriculture which are now allowed to lie fallow by their over-fed proprietors, as well as all those lands, still more extensive, which are now abandoned because the harvest would not be sufficient to cover the expense necessary to put the in a productive state and also to give the owner a usurious interest but which in the future society would cost but little to put into cultivation, since the indispensable material would be in the hands of the workers, when we should be able by means of the steam-engine to ransack the earth unceasingly and take from it those nourishing essences that are given to the soil in the form of the manure which chemistry is able to produce to-day. Without estimating the future we can, therefore, very well think and even assert that production will be able quite well to answer all the requirements of consumption.

The fact has been specially insisted upon that there are some products such for instance as silk and similar articles, which it will not be possible to make so quickly as to satisfy all requirements. It appears to us to be a strange idea of the Revolution to imagine that workers who have become so intelligent as to understand the origin and study the causes of their misery and to apply the remedy, could possibly be so stupid as to fight amongst themselves if there was not some authority to divide amongst them a piece of silk, a basket of truffles or any other article which is often sought for only on account of its rarity. This objection is so stupid that we do not think it worth replying to; we prefer to believe for the sake of humanity that the workers having obtained the satisfaction of their urgent material and intellectual wants, for which they have fought, will be sensible enough to arrange amicably amongst themselves as to the division of the products which cannot be put at the disposition of all. If necessary the more intelligent will know how to abandon their share to those who are not wise enough to patiently await their turn.

We should have liked to have gone more fully into the question of what the Collectivists call public services, but we feel compelled to limit ourselves to a few brief remarks. In passing, let us say that the Collectivists have invented this term “public services”, merely for tactical purposes. They include under this denomination all the services such as the Post Office, Telegraph Department, Railways, etc., which as they say are not actually productive, inasmuch as they do not give

any product which may be stored away in the warehouses, and say that it will be necessary to deduct the salary of those who perform these services from the produce of the other associations, which would simply be to establish a tax under another name. By making this distinction amongst the workers they doubtless hope to pass through their commissions of statistics and all the officialdom which they desire to create in the new society, thus confounding these parasitical officials with the workers we have mentioned, whose activity, although it is not bestowed upon the creation of objects of consumption is none the less one of the forces necessary to society.

But the motive is too apparent. Is not everything that contributes to the well-being and progress of society by that very fact a public service, and whether any one is employed in the production of grain, or no matter what other commodity, or in its transport to the place where it is needed, an equal service is rendered to society. But the commissions, sinecures and official employments of the Collectivists would only be a bad service to society of which we should have to rid ourselves as speedily as possible.

It has also been said that for works of general utility embracing one or several particular districts, it will be necessary to appoint delegates to arrange matters, even if only temporarily said for the single purpose for which they would be appointed. This also is a mistake. In fact as we have tried to explain the individual interests would be founded upon the general interests and, therefore the relations between the groups would only be affected by general matters that each group would be very well able to consider at its particular point, and which would all tend to secure the same result. Moreover all these distinctions of village, township, country, etc., would disappear or at most would only be geographical expressions. If then we take for example the making of a road, a canal or a railway line, we see no necessity to send delegations to organise these works. We will suppose that the idea of this work arises spontaneously in the brain of a single individual. The first thing he would have to do would be to make his idea known amongst his neighbours, to seek for those who desire to adopt it and to assist him in his enterprise, to find a Borne engineer, if he was not one himself like the plans, decide on the places where the canal, road or railway ought to pass, coiled the excavators or other workers necessary to the undertaking. Then when he had obtained the necessary nucleus for his operations, when the matter had been discussed and considered, when the plans were ripened, the details decided and the division of the work satisfactorily arranged, the undertaking would be commenced and the work would be carried out as can easily be seen, without any authority or delegation whatever and by the simple initiative of the individuals.

To-day we see all sorts of associations springing up. Railways, canals, bridges, commerce, industry; all are the prey of strong societies formed for the purpose of exploiting such or such a speciality of human industry. On a smaller scale we find little societies formed for the purpose of procuring material advantages for their members or for the satisfaction of some pleasure. Such are the co-operative societies, the choral and instrumental groups, and the bodies organised for scientific peregrinations or simple walking clubs. Now, incomplete as they may be, these associations respond in a great measure to the wants of their members. What then will it be like in the society of the future where individual initiative will have elbow room and will no longer be shackled by the question of money, where affinities will be free to seek each other and dispositions to harmonise without difficulty. Nothing will prevent individuals; from grouping according to their tastes, aptitudes and temperaments so as to produce or consume whatever they may please. Posts, railways, educational institutions, etc., will enter into the social Organisation on just the same footing as shoes and copper kettles. A division of work will, have to be established in this

order of ideas as in the other; that is all. As nobody would be shackled by material difficulties, by considerations of economy, everybody would accustom themselves to go to the group which best responded to their wishes, so that the group which rendered most service would have the greatest chance of developing itself. As man is a complex being agitated by a thousand different sentiments, actuated by various wants, the groups formed would be very numerous, and it is exactly their diversity that would assure the satisfactory, working of all the services necessary to the well-being of the individual, and that would lead us to the end we all dream of—HARMONY.

And let no one cry out at this that it is utopian and improbable, referring us to the actual or, organisations for proof of their criticism. It is necessary to remember that the situation will no longer be the same that it is to-day. To-day all the associations are authoritarian and individualist; amongst the members, if the body is a large care, there are distinctions of offices or of salaries, often of both at the same time. But in spite of all these causes of disunion, unity is generally maintained for a good length of time, dissension only arises when there is one who is more greedy than the others and who tries to over-reach his fellow-members or seeks to profit by the position which he holds in the body to dominate over his comrades. Then distrust commences to creep in amongst them, quarrels ensue and finally there is a complete break up of the body. But let us bear in mind that in the society to which we look forward there will be no special profits to be obtained from any enterprise, that all individuals will be placed upon a footing of the most perfect equality and will be free to withdraw from an association whenever they wish, having no money invested, and that the economic situation will be the same for all; and—we again repeat it—let us above all not forget that to establish such a society the workers will have to be intelligent enough to destroy the present society which keeps them in subjection.

## V. The Idlers

There is another objection to which we should think it useless to reply but that it has been put to us by many of our workshop companions. It is this: If in your Society everyone is able to consume without being compelled to produce in return no one would wish to work, or, at any rate, there would be a great number of idlers who would do nothing; the rest would, therefore, be forced to work for them.

To this objection we again reply that those who raise it look at things too much from the point of view of the existing Society, and do not form a just idea of what the transformed Society will be like. To-day, when the worker is crushed under exhausting and repugnant work for twelve or thirteen hours a day, often under conditions more or less unhealthy, and for a ridiculously small wage which scarcely prevents him from dying of hunger,—certainly he cannot help being disgusted with work. But in the future Society, when, as we have before said, there will be restored to productive work the multitude of wage receivers who to-day only employ themselves in the maintenance of the governmental machine which crushes us amongst its numerous wheels, or whose work consists merely in supplying a greater amount of enjoyment to our present exploiters. When, too, a better distribution of work will have diminished the work of the hand, and by a greater extension of the mechanical process production will have been facilitated, while the hours of work will have been very much reduced; when the workshop will have been made healthy by repairing and altering the buildings which are now in use, and which can easily be made to suit the wants of the producing groups. When, besides, in the most exhausting kinds of work machinery will be employed instead of hand labor, and that by all these immediate ameliorations the working day will be reduced to four, five or six hours at the most, we do not believe that there will be so many idlers as is suggested. Man has within him a force of activity which it is necessary to expend in some manner or other, and when it happens that the greater part of his time will be his for his leisure or any occupation he may desire to follow, we do not see what interest he will have in refusing to work, particularly as all work done will be reciprocal.

But we willingly admit—and certainly it will occur in the beginning—that there may be some natures sufficiently corrupted by the present Society to refuse to do any work. But, at all events, these will only be a very insignificant minority. To-day when, half-fed, we have to work like madmen to fatten a horde of parasites of all sorts and conditions, many of the workers find that very natural, but in a society where we shall know that all our wants will be satisfied, where work will be made much more attractive, shall we with light hearts set up masters unto us under the pretext that there may be some few individuals demoralized by the present Society who refuse to work. Come, come! Is it not the case that we should derive greater advantage from letting them alone than from establishing an organisation for the purpose of compelling them to work, and which would probably not be able to do that for which it was created. Some of us remember the fable of Lafontaine, in which the Gardener sought out the Lord of the place, asking him to deliver him from the rabbit that ate his cabbages.

Moreover, these men, left to themselves in a Society in which the rule, the very base of life, will be Work (whereas in the Society of to-day the contrary is the case) will very soon be ashamed of their position, and will come of their own accord, after a lapse of time more or less long, to do some work, 'They will come and implore for work so as not to die of weariness, whilst, on the other hand, by trying to force them, you drive them into open war with society. Then they will seek to procure by trickery or by force (the theft and murder of the present society) what you refuse to let them have willingly. It will be necessary to establish a police force to prevent them from taking what you refuse to give them, judges to condemn them, gaolers to guard them; in short, little by little to reconstitute the present form of society. That is to say, in order not to feed a certain number of idlers who, as we have said before, if left to themselves would very soon be ashamed of their position, we should create a new sort of idlers, with this serious additional trouble,—that the situation of these last in society would be legal, but they would produce nothing just the same as the others and would only serve to perpetuate the situation. Thus we should have two kinds of idlers to feed, those who live at the expense of society in spite of it, and those that society had created itself, without taking into account that the authority thus established would be able at any moment to turn against those who had established it.

It is also said: Men are too much corrupted by their present education, and by their heritage of several thousand centuries of prejudice of all kinds; they will be neither wise enough nor improved enough on the morrow of the Revolution to be left free to organise themselves.

What do you say! Men will not be wise enough to control themselves and to avoid this danger, you have nothing better to suggest than to put at the head of these men, who? other men! who will be intelligent perhaps, but who none the less will share these prejudices and these vices with which you reproved the mass. In other words, instead of trying to remove these prejudices and vices from the mass, and to try and obtain by the help of all the spark of intelligence, which can light our path to the future society, you place the whole destinies of society in the hands of a few individuals who will guide it according to the more or less narrow ideas which they hold, for whatever may be the width of conception of the human brain, every man has a side of his mind which urges him in spite of himself into the craggy pathways of routine.

And then, besides, who will choose these chiefs? We do not suppose that they would choose themselves? it would therefore be the people? But you have just told us that they would not be wise enough to control their own actions, and by what miracle would they be wise enough to make a proper choice amongst all the intriguers who would come to canvass their votes.

Ah! Take care that when you come to speak to us of progress and liberty we do not come to the conclusion that your method of following progress is to hinder it, under the pretext that you are not free to follow it; that the only liberty you wish to conquer is that which consists in disembarassing yourself of those who do not think the same as you, of those who believe that there are no superior men who contain within themselves the knowledge of humanity, but that this knowledge on the contrary is scattered among the human race; of those who believe that it is only in leaving all intelligences free to investigate and to group themselves that the light will appear; of those who believe, in short, that it is only by seeing at its side a group well organised that a group badly organised will be transformed in trying to improve itself, and that from the continual clashing of new ideas, continual movement, never ending alterations, will come in the end that communion of ideas of which nobody has yet discovered the secret, and which it is vain to try and establish by force.



## VI. The Educational Period

We now have to deal with an objection which is brought forward by certain Socialists, but which should really be credited to the middle class. Not being able to deny the vices of the existing organization and the necessity of a social transformation these people entrench themselves behind the exigencies of what they term progressive amelioration and say to us "Certainly; you are quite right! What you say is excellent. It is really a desirable thing that the workers obtain the whole product of their work; but you must not forget that you have to deal with society as it is; you have to take into account the ignorance of the masses. If all of a sudden we were to make the reforms you ask for we should run the risk of having the majority of the populace against us. It is not in this way that we must act. When the articles of consumption are so plentiful that men can help themselves without the fear of others going short; when men are intelligent enough to know that they ought to respect the liberty of others, then doubtless it will be possible to proclaim the complete liberty of the individual, to suppress all government. Let us get to this point gradually. At first let us instruct the people and when they are instructed they will obtain for themselves all you demand." With this sort of language the middle-class, without denying the legitimacy of our demands, succeeds in putting off their realisation to the Greek Kalends. Following this example certain Socialists tell us, "Your ideas are beautiful but they are not capable of being realized with the temperament of the French (referring to France or the English temperament when speaking of England). Certainly your ideal of society is magnificent in theory but impracticable in reality. When a transitional period shall have perfected humanity and destroyed the evil instincts of man your ideas can be applied without inconvenience, but in the meantime man must pass through that educational period which will bring him to the end you have in view. From the commencement of the Revolution, however, or at any rate directly the struggle is terminated, it will be necessary to regulate the consumption according to the production of each so as to prevent the production being exceeded by the consumption."

We will deal with the danger of the want of products later on, but we venture to remark here to those self-styled Socialists that they appear to have a very peculiar idea of the economic revolution which they preach in theory. In practice they appear to desire nothing more nor less than a political revolution. That explains to us their manner of action in propaganda. Grouping themselves into committees for this and committees for that, in local branches, district and national federations, etc., they hope to substitute in the course of the struggle their new organization for the old, and already they begin to dictate their laws to us.

As we have seen in a previous chapter, the taking possession of the machinery and soil cannot be accomplished by issuing decrees. Such a change of government could have no other result than to change the men in power, for directly the new government was established it would, if the economic changes had not already taken place during the struggle, either be carried away by a counter revolution or else, through diplomacy, be compelled to adjourn these measures—and once adjourned the people would have to wait for a very long time.

We Anarchists look at the Revolution which is being prepared from a wider point of view. For us the Social Revolution cannot be accomplished like the political revolutions of the past after a day or two's fighting. According to the completeness of the propaganda which will have been made, according to the time that we may have before us to prepare it, this struggle will be more or less long and may last for an indefinite number of years. To suppose that the middle class will allow itself to be despoiled of its privileges without resistance is to commit a grave error. The savagery displayed in the repressions, which have followed those revolutions where there has been only a tinge of Socialism, show us the sort of warfare that we shall have to carry on. Attacked boldly in its privileges, threatened with the loss of that which raises it above the mass, we may be sure that it will defend itself with all its strength, putting into play all the resources which give it the power it now possesses.

Now; whatever we may do we may be sure that our propaganda cannot penetrate everywhere to an equal degree. We can foresee that the middle class will intrench itself in the localities which have not been worked by us, and from thence will carry on the war against us, and cause to the new organisation all the embarrassment it possibly can. There will then be between the new ideas and the old dying society an implacable and terrible struggle without any truce worth mentioning which may possibly last as we have said several years and, who knows, perhaps several generations.

It is evident that during this period of struggle production must be organized so as to facilitate consumption. In our opinion this will be effected by individual initiative spurred into action by necessity.

In the beginning of the struggle the people urged on by want will go to the warehouse and take what they need and at the same time will place their labour force where it seems to them to be most necessary. Thus by practice they will become habituated to consume without troubling about where the products come from which they consume, and to produce without eating where the commodities go which they manufacture. In this way the workers will grow accustomed to Communism before the Commissions of Statistics have been able to agree amongst themselves on Value in Exchange. And this will take place spontaneously under the impulse only of example. If the Anarchists whom the propaganda will have made are fully conscious of the part they ought to play they will be able to carry the masses with them; it will suffice for them to resolutely put their theories into practice in order to demonstrate their advantages; and, as the mass understands plain matters and is always even in times of revolutions, attracted by new ideas, the only thing which could prevent their being universally adopted would be an attempt to reconstitute authority. The duty of Anarchists is quite clear. It is to prevent the establishment of such authority.

In all probability, when the commodities are taken possession of, all those which are not required for immediate use will be gathered together in warehouses, something like bazaars, and a special class of workers will be established to look after the goods and prevent them from spoiling. These bazaars which will be available to supply the wants of all, being in communication with each other, will know exactly what varieties of commodities are in demand and will exchange what they have as may be necessary. The producers when coming to give in their products, by the mere fact of this understanding amongst the warehouses, and without any administrative pressure whatsoever, will be able to ascertain the necessities of consumption, the under production of this article the over-production of that, and instead of our seeing as to-day, associations of

speculators springing up spontaneously to exploit an invention, a mine, or a discovery, we shall then see producing groups arise spontaneously to produce the articles required for consumption,

Since nothing will be compulsory every effort will tend towards, progress, every individual will do only what he thinks best, and as the individual well-being will result from the collective well-being, there will be no reason for individuals to go against the general interest. Besides we know that bad will exists only where there authority; for it is in our natures to dislike being commanded. In fact, if those of our comrades who still believe that some sort of authority will be necessary to keep matters right in the future society, were to think the matter out fully, they would see that although they desire an authority it is with the reservation that they may be free to dismiss it whenever it might seek to compel them to do something they had an objection to doing. If these comrades would only reflect a little more they would see that an authority under these conditions would have no reason for its existence; they would need it then only for those or rather against those who are not of their opinion. But what a peculiar idea of liberty is this! It is true that certain Collectivists have pretended that the more man develops the more he becomes the slave of society and by means of science they seek to prove that the autonomy of the individual is an impossibility. This is an error which we shall refute later on; we will therefore not deal with it at greater length here. To those who tell us that there must be rules and regulations that we cannot make everybody contented (which would be true if we tried to make everybody see and think alike), that in a word the majority ought to make the law, we have only one thing to say: What is the criterion which will enable us to recognize when the majority is in the right and when in the wrong? Where does the power of the majority commence and where does it end?

If the majority is right we have only to bow very humbly before the exploiting classes since the majority is of their opinion and we are only in a minority. In reply to that it may be said: Yes, but in an improved society where the worker will have the whole produce of his work, where he will have all sorts of liberty—a society where education will be free to all, etc., etc. it will be quite easy for the workers to freely choose their representatives and to be guided by the best ideas. But if we look at humanity from the commencement of history we see that every time an idea has gained a majority and thus conquered its place in society, it has had behind it a still greater truth which was pushing it on, and when this idea had come into power it became old and oppressive in its turn, until through the evolution of ideas a new evolution took place which destroyed it in its turn and took its place. Well, we Anarchists think that it is necessary to break this vicious circle. The earth is big enough to nourish all and to allow us plenty of room for evolution. There is room for all in the sunlight without our seeking to cut one another's throats. If we wish that evolution may take place peaceably in the direction of progress we shall have to break down that which hinders its forward march, without paying any regard to what is called the majority. Every truth is proclaimed by a minority when it first appears.

The objection has been raised that in leaving individuals free to organize themselves as they please, we shall see taking place between groups the competition which today takes place between individuals. This is a mistake, for in the society we look forward to money will be abolished, consequently there will be no more exchange of products but exchange of services. Moreover, in order that a revolution such as we desire may be effected we must admit that a certain evolution of ideas will take place in the minds of the masses, or at least of a strong minority. But if the workers are intelligent enough to destroy the exploitation of the present system it may be

granted that they will not do so to re-establish it in their midst, especially when the satisfaction of their wants will be assured.

As may be seen the Revolution itself will supply to a very considerable extent the educational period desired by certain belated Socialists. The comrades who talk to us in this way may do so in good faith, but for our part we see no reason in these objections. We have an idea which we believe to be good and we seek to make it known round about us and to make it comprehensible to those whom we seek to carry with us to the Revolution. Perhaps when the Revolution takes place our ideas will not be sufficiently advanced to rally around us the masses who take part in the struggle, but at least by our propaganda we shall have endeavored to spread them and if on the morrow of the Revolution we are compelled to submit to a transitional period, it will be bad enough to have to submit to it without having made ourselves its advocates. Besides which, that sort of fervour and exaltation which lays hold of individuals in revolutionary times is not sufficiently taken into account. At such moments ideas germinate and develop rapidly. Men are urged forward to a certain abnegation of themselves. This has never been missing in the revolutions of the past, but on the other hand it has been the chiefs of the movement whom we have seen stifle large and generous ideas.

## VII. The Free Choice Of Work.

One of the objections which are brought forward to show the necessity of an administration of some sort is this: "In the producing groups it will certainly be necessary to have a foreman, someone to give out the work. Without that there would be disputes as to who should do a certain thing, and in the end nothing would be done."

In our opinion this is looking at things from the point of view of the present society, and not at all from that of the future. What good would a foreman be, since the individuals who would compose the group, formed in order to produce a certain article required for consumption, would certainly arrange beforehand on what basis they wish to be constituted? Their ideas must necessarily be in accord, since they are associated of their own free will. Therefore there is not the slightest necessity for any authority to arrange the distribution of work. They will settle it without any wrangling whatsoever according to their aptitudes, and so much the better, because those who are not satisfied with the arrangement will be free to leave and seek another group, or form a new one which responds better to their wishes.

If today a worker chooses a particular sort of it is mainly because it is the most remunerative for him. The same motive would actuate him in a Collectivist Society, since under that system, as under the present one, work would be paid for by wages. But from the moment that the wage system is abolished, from the moment that the worker is only required to give a certain amount of labour-force to society in return for the satisfaction of all his wants, little will it matter to him whether this labour-force is expended in making boots or shoes, kettles or saucepans; he will choose the work which he can best do, guided as he will be by that self-respect which makes one wish to do his best.

Reference has also been made to painful and disgusting kinds of work. It has been said that if there were no special rewards given for doing such work, nobody would be willing to do it. We believe, for our part, that the individuals who are accustomed to a certain trade will continue in that trade after the Revolution, just the same as before. They will be able to do it so much the better that the work can then be carried on under more healthy conditions, that the working day will be much shortened, and that by the extension of machinery and improvements that may be applied immediately we shall, so to say, have suppressed as manual work certain callings considered to-day as especially exhausting or repugnant.

The same reply may be made to the objection which is continually being brought forward—how, in a state of society such as the Anarchist-Communists desire, would such work as cleaning out the sewers be done? Nobody would be willing to work at such a trade. Very good. Let us follow our opponents even on to this ground, and let us suppose that, everyone being free to do as he pleases, no one would be willing to undertake such work. But do you imagine this unwillingness would last long? Do you not think the necessity of clearing the sewers would soon make itself felt? Then the people of a district or of a city would very soon arrange among themselves as to who should do the work, or, seeing that they all had an immediate interest in it, seeing that the danger of fever and death threatened all alike, they would all be glad to help, and they would

also put their inventive ability to work to devise a machine to do the work for them. In saying this we put things at their worst, seeing that the progress which is being made in sanitary affairs easily permits us to suppose that things will never reach such a pass,

In fact, a good reason why we believe that the worker will be enlightened enough to know how to organise himself on the morrow of the Social Revolution is that already he will have broken the bonds which enchain his intellect, Certainly man will not be greatly improved by the simple fact that the Revolution has been made, but his surroundings will be changed. Instead of the selfish Individualist society of to-day, where every morning the starving worker has the terrible, and often unanswerable, question put to him, Where shall I get food to-morrow?—instead of this society, where the struggle for existence goes on without any cessation between all the individuals who constitute it, man will find himself in a society of wide hopes and broad sympathies, without any oppression, based on the solidarity of all interests, and in which the satisfaction of his wants will be assured, having in return only to supply his share of the work,

Why should men not be able to understand one another? Yes, it is true that man is an egotist and ambitious; but when he can no longer flatter his egotism and serve his ambition by the possession of property, when it is impossible for him to rise above the crowd and to separate himself from the mass of human beings, who have all the faults of a bad training inherited from a society entirely corrupt, he will develop large and generous ideas, and display an abnegation of self and an enthusiasm such as we have seen in the revolutions of the past, where armed men clothed in rags have stood guard over millions of money and scrupulously preserved it for those who juggled them out of their victory. We do not wish to compliment them upon this. On the contrary, we should have preferred to see them take possession of these millions; but it was an instance of self-abnegation and enthusiasm which to us appears convincing.

We are always being talked to about evolution. We know very well that the evolution of ideas must take place before these ideas can be translated into facts; and it is precisely because we know that an idea, however just it may be, cannot be realised if the masses are not yet prepared to receive it, that we are trying to effect this evolution of ideas before the Revolution which events are preparing is upon us. As to the Revolution, when it comes we shall put our ideas into practice, and shall, by our example, call upon our companions in misery to do as we do. If they do so, it will be because the evolution of ideas will have taken place. If, instead of following our example, they oppose us, it will be because this evolution is not yet accomplished, and then certainly we shall succumb. But however little we may do in the coming Revolution, we shall have thrown our ideas forward into the domain of facts; and when the workers fallen under the yoke of new exploiters begin to see that again they have only drawn the chestnuts from the fire for a gang of schemers, they will reflect and will admit that we were right in telling them not to give themselves masters. And as our deeds during the revolutionary period will be in themselves an educational force, we may be quite sure that the following Revolution will have for its purpose the putting into practice of our ideas.

We Anarchists contend that work, being made attractive in the future society, instead of being a burden, as it is to-day, will be a recreation; we maintain that the hours of work required to supply the articles of consumption will be reduced by substituting for manual labour all the forces that nature and science have put and will put at the services of humanity, by the restitution to productive work of all the energies now employed upon useless toil, by the suppression of all the parasitical callings which serve only to augment the exclusive enjoyment of a class of individuals. We say and we know that work will no longer be what it is to-day; those who have been capable of

carrying out a Social Revolution will be intelligent enough to know that if they wish to continue to draw from society all the happiness which they desire, they will have to contribute to the general production,

These facts appear to us so much more evident that each individual possesses in himself a certain measure of activity that he is bound to expend in some form or other. Nothing is more natural than that he should expend it in the work which enables him to live and to obtain the satisfaction of his wants. As association alone can enable him to accomplish this work with the greatest economy of effort, and to utilize the mechanical appliances which already exist, and which will be greatly improved and added to, it is then for the good of the group of which he is a member that he will exert his efforts, since his welfare will result from it. The exertion of all will therefore be devoted to useful work, and only the enterprises which are evidently necessary or agreeable will be sufficiently attractive to induce people to start to work upon them. It follows, therefore, that we shall see all activity employed in adding to the general well-being, and we shall no longer see the heartrending spectacle which society presents to-day, in which the efforts of thousands of producers are expended for the satisfaction of the caprices of a few individuals.

To return to the question of organization. Let us suppose a house is to be built. We take this work for example; we might just as well take any other. It is necessary, first of all, to make some sort of plan. Although anarchists are accused of being crack-brained folk who do not know what they want, we will give them credit for not wishing to amuse themselves, when it is desired to build a house, by placing bricks one upon the other without knowing why or how. At the present time, if a proprietor wishes to erect a building, he seeks out an architect, who makes a plan, with estimates of the work to be done, and he has the work done in accordance with this plan. People will not build for the pleasure of building, in the future society, any more than to-day. When it has been decided to erect a building, it will be constructed in accordance with the peculiarities of the chosen site. Those who desire to build a house will know before the work commences how they wish it to be built; that follows as a matter of course. Two cases may be taken: the one in which a group of bricklayers, etc., builds on its own initiative, the other in which it builds at the request of another group. In the first case, they will have drawn up, or had drawn up, the plans of the building to be erected. In the second case, the group desiring the building would hand in to the builders the plans which they had made themselves or had had made for them. But in either the site would first of all be decided upon, and the plans made accordingly. To come to a satisfactory understanding, the groups would have no more need of authority than they would have to decide upon the plans to be adopted, for, the cause of all dissension and trickery amongst individuals—selfish personal interest—having disappeared in the relations of society, differences of opinion would only arise from the different ways of looking at and understanding things. Trifling objections would disappear in the discussions which would take place, and only differences of opinion too strong to be bridged over would remain. Then each party would set to work to carry into effect the plan it favoured. It might result from this that two, or even three, buildings might be erected in the place of the one originally intended, But who could complain? Beside, there would be this advantage, that each individual, being desirous of proving that the plan which he favours is the best, that the group of which he is a member is right, would bring to the work all his skill and energy. Here we find again the stimulant to the individual which the defenders of the present condition of things say would be destroyed by the suppression of private property.

Then, when they were everyone supporting the idea which he believes best, there be no place for authority. This desire of individuals to do their best would urge them on to take up the kind of work at which they consider themselves best, no contrary interest urging them to choose another sort of work, since there would be no differing payment for work, and in the new society every individual would be entitled to the satisfaction of his wants.

When this division of labour is satisfactorily settled, everyone would set to work. If, during the work someone wished to change his occupation, he would seek out someone willing to change with him. Thus the work would be carried on to the satisfaction of all without any sort of disturbance or bitter feeling. It would be, in a word, that harmony which is the ideal of humanity.

If, for some cause or other, one or several individuals find that they can no longer agree with the group they have chosen, nothing compels them to remain, nothing forces them to stay; they can go to a group which is more in accordance with their taste. If such a group does not exist, they can seek out other individuals who sympathise with them, and make a group according to their ideas; and as every kind of man—unless he is quite an eccentricity—can find men of his own ideas, as eccentricities are extremely few, and as society or association is or ought to be only concerned with sociable characters, it follows that we have no need to take into account these exceptional beings, who are brought forward as objections to our ideas.

Moreover, necessity compels. No master commands, but existence is not possible without association. If anyone wishes to perish, he is free to do so; but if he wishes to live he can only do so by finding comrades. Solidarity is one of the natural conditions of existence, and we believe in obeying the laws of nature.

What we have said about the construction of a building may be applied to all the wants of society—as well to the making of railways, canals, and telegraph lines, and to the putting into operation of new inventions, as to the manufacture of the most insignificant articles of production—in fact, to all the branches of human activity. Later on we shall try to show that all groups will be able easily to arrange matters between themselves without having need for any authority to compel this agreement.



## VIII. Harmony, Solidarity

IN the preceding chapter we have seen that individuals will be able to group themselves and understand each other in the organisation which will result from their daily relations without the necessity for any authority existing among them, by the mere fact that those who group themselves will have the same affinities, the same tendencies, the same end in view. It remains for us to see if the groups can continue their existence side by side without hindering, troubling, or lighting each other. We firmly believe it, and we will explain the reasons which, in our opinion, make this belief a certainty.

If we study the causes of division which in the present society makes every individual an enemy of his kind, we shall see that primarily it is the fear of to-morrow which makes every individual an egotist. Nevertheless man as a whole is rather inclined to sociability, and is pleased to help his fellows when he feels that he can do so without injuring himself or his chances of success. The desire to be successful, the love of money, are only the products of the competitive organisation of society, which makes it a law for every individual to use all means in this continual war in which they are engaged; to reach the goal before their competitors they must crush them, if they would escape being crushed themselves, serving as a stepping-stone to the others. Such is the organisation of society. We must conquer or be conquered; we must stop our ears, so as not to hear the cries of those who are drowning. Instead of stopping to help them, one is compelled, on the contrary, to aid them to sink still deeper, for the crowd of competitors is ever behind you, always pressing onward, and it will march over you without pity if you show any signs of stopping. When we consider this, it is not astonishing that concord and agreement between individuals is so difficult in the present society, based as it is on individual competition, on mutual extermination.

But, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, the present society being destroyed, private property being abolished, individuals no longer having any necessity to hoard up money in order to have the certainty of being able to supply their wants to-morrow—that, moreover, being made an impossibility for them by the suppression of all money or representative of value—having the satisfaction of all their needs assured in the new society, the incentive to individuals being then only that ideal which finds its expression in striving towards the best, the relations between individuals and groups of individuals will no longer be based upon those exchanges of products in which everyone tries to beggar his neighbour, the object of these relations will then simply be to render mutual services. Where the individual interest is no longer paramount a common understanding will be easy, and the causes of discord will have disappeared.

Certainly this concord will not be established in a perfect manner all at once. These happy relations will not come into existence immediately, as at the touch of a wand of a fairy at the theatre. Before we reach this point we shall have to put up with much trickery, we shall have had to feel our way; but it would also be a mistake to believe that the Social Revolution, such as we understand it, such as it must be in order to endure, can be the work only of a few days. The task will be long and painful, and will give rise to much strife, but with all its attempts, all

the repetition of effort, all the deception met with, the final success will be much more complete than it could possibly be made by acts of authority. The mistakes, the trickery, will only have one result: it will make individuals more careful, it will cause them to reflect before taking action; and when they see that they are going wrong, it will be easy for them to change their direction. But an authority would prescribe a wrong road for them to take, and would force them to proceed along it; they would only be able to alter their wrong course and get rid of their blind leaders by recommencing the revolution. Experience has shown us that this is not always such an easy task.

Individuals being grouped as we have seen in the preceding chapter, either for producing some article required for consumption or to consume some article provided by production, it will be necessary for these groups to enter into relation with each other. They will have to keep themselves informed as to each other's condition and manner of action in order to provide what is required, or to know where they will have to apply to procure what they want. In a word, it will be necessary for the groups to carry on the same work of aggregation as the individuals will have effected between themselves in order to form groups. Each group requiring a product of any kind will seek out the group who produces it, and will enter into relations with it in order to get the required supplies.

At this point arises the objection, "What will a group do in case the other groups are not disposed to supply it with what it requires?" As we have said, individuals being no longer forced by want to hoard up riches in a society where the individual interest is merged in the general interest, the relations of individuals and groups will be based upon the general well-being, or what is considered such. Every sort of work which is really useful will certainly find its supporters in some of the various groups. It will have to be very bad indeed if it attracts no one. It will even have this advantage over the present society, that new ideas will be put into practice immediately, whereas now a new idea is put into practice only when a capitalist realises that he has found a new means of exploitation; and as capitalists, outside of their business, are not very strong intellectually, it results that many ideas are indefinitely adjourned when they are not definitely buried, and those which are carried out, instead of benefiting everybody, only become a means by which a few secure a fortune.

"But," we shall be told, "your ideal of society would be a Spartan republic where all would be turned to the advantage of society. You would sacrifice the individual; and everything in the way of causing pleasure, everything which only served to amuse or to distract and was not employed for pressing wants, would by this very fact be excluded from the social production."

This is indeed a mistake. We consider that everything the individual can desire is for him a want, and therefore it is necessary for him to have it, and it must inevitably form part of the social production. There, again, the affinities, the similarities of taste will lead individuals to group themselves so as to establish relations with one another and to ensure the satisfaction of their desires.

For our part we believe that, allowing for the diversities of temperament and the varieties of aptitude, groups will be established for the production of everything which human activity can dream of, and that in a society of equals we shall continue to find everything which can give pleasure to individuals. This is a conclusion which we reach through the ideal of which we dream, in which all men, by the fact of their possessing a superior education and through the facility by which they will be able to satisfy their wants, will have the most simple, and at the same time the most refined and aesthetic, tastes, and consequently will lose the love of tinsel and

decorative metal which distinguishes the uncultivated man. We take man as he is and as he will be in all probability on the morrow of the Revolution, and we say that the variety of aptitudes that differentiates men will permit the production of precisely that which is necessary to satisfy all individuals, however great may be the diversity of tastes which separates them.

We willingly admit that certain things may not be produced because the need of them is only experienced by a very few individuals. But, then, will not men be masters of the greater part of their time; of all their time even, if it pleases them? Will not materials and tools be at the disposal of everybody? Those who feel the want of a thing which is not ready made to their hands will only have to seek out those who have the same wants and form a group in order to produce that special thing which they lack. So we shall see a new branch of social industry created.

Another objection, which is not serious, but may appear so to anyone who has not yet succeeded in disembarassing himself of the prejudices of the existing society, is this: "It may happen," we are told, "that the efforts of production will be expended rather on one branch of industry than another, and consequently that certain commodities will be in excess of the demand for them, whilst others will be absolutely lacking. In order to prevent this inconvenience, we must have some statistical committees, who will not be a government at all, but who will tell the individuals what they ought to do. If you do not have these committees, you will not be able to deal with this inconvenience."

What we have just said about the production of articles of luxury or pleasure is a complete reply to the question. Those who feel the want of an article will always be able to produce it themselves; but we should have to consider people very stupid if we believed that they would be glad to work merely for the pleasure of working, or if we imagined them capable of being so infatuated with their task as to desire to produce goods which they would know would only be blocking up the warehouses.

Besides, statisticians would not be wanting. The taste for figures, for reckoning and measuring, is possessed by very many men. Let theirs be the task to keep us informed on the details of production and the balancing of commodities with consumption.

The producing groups would only be started in accordance with needs, and an inconvenient excess of commodities could never arise, for the Post Office, the telegraph, and all other means of communication being at the free disposition of groups and individuals, every group could keep itself informed as to the necessities of consumption and regulate its action accordingly. Commodities could be sent from the places where they had accumulated to the places where they were needed. Consequently individuals would find no useful end served by establishing in authority over them a statistical commission, which would order them what to do, when they could very well arrange the matters themselves.

It will be seen from the few points we have dealt with that it will be perfectly easy to organise a society without authority.

## IX. Communism and Anarchy

We are asked: "Why do you take the title of Communist which implies authority, for if we were living in a Communist condition individuals would be compelled to share with other individuals what they had been able to obtain for their satisfaction and consequently they would not be free? Why not call yourselves simply Anarchists?"

The word Anarchy is only a political negation and in no way indicates our social tendencies, and, as the liberty which the Anarchists demand can only result from the economic situation which individuals will be able to create, it is, we believe, quite necessary to indicate the end we have in view.

Certainly there is not much likelihood of confusion with regard to the word Anarchist. All Anarchists are in fact looked upon not only as enemies of authority but, especially, as enemies of property; but our end, our ideas, our tendencies, our physical organisation, our wants, in a word, everything, urges us forward towards a social state where all men, united amongst themselves, would be able freely to evolve according to their different manners of regarding things. Why then should we be afraid of a word if it is capable of making clear our conception merely because it has served as a label to certain systems to which we are opposed. Let us have no fear of words but let us rather be on our guard against the meanings which some will try to cover with them.

We ought to take words for what they are worth, and not to stop ourselves at the meanings which others wish to give them. Now as we think that Anarchy will lead humanity to a harmonious social state in which individuals will live without quarrelling, without conflict, in the most perfect understanding with each other, the word Communism is perfectly adapted to the thing. What then does it matter to us that certain manufacturers of social systems have given this name to the conceptions they have dreamed of imposing, the words have only a relative value such as one wishes to give them, and the word "Anarchist," far from being out of place by the side of the word "Communist" acts as corrective of the authoritarian idea that is given to it and demonstrates that if we recognize that individuals ought to live in society we recognize also that they ought to live on a footing of the, most perfect equality without any authority, neither that of the sword nor that of divine right, neither the authority of rank nor that of intelligence. Each individual ought to be his own master and should not submit to the dominating influence of anyone.

It is then most important to clearly show the end towards which man finds himself attracted by his faculties, to make clear this word which appears to frighten certain of our friends, to take from it the false meanings which have been attached to it by certain Socialists who desire to found societies based rather upon of their imagination than on the true character of man. It is this work which we are trying to accomplish, at the same time taking care to make it quite clear that we have no pretension to create from our brain a society complete in every respect which is to be imposed upon all individuals under the pretence of making them happy. To do so would be to fall into precisely the same error as our predecessors. We seek only to demonstrate to individuals that they alone are able to fully understand their own requirements, to know how

to guide themselves in their evolution; and that they ought to confide this work to nobody else; that there is only one way to be free and that is to have no masters. At the same time we seek to demonstrate to the workers that a perfect society can be established on these bases. This is our only desire. If we can succeed in it we shall be satisfied.

We must throw away our Communism, we are told, if we would not fall into the vague and ill-defined sentimentalism of the early Socialists. No one is more opposed than we are to the stupid sentimentalism which induces the individual to respect the prejudices which hinder his forward march, no one is a greater adversary than we are of this idiotic sentimentalism with which the middle class poets and historians have crammed their literary productions so as to falsify the intelligence of the mass by exciting in it a stupid generosity which will always render it the dupe of intriguers whose sole object is to exploit the sentiments of abnegation that they know how to excite in the bosom of others.

The failure of past revolutions is largely due to this sentimental introduction of stupid and untimely scruples.

But under the pretext of avoiding falling into sentimentalism we must not follow the bad example which has been set us in literature and go to the other extreme so as to present man under an aspect as impossible as that under which the poets present him. Apart from his sentimentalism of badly balanced minds, there is a certain ideal, a sentiment of improvement, a need for progress, which is experienced by all men and which we ought to take into account. It is such aspirations that make man an intelligent being and, becoming the motor of his actions, serve to distinguish him from the brute: It is by it taking man as he is, taking into account all the sentiments which actuate him and the conditions of existence that nature creates for him that we are able to form an idea of his future.

The question here places itself upon another footing and becomes this: can a man live alone? Given the conditions of existence in which he finds himself, the development of his industry, his physical organisation and his wants, can he isolate himself? Everything answers No! everything urges him towards association; each one of us feels himself attracted by certain characteristics, by certain individuals. Isolation is the greatest of the tortures with which philanthropists have endowed society; sociability is the true characteristic of man, misanthropes and people who live by themselves are the victims of some sort of insanity or hallucination. And that which is perhaps the strangest proof of the force of this characteristic in man is that it has been able to survive and resist the crying injustices which are committed every day in the name of the community and has enabled them to be borne by individuals as a necessity of the social state.

But if man cannot live alone, if he is able to overcome the obstacles which are created for him by the natural conditions of existence only by associating his powers with those of his followers, if his temperament, his tastes, his interests, urge him towards association it is evident that this association ought to be formed under conditions of perfect equality between all contracting parties if it is to be durable, and ought not to permit of any special privileges if it desired to preserve and render easy the understanding between the members who by the fact that they will live, (in society or in groups, no matter what name is given to the association) will consume, will produce, will act in short together according to the end for which they are grouped, and will consequently act in common.

We are told that "if we had Communism individuals would not be able to keep for themselves the articles which they might be able to create." This objection is groundless for as machinery, production, the soil the means of communication and transport would be at the free disposition

of all individuals without the authorization of any intermediaries, individuals would by no means have to divide the articles which they might make for their own use. Those who selfishly wished to keep these things for their sole enjoyment would not be prevented from doing so; that would be their business. Those who surrounded them would not even think of asking them to share their possessions for if their wants caused them to desire such possessions they would have all the facilities wished for to make them for themselves, Here again one of the stimulants to the individual (which middle class economists pretend would only exist under individualism) would make its appearance under new and more noble forms in the new society. As is easily seen Communism as we understand it has nothing in common with that of the authoritarians and leaves entire liberty to the individual,

But if man is compelled to live in society the only reason for the existence of this society itself is the advantages that individuals ought to find in it. The social state is for man simply a means of conquering the obstacles of nature and of enlarging the field of his activity, and of his liberty, by giving him the necessary force to overcome such obstacles and by reducing to a minimum the amount of time necessary for the production of the commodities indispensable to his existence and to the satisfaction of his physical wants.

This means that society (that abstract entity created by socialists and politicians to absorb human individuality in a whole that they can exploit to their profit) has no right, no power, over the individual and that in no case is the latter to be sacrificed to the interests of the former; for society cannot have any need or interest peculiar to itself alone.

Its wants are only the sum of all the wants of the individuals who compose it and consequently the social interest, and the individual interest can never be in antagonism in a properly balanced society. When that is the case it is because, as at the present time, society is established on false bases and serves only to mask the exploitation of a portion of its members to the profit of another part which has known how to turn the association to its own benefit. Then the oppressed individuals have a right to break up the association, and by force if necessary.

But if man finds himself compelled for his own benefit to live in society there is no real compulsion about it. It is a very strange idea to fancy that a man will decrease his autonomy, alienate his liberty by uniting his to those of other individuals so as to realise a better result from his exertions. When men have acquired economic liberty, when they have no longer in their midst dealers in the products of nature and industry, when these products are at the free disposition of all, individuals will all be free and equal; for being able to satisfy all their wants will no longer be forced to submit to the influence of anyone else, will not so submit, they will feel themselves quite as strong as those who wish to dominate them.

It is, then in order to clearly characterize this economic side of our propaganda that we have deemed it useful to add to the qualification "Anarchist" the word "Communist." We ought not to forget that our political slavery results only from our economic slavery; the only reason for the existence of authority being the defence of the privileges of the possessors against the claim of the dispossessed. It is against our economist masters principally, that we should direct our blows.

Moreover, in the society we are considering we absolutely oppose the establishment of places or situations which would permit a number (great or small, more or less restricted) of individuals to dominate and support themselves at the expense of the others. As our propaganda consists in demonstrating that all this machinery is dangerous without being of any use whatsoever, it follows that our Communism is well defined and admits of no doubt or equivocation. So much the more that all pictures, more or less idealistic, that we are able to evoke, of the society of the

future, we present to individuals only as a more perfect state towards the realization of which they ought to exert all their efforts; and we take care to demonstrate to them that this society can be established only by the free evolution of individuals when they shall have overcome the obstacles that now hinder progress, and cannot be imposed upon society without producing contrary results, that is to say maintaining in our relations the state of war that distinguishes our present social condition instead of supplanting it by our idea: HARMONY.

## X. The Moral Influence of the Revolution

“Why should we occupy ourselves with what will happen to-morrow? We have enough to do in taking our share in the present struggle without considering what we shall do afterwards. Let us not waste any time musing over utopias whilst we are being crushed as we are now. Let us first of all concentrate our efforts against the existing society; when it is overthrown we will consider what has to be done further.”

This is one of the objections which have been made to our propaganda.

As we have already said over and over again we have no intention to create a new social system which is to be put into force on the day of the revolution. If we had such an idea it would be quite reasonable to reproach us with wasting our time. We do not even hesitate to say that those who have such an intention are doing the work of reactionaries, for to attempt to create an organisation all complete for the future society would simply be to try and hinder the course of its evolution, to put a limit to progress, to try prevent it going beyond the ideas your own understanding had been able to comprehend.

We challenge anyone to prove that we have ever said or written anything which would lead them to suppose that we ever had any such idea. Far from wishing to demonstrate what the future society ought to be we desire to show those who contend that individuals would not be able to agree with each other in the absence of a governmental power that this authority on the contrary would be injurious. We have sought to show that society can easily arrange its affairs without the various accessories which the authoritarians wish to force upon it. We have tried to make it clear that individuals would be able to group themselves in order to supply their various needs without any authority being in existence amongst them. The individuals themselves ought to decide on the method of association which they may desire.

In a word we have tried to explain to our fellow workers what ought not to be, what they ought to prevent being established on the day of the Revolution if they would make the revolution real and not merely a change in the form of the fetters which bind them as slaves to the land and the machine.

The reason why we consider this discussion so very useful is that if the revolutions of the past have been pitiable failures, if the intriguers have always been able to turn the victory to their own profit it is due to the fact that the people have always been preoccupied with the struggle, paying very little attention to the end for which they were fighting. Certainly they meant to establish Liberty and Well-being for all but they did not give much consideration to the forms under which these things could be obtained. They were told that a republic meant all sorts of felicity and this satisfied them. They fought for the Republic, leaving to the initiated the care of organising the state of Liberty and Well-being, and these took advantage of their trust to rivet on again the chains which had been broken asunder. This ought not to happen any more. When the people again go into the streets we hope they will know what they want and will not allow themselves to be led astray.



Certainly it is very easy to say "We will not concern ourselves about what is to happen tomorrow, every day has its task, let us exert ourselves to destroy that which troubles us now; we will set about the rest later on." We hope our friends who take up this line of argument will permit us to say that it is not in this way that we shall make convinced adherents to our views who will know what they want and will be incapable of been turned out of their way by fine talkers. It is because revolutions are only made by the force of ideas that we wish to clear completely the ground on which we wish to fight, that we seek to remove from our path the prejudices that hinder our forward march, and try to form a firm conviction in the minds of those whom we seek to convince.

It is not desirable that in the next revolution the people should be moved by mere words, it is not desirable that under the epithet "Anarchy" they should be induced to swallow all sorts of systems. It is important that the workers should know beforehand what they should do during and after the fight—not that they should be enlightened on all points and in all details as to what should be done, that is impossible, circumstances will guide them as to the necessities of the struggle—but it is important that they should know all that they ought to guard against if they want to prevent the victory slipping through their hands again. If in the previous revolutions they were not sufficiently concerned with what was to happen afterwards we will not fall into the same error to-day. It is important that the same mistakes should not be made again, it is important that our ideas should be discussed and thoroughly elucidated so that the people will not again allow a state of things to come into existence which would be the negation of the end for which they will have been fighting. It is only when we know quite well what we desire to do that we can make a good job of it.

We have the existing state of things which we must fight with all our might. That is true and we recognise it, but in our propaganda there is room for the energies of all, for those of every variety of temperament. Let the impatient, those who burn to attack the existing organisation of society and do not want to hear anything else spoken of, act according to their temperament; we see nothing wrong in that nor shall we ever be the last to applaud energetic action, Moreover theoretical propaganda can only be a useful help to them: indeed it is indispensable.

But we regard the struggle from a wider point of view; we look upon it in all phases and are led to the conclusion that to make such a tremendous transformation as we desire there cannot be too many, of varying aptitudes and different ideas, engaged in the work, no matter what may be the form under which they appear, provided only that as an end in view they have the destruction of a prejudice, the elucidation of a truth. It is this natural and spontaneous division of the work which permits all sorts of initiative to arise that will facilitate the destruction of the existing society by enabling us to attack it on all sides at the same time.

Other comrades say to us: "But if there is no longer anything but Anarchy how shall we prevent the former employers, landlords and governing classes from leaguering themselves together in order to re-establish private property and authority, if the revolution happens to be victorious in any one country how shall we be able to defend it against the other powers who will certainly not hesitate to attack it, if the individuals are scattered about have no force binding them together. How shall we prevent crime, how shall we prevent madmen doing serious injury?"

If the comrades who raise these objections had reflected on the matter and formed some idea in their minds of the vast amount of energy the people will have to expend in order to realize the Social Revolution; if they had but considered that most of the inconveniences they dread are only the result of the present antagonistic organization and must inevitably disappear with it

they would have understood that these objections cannot possibly stop the propaganda but as it is always a gain to elucidate a question we shall reply to it more fully.

How does anyone think that the former governing, possessing and employing classes will try to establish their authority and private property again when the force which now sustains them have been found insufficient to prevent their overthrow and will be destroyed and dispersed so that they will have to rely entirely upon their own strength. When the workers have strength enough to destroy the whole existing organisation which now bears upon them with all its weight do you not think they will be strong enough to prevent it being reformed? Will not the danger rather be in the possibility that the retrograde specialists will try to possess themselves of power and use it for their own benefit if the workers are stupid enough to permit them? To put this question is to answer it,

As to the governments falling upon the people who do succeed in winning triumph for the Social Revolution that would doubtless happen if it was possible to localize the revolution. But as the Social Revolution can be victorious only on the condition that it is international, as the workers will be able to get rid of their exploiters, only by getting rid of their exploiters, only by getting rid of those fictitious lines which separate them and by abjuring the idiotic hatreds which their exploiters have breathed into them in order to arm them against each other, they will have to help each other in accomplishing this salutary work, the destruction of the parasites; as the Social Revolution in fact cannot be effected by one nation more than another but must extend over the whole of humanity, it follows that the revolution cannot localize itself but that it will burst out at several points at one and the same time, or one after the other, according to the circumstances which give rise to these movements. Consequently as these causes will act upon all points so as to produce the same effect each government will be sufficiently occupied at home without being able to concern itself about what passes in neighbouring states,

Looked at from this point of view the Social Revolution appears to us as a long series of battles with alternating defeats and victories for the workers, so that which is improperly called the *Morrow of the Revolution* will be indefinitely removed. The revolution may last a century or it may be ended in a few years ( it is the revolution itself that with us takes the place of that transition period which the collectivists clamour for). But it would be a mistake to believe that the overthrow of the old world as we understand it is merely the work of a day or two. Those who believe that all that has to be done to establish the new state of things is to overthrow a government or two and issue half a dozen decrees are deluding themselves very much. The struggle will be long and painful. It will be ended only with the taking of the last piece of individual property and the disappearance of the last vestige of authority from the earth.

As to the crimes, with very rare exceptions no one is criminal simply for the pleasure of committing a crime. In the existing society most of the crimes are committed from motives of interest or from causes due to the bad social organisation. Let us get rid of the causes and the crimes which they engender will disappear with them.

As to the criminals whose acts do not appear to have any explicable motives, who seem to act as they do only for the pleasure of killing or some other sentiment of ferocity, although in some cases no appreciable trace of brain disease has been discovered it is to be found by the doctor or the savant who really desired to know and whose science consists in something more than the wish to create for himself a good position by fawning upon the existing society or making himself the servants of the hangman. The disinterested man of science is able to establish without a doubt that these individuals have simply obeyed impulses quite independent of their will and

that even if they are not generally recognized by the world of science at the present day these lessons none the less exist. Such individuals should be handed over to the doctor and not to the hangman.

It is evident that if such cases arise in the future society people will always be in a state of legitimate defence against those who are likely to attack them. But then let us defend ourselves when these attacks come, let us at least have the courage of our acts, do not let us shelter ourselves behind phrases which serve only to mask cowardice and induce people to do with parade and ostentation what they pretend to punish in the individuals of whom they have constituted themselves the judges.

It is truly a fine sort of logic, to kill an individual under the pretext of teaching him that he must not kill anyone.

For our part we are certain that these occurrences will disappear in the future society; it is not natural for men to be ill have a disordered brain. All the maladies, all the cerebral diseases are only produced by the conditions of existence which society has created for the individual.

They will disappear when man has returned to his normal manner of living.

Certainly these anomalies will not disappear all at once with the causes which have given rise to them; heredity will continue them for a certain time, but will gradually cease, for there again the revolution will exercise its salutary influence, although this may possibly seem paradoxical.

Doctors have in fact remarked that during periods of troubles, maladies and epidemics have much less effect on populations in a state of effervescence, and that is true. The struggle, the movement, the enthusiasm: all these things develop the vital forces of the individual and render him less vulnerable to attacks of disease.

The long revolutionary period which humanity will have to traverse, whilst arousing in the individual all the passions which give him vitality, will contribute to a very large extent in the elimination of these morbid germs which take possession of humanity in its decay. The future society in restoring man to his natural conditions of existence will release him from disease and put him once again on the path of progress.

## XI. The Child in the New Society

One of the most complex and delicate questions to deal with is certainly the question of childhood. When we think of the feebleness of these little beings, when we consider that the first sensations which are imprinted upon their brains will influence, more or less, the remainder of their lives, we feel a profound sentiment of sympathy towards them.

It is just because they are feeble, because they would die if we did not come to their aid, that in an Anarchist society, where no one would have any reason to fear want, everyone would hasten to the help of the children and their physical and moral development would be absolutely assured.

But before opening up this question, we must have a clear idea of the social relations, we must consider the ties between men and women. It is necessary, in short, for us to rid ourselves completely of the prejudices which now serve as the bases of legal family life.

Seeing that the Anarchists wish to have no authority in their organization, seeing that organization according to their idea results from the daily relations between individuals and the producing groups, relations which are direct, without any intermediary, working by the spontaneous action of those interested, group with group, individual with individual, discontinuing at will, without any committee which represents, or at least which pretends to represent, the social organization; seeing in fact that the relations of the sexes will have become what they are naturally: a free arrangement between two free beings, an arrangement which has nothing to do with the social organization, the question is greatly simplified and can no longer be put in the form in which it has up to the present been put by the authoritarian socialists—"To whom shall the child belong?" for the child is not a property, a product that more rightfully belongs to the one who has created it, as some wish to say, than to society as others pretend.

In Anarchy, as we have said, there is an association of individuals who combine their state in order to obtain the largest amount of enjoyment possible, is no society properly so-called, such as we understand the term to-day, that is to say forming a series of institutions which act instead of, in the place of, and in the name of, the masses. How therefore are we to assign the infant to a thing, to an entity which does not exist in a palpable and tangible form? Who would take possession of it?

As to those who wish that the child should belong to those who have created it, who regard it in the light of a product, we would ask them to observe that the child, although arriving in the world under conditions not very favorably for it, by the fact of its weakness, which makes it the inferior of those who care for it and attend to its wants, is none the less a being who in being born brings with him the right to existence, and that his feebleness in no way weakens this primordial right since this period of feebleness is one of the phases common to all human beings. Therefore the child cannot be the property of those who have preceded it. It ought to be supplied with all the things necessary to its complete development, in the same way as those have been supplied into whose hands it has fallen. The question then is no longer as we have

quoted above, but should be worded in the following manner:—"Who in the new society shall attend to the wants of the child?"

In fact the legal family being abolished, the relations between men and women being no longer hampered by economical or social difficulties as is the case at the present time, these relations will freely assert themselves by the simple attraction of affinities.

The character of individuals will be necessarily modified by this situation; the idea of the father and the mother will necessarily be amplified. Individuals finding in society the satisfaction of their wants, the education and maintenance of the children being no longer by this fact a charge for the parents, the father and mother will be no longer, as they are now in consequence of the privations that they impose upon themselves, allowed to consider the child as a thing belonging to them and of which they can say "I have created it, I have nourished it, I maintain it, it belongs to me; the law has proclaimed me its master, I have the right to do with it whatever seems good to me."

The position will be entirely different: individuals no longer submitting to any constraint, being no more subjected to any privation, instead of seeing in the child another expense, another misery, an unconscious being that they will fashion according to their interests, will see in it a little creature to develop, to instruct, and being no longer harassed by the cares of existence, they will perform their task admirably.

The family being no longer regulated by any law—since they will all be abolished—here as in all the social relations, the diversity of characters and temperaments, the free play of the various aptitudes, will smooth away the difficulties of the situation and will allow of everyone finding his place in the Social harmony without any jostling or difficulty.

There are some individuals who do not like children, for whom it is a punishment to have children around them; these are they who in the existing society make martyrs or slaves of their children; being compelled by the law to keep them and raise them; they make these little creatures pay for the disagreeableness of a bad social organization.

There are other individuals on the contrary who enjoy having these little beings to fondle and pamper. It is a Supreme joy for them to guide them in their first steps, to teach them say their first words

How many persons of this class we see become school teachers, especially women, in spite of all the unpleasantness that this profession now carries with it, being attracted towards it solely by their love of children. And how many others there are who are not able to develop this sentiment in consequence of the economic difficulties which the present bad social organization brings in its train.

Now there is nothing to prevent us supposing that in the new society these individuals will be able to group themselves and come to an understanding so as to undertake the charge and attend to the wants of those children whose parents consider them a trouble. In looking at the question in this way it resolves itself without difficulty and there is no need to call for the intervention of society to settle it. Everyone takes his share of the work as he thinks fit and finds his personal satisfaction in it since in choosing it he is suiting in the best manner his tendencies and aptitudes.

This objection has often been raised: "If society does not take possession of the child, but leaves the parents free to bring it up according to their will, and if their intelligence is narrow or little developed, the child will run the risk of not receiving all the attention that his complete development will require. Those who have him under their control will instill into him all the prejudices with which they themselves are filled. It may happen also, for instance, that a mother,

blinded by the material love, will wish at any cost to nurse her child when it would be easy to prove that its state of health will not permit of her doing so.”

We shall take these objection one by one and shall try to demonstrate that the mere exercise of liberty will not only smooth over the difficulties better than authority could do, but that the latter could only aggravate the situation. It will not be difficult for us to answer the last objection. If, from the point of view of natural law, anyone is able with some show of reason to claim any rights over the child, certainly it is the mother. More than society, more than no matter who, she can prove the validity of her claim, since it is through her that the infant comes into the world, and she can give him the attention and the food necessary to maintain the life which she has given. Now, if this mother wished to maintain her rights, how could we possibly withdraw the child from her care without doing some authoritarian and consequently arbitrary act? We have already pointed out that under Anarchy no organization whatsoever can be substituted for society. It would therefore be impossible to appeal to society to take away the child from the mother; it could only be done by falsifying the idea of Anarchy and creating again the authority which we seek to destroy. For the Anarchist idea admits of no equivocation: either complete liberty, or else a new submission to authority.

By means of complete liberty we shall see that the difficulties of the situation will solve themselves. Even in the present society, in spite of all the difficulties and the bad conditions of existence, which hamper individuals in their evolution, mothers raise no objection to putting their children out to nurse for motives less serious than the health of the child; perhaps if they are workers to enable them to go on with their work, or if they belong to the middle class to admit of their going to balls and evening parties. How then can anyone allege that in the future society a mother will refuse to do that which it will be proved to her will affect the health and life of her child, especially when every facility will be at the free disposal of individuals? In the first place there will be no more of these mercenary care of to-day! Those who devote themselves to the education of children will do it from taste, by vocation, and not to gain money; consequently the sentiment which will have led them to concern themselves about children will be the best guarantee that one could wish for the welfare of the new born. They will strive to find all sorts of kindnesses and refinements to amuse and to aid in the development of the children given over to their care.

Then it has been not been proved that the suckling of the child by the woman is an indispensable condition of health for the infant; we know very well that certain doctors pretend that for a normal development of the child it ought to be suckled by the mother, but we also know that certain so-called scientific assertions are in the existing society dictated rather by the interests of a class than by science itself, for every day we have under our eyes children who develop in the most perfect manner although they are artificially suckled. This will be managed still better in the new society when all the articles of consumption will no longer be adulterated by dealers greedy for gain, as is now the case, and where it will be possible to appropriate the nourishment of animals that may be selected for the feeding of children whose mothers do not wish to separate from them. Moreover if a change of climate is considered necessary people will be able to go the chosen place without being stopped by pecuniary difficulties such as exist to-day, being assured, as they will be, of finding the same facilities for existence in their new place of abode as in that they leave.

We have just seen that the sentiment which urges individuals to concern themselves with children is a guarantee for the latter and that people will have in the new society all the conditions

which are necessary in order to satisfy and develop this sentiment. It remains for us to refute the objection of those who fear that parents of limited intelligence will seek to cramp the intelligence of their offspring. Here again there is no serious ground for fear. What is it that prevents parents from sending their children to school? Always under varying forms the money question. And yet, in spite of all the difficulties which exist, the number of illiterate decreases every day. How can anyone imagine that parents in the new society, when they are no longer influenced by this question, will think of allowing their children to be ignorant, at a time, too, when every facility wished for will be at the disposal of every individual for his physical and intellectual development.

In what has been said we think we have shown that it would be contrary to the principles of Anarchy to confide the education of children to a centralized organization; but it remains for us to show that it would prevent the complete development of the child himself. We all know that everyone of us comes into the world with different sorts of capacities and that these capacities develop only in proportion as we find an opportunity to exercise them. Now seeing that we have these varieties of temperament and character, it is evident that these capacities would be smothered in children if they were subjected to an educational government. We have already before us in the present society an example of what this sort of action results in: those who devote themselves to the education of children must then stuffy their character, their inclinations, in such a manner as to develop in them the abilities that are able to manifest themselves instead of unconsciously smothering them by means of a single arbitrary method. More than this we say that it is necessary for the free development of humanity that the education of children should be left to individual abilities and methods. What is it that has contributed to mislead the judgment of man? What is it that has helped to retain in his brain all the prejudices, all the stupidities which he finds it so difficult to rid himself of? What is it indeed, if it is not the centralization of education which has always come to him through the medium of the State or the Church, and is easily able to overcome that received in the family since the parents have received the same prejudices, have been deluded with the same nonsense. If in the new society the education of childhood were to be centralized in the hands of a few the danger would be as great as in the existing society. If those who charge themselves with the work of education were able to get rid of the prejudices with which we are all nourished all might be well, but if, as is more than probable they were still under the influence of those prejudices, it would be a great stumbling block to progress.

Even if, after the suppression of Church and State, it pleased certain individuals to try to make simpletons of their children, we think they would be quite unable to do it. In the first place the desire to know is inborn in man. Now as it is presumable, certain even, that groups would form themselves in the new society in order to make it easy for their members to study certain special branches of knowledge, and as these groups would be formed in connection with every variety of human knowledge, we can see the intellectual movement, the exchange of ideas that would take place. Besides, relations being much more extensive and much more fraternal than in the present society based as it is on the antagonism of interests, it would follow that the child, by what he would see within his own field of observation, by what he would hear every day, would escape from the influence of his parents and find all the facilities requisite to acquire the knowledge which his parents refused him. Moreover if he found himself too unhappy under the domination which they sought to impose upon him, he would abandon them and go and put himself under the protection of persons with whom he was more in sympathy, and the parents could not send

the police after him to bring again under their rule the slave that at present the law accords to them.

It will be objected, perhaps, that nevertheless, in spite of all, there may be some exceptions who profiting by the absence of regulations will be able to stunt the intelligence of the children they may have. We reply that the suppression of authority will certainly not prevent the exercise of solidarity. It is for us to combat by our educational Anarchist propaganda the absurdities of these few idiotic parents. Because it pleases half-a-dozen brutalised beings to go in opposition to common sense, it is not necessary to entangle the rest of humanity in the meshes of a legislation which would be opposed to liberty by the very fact that it would be the Law.



## XII. Darwinism and the Revolution

We know that the partisans of Darwin's theory and especially the French commentators claim to draw from the theories of evolution of the celebrated English naturalist arguments in favour of the existing social organization. Seizing hold of theories on the struggle for existence they pretend it is perfectly natural for society to be divided into two classes, those who consume and those who produce, that seeing the difficulties of existence there must be struggle and consequently conquerors and conquered; that always as a result of this struggle it is inevitable that the conquered must be enslaved by the conquerors and employed in the work of production so as to increase the enjoyment of the latter; that, however regrettable this may be the conditions of existence are such, there not being sufficient of the necessaries of life to satisfy the wants of all. It is a natural law, they say, that there should be only this little number of elect for whom is reserved the entire satisfaction of their wants, and this little number of elect by the mere fact that they are conquerors find themselves to be the aptest, the strongest and the best gifted.

Certainly they add, it is regrettable that so many victims disappear in the struggle, undoubtedly society is in need of reform but that should be the product of time and can only be the result of human evolution. Let those who feel themselves sufficiently strong or sufficiently intelligent to make their way and impose themselves upon society do so. This antagonism always was and continues to be one of the causes of human progress.

Malthus was not afraid to write these lines, which have been quoted so many times: "A man who is born into a world already full, if his family is not able to nourish him, or if society does not want his work, this man I say has not the least right to claim any portion of nourishment whatsoever, he is really one too many on the earth, at the great banquet of nature no cover has been laid for him. Nature orders him to depart and she will not herself delay to put this order into execution. When nature charges herself with the task of governing and punishing it would be a very contemptible ambition to try and take the sceptre from her hands. Let this man then be delivered to the chastisement which nature inflicts upon him to punish him for his poverty!!! He must be taught that the laws of nature doom both him and his family to suffer, and that if he and his family are prevented from dying of hunger they owe it to some compassionate benefactor, who is in succoring them disobeys the laws of nature!!!" (Malthus, 'Essay on Population.')

In these lines we see middle-class egoism display itself in all its splendour.

Workers, who starve in your old age, when you have expended your strength on producing the wealth that augments the sum of enjoyment for your exploiters, it is a crime to have come into the world in poverty; you should be very well satisfied that some compassionate protectors have been good enough to employ your services in the production of their capital, which they would not be able to make without you and for which they give you in exchange only sufficient to prevent your dying of hunger.

Here is what, on his part, writes another middle-class author:—"Darwinism is anything rather than socialist. If anyone seeks to attribute to it a political tendency this tendency could only be aristocratic. Does not the theory of selection teach us that in the life of humanity as in that of

plants and animals everywhere and always a small privileged minority alone succeeds in living and developing itself, the immense majority on the contrary suffers and succumbs more or less prematurely. The cruel struggle for existence is everywhere severe. Only the little elected number of the strongest or the most apt are in a condition to sustain this competition victoriously.

“The great majority of the unhappy competitors must necessarily perish. The selection of the elect is associated with the defeat or loss of the great number of beings who have survived.”—Haeckel.

This passage, fellow workers, is not written for the purpose of showing you that the development of the middle-class leads fatally to the loss of the proletariat. Each new enjoyment brought by science to the middle-class corresponds to a new suffering for the workers. In order that the existence of the middle-class may be assured, it must definitely rivet the proletariat under the yoke beneath which it has been put. It is not we who say this. it is M. Haeckel, a middle-class man, who ought to know, seeing that he has studied for the purpose.

Only what we revolt against is this pretension of the middle-class in believing that they are the best, they whose only superiority consists in the banknotes, with which their papas have been careful to stuff their cradles, they whom barely a century of power has been sufficient to reduce almost to impotence. Really when we compare our great men of to-day with the Encyclopedists, with the giants of '89, we are inclined to doubt that these are their descendants. When, above all, men of superior knowledge such as those we have cited, those who have all the means of development of which the worker is deprived, succeed in drawing from the scientific information put at their disposal, and which their education permits them to analyze, such conclusions, we are quite right to ask ourselves what degree of development they would have attained if they had been deprived of the material means which have given them the opportunities to study.

You call yourselves the best, but for a few who really profit by these means of development which wealth or social position procures for them how many are there whose intelligence remains very inferior indeed!

How many among the workers succumb under their misery, worn out by work without rest, who nevertheless, like Chenier marching to the scaffold, would have the right of saying whilst striking their forehead, “However, there is something here.”

Belonging to a class whose emancipation is only possible by the employment of force, we are going to lay hold of the arguments supplied by the learned official themselves to support our demands, and we shall try, at the same time, to show that the present social organization, far from favoring the cleverest and the best endowed by nature, reserves its enjoyments, on the contrary, for the worn out, exhausted class, and that this want of necessaries which they pretend exists, is only a figment of their imagination; that if the struggle for existence has been one of the causes of the progress of human race evolution, this ought not to be the case any longer; further that science and reason agree in denying the supremacy that certain classes of certain individuals pretend to arrogate over the remainder of humanity, even when they say they are backed up by the majority.

The middle-class, who wish at any cost to support by means of science the exploitation to which they subject the workers, are thrown back upon this theory of the “Struggle for Existence,” for showing, according to their belief, that it has caused all human progress, by compelling individuals to keep their faculties on the alert in order to obtain the satisfaction of their wants, by developing them through the necessities of the struggle, by imposing so to speak upon the races a law of continual progression the offenders against which are crushed out. And according to

them this ought to continue to be the case, for if individuals find themselves situated in a state of society where they will be sure of obtaining the satisfaction of their wants and where they will all be equal, there will be no more emulation, therefore no more initiative. Such a society, they say, will not be long in falling into decay; whilst in the present society, individuals, being compelled to struggle in order to live, find themselves forced to develop an amount of ability and intelligence which contribute much to the forward march of humanity, and in this way the victory is assured to the ablest, the strongest, and the most intelligent.

To oppose these middle-class theories we have only to quote from the middle-class themselves. "A great inconvenience of the social war, as compared to the simple natural war, is that the influences of the natural law being more or less hindered by human will and human institutions it is not always the best, the most robust, the best adapted who has the chance of triumphing over his competitor. On the contrary it is rather individual greatness of mind which is habitually sacrificed to personal preferences inspired by social position, race and wealth." (Buchner, "Man according to Science," pages 207 and 208.)

In the same way the struggle instead of being the result of natural inequalities is the cause of them; here is what the same writer says on the matter: "All these inequalities, these monstrosities, we must as we have before said, attribute to the social struggle for life, a struggle not yet ruled by reason and justice, and maintained specially by numerous acts of political oppression, violence, spoliation, conquest, which fill the pages of past history and appear in the eyes of the badly enlightened minds of contemporaries an inevitable consequence of the social movement." (Buchner, "Man according to Science," page 222.)

Certainly in far off times, when man was confounded with other animals and possessed as weapons only his instincts, the need of living and of reproduction, a rudimentary brain upon which was impressed very slowly each step of progress made, each new adaptation, it is possible that the struggle for existence may have been one of the causes of progress; and this factor of progress found, it will explain, if necessary, why the first human societies were from their birth a means by which the strongest might exploit the weakest.

Indeed, when the first organised beings, after an uninterrupted succession of transformations and adaptations, appeared on the earth, it is very evident that amongst all these organisms without reason, without intelligence, impelled by the single want to live and to reproduce, there was necessarily an incessant war without mercy for the vanquished. So in the first human associations (which nevertheless were due to the combination of interests and efforts) the weakest were sacrificed to the strongest, for man who had scarcely ceased to be a brute had acquired—in consequence of the continuous against nature and the other animals with which he had to fight for food and the right to live—so considerable a hereditary burden of instincts of struggle and domination that, even at the time when they began to understand the benefits of association, the most intelligent, employed it as a means whereby they might dominate the weak and establish themselves as parasites on this new organism, Society.

But to-day, when man is a conscious being, to-day, when man compares and reasons, and possesses a spoken and written, by means of which he can transmit to his descendants his knowledge and his discoveries, ought he to continue to be such a being? Evidently not, and Nature furnishes sufficient difficulties for the purpose of overcoming them. In this work men can find all the essentials of a struggle of a far more advantageous kind than if they set to work to destroy one another.

So when the middle-class come to speak to us of progress, of the rights of society, etc., we can only laugh at them, whilst replying to them by the rights of the individual, who can scarcely care very much about progress if he is to continue to be the victim. But we shall see later on that a society in which men would be assured of the satisfaction of all their wants far from hindering progress would assist it, for it is in the nature of man to create new wants in proportion to the facility with which he is able to satisfy them. we shall see that the present society, far from keeping its enjoyments for the most intelligent, hand them over to a degenerate and effete class.

While the middle-class had to struggle against the nobility, while it had to fight to conquer its place in the sunlight of freedom, it no doubt developed certain qualities which enable it to obtain what it wanted, to acquire power, the supreme end of its eager desire. But once it had reached its goal there happened to it that which happens in the animal kingdom to all parasites, notably to the crustacean who lives on the backs of certain mollusks and whose larva is more developed than the perfect animal; once installed on the back of its host it loses all means of locomotion and develops instead certain tentacles, which only serve as a means of attachment to that which it exploits and from which it draws its nourishment; thus after being an animal acting and struggling, it loses all its faculties and transforms itself into a mere digestive bag. Such is the condition of the middle class: that which constitutes the force of the existing society is neither the physical faculties nor the intellectual faculties, but merely money. Anyone may be scrofulous, rickety, idiotic, deformed, both physically and morally, if he has money, he may do what he likes, and may be sure of finding a woman who will enable him to be the founder of a similar stock; whilst a worker who may be born with a brain of unlimited capacity, finds it of no use to him if his parents have not sufficient money to give him the instruction necessary for its development. If he is born with all the physical advantages that could be wished for, premature work, privations and misery will break him down before he gets old, and if perchance he comes across some wretched woman who will consent to share his lot it will only be to give birth to some puny, sickly creatures; for very often in order to complete the sum needful at the time of confinement the woman is forced to work until the last day, almost always in unhealthy and unfavorable conditions.

Indeed, the middle class has now attained to such a degree of degeneration that if it were to triumph in a struggle with the workers it would be very nearly in the condition of that ant (*formica rubescens*) which, through putting all the burden and care of the work on the slaves of the anthill, is become "instinctively so aristocratic" that it can no longer eat alone, and dies of hunger when it has no longer any servants to feed it.

From what we have said, it will be seen that the liberty of the "struggle for existence" for which the middle-class clamour, is only an illusory liberty, and that this fight for life that they would wish to see perpetuated amongst us is only an imitation of those combats to which the Roman aristocracy treated itself in its bloody orgies, where horsemen completely armed entered the arena to contend with poor naked slaves armed with tin swords. Moreover as we have said their society, far from reserving its enjoyments for the most intelligent and the strongest, assures them on the contrary to a degenerate and feeble class or to those who are bound to become degenerate and weak, since the ideal state of these elected ones, when they have once reached their goal, is to destroy their powers by inactivity!

So when the middle class tell us that life is an eternal combat, in which the weak are destined to disappear to make way for the strong, we reply: we accept your conclusions. "The victory is for the strongest and best organised" you say. Very well, so it be. And we, the workers, claim

the victory. Your strength consists in the respect with which you have succeeded in surrounding your privileges, your strength is in the institutions that you have raised up as a rampart between you and the mass; your only strength, in fact, is the ignorance in which, up till now, you have kept us to serve your real interests, and in your ability to induce some of our class to defend your privileges under the deceptive names of Country, Individual Property, Morality, Religion, etc. Very well. But the day when we are able to clearly see in what your ability consists, when we begin to understand that our interest is entirely opposed to your, we shall see that your institutions, far from protecting us, serve only to keep us enchained in misery. Down with stupid prejudices, down with idiotic respect. We are the strongest: for an almost innumerable secession of centuries we have struggled against hunger and misery; under the most exhausting toil and yet we are still alive and kicking, whilst barely a century of power has sufficed to degenerate you, We claim the victory because we are the most apt, since all your social organisation falls upon us, we being the only producers. We claim the victory because we are the best adapted and the best organized, for at any time you might disappear without preventing us from producing (we should only consume the more); whilst on the day on which we refuse to produce, you cannot possibly supply your own wants. We claim the victory, in short, because we are the most numerous, and this according to your own showing is always sufficient to legitimize every audacity. On the day of battle we shall be in the right in applying to you your own sentence by making you disappear from the society in which you are only parasites,

You have said it yourselves, "Victory is for the strongest".

## XIII. The Struggle Against Nature

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, without having to look for other arguments in support of the right of revolt, which we loudly proclaim, we have only to take for ourselves those with which the middle-class has supplied us, and with the middle-class theories we can undermine the bases of the social order which they seek to consolidate. But we have wider aims. Instead of looking at human society as a vast battle-field, where the victory belongs to those who have the largest appetites, we think that all men's efforts ought to be united and directed only against Nature, which presents to man sufficient mysteries, sufficient difficulties to supply him with the elements of a long and bitter struggle, for which all his strength will not be too much.

What force is lost, how many lives sacrificed, either in the hard struggle for life or in stupid wars! What intelligences are wasted which in other conditions might be turned to the profit and enjoyment of humanity! If all the men who are brutalized and enervated by the life of the camps and barracks were employed in sanitary work or other useful employ as the construction of canals, the tunneling of mountains, etc. etc., can we not see what an immense advantage humanity would derive? Besides which, these men would be doing their share of the common work instead of living as parasites on humanity.

If all the energy which is expended in producing the implements of warfare and destruction was devoted to the manufacture of machinery and tools necessary to production, how the hours of work that every one has to give to society would be reduced. If all the efforts of the inventors who are intent upon the discovery of cuirasses and sheet armour for ships, which their heavy armour only makes slow, and which to-morrow the invention of a new gun or a new system of torpedoes will render useless, were directed towards the making of new machines to lessen the necessary amount of work or to triumph over nature, what ideas might not be realized which to-day appear to us only as a dream.

In the society we desire, all this progress, all these discoveries, would be to the advantage of the producers, seeing that in this society there would only be workers, whilst nowadays, when a discovery of this kind is made, it only increases their burdens and misery, taking their place in the workshop, throwing them without resources upon the street, whilst the masters increase their capital by the advantages over hand labour which they are able to secure.

Then what is the good of continuing to contest the supremacy of nation over nation and race over race? Is not the earth big enough to nourish everybody? Certain of the middle-class deny it.

In order to justify this scarcity of food which they say exists, our short sighted economists have established (in their books)—we do not know on what grounds—some calculations which they say show that articles of consumption increase in an arithmetical ratio of 2, 4, 6, 8, etc., whilst the population increases in the geometrical ratio of 2, 4, 8, 18, etc.; so that if things were allowed to continue in this way food would, after a while, be completely wanting, and men would be forced to return to the state of cannibalism in which they formerly lived. Happily, they say, the social organisation intervenes with all its accompaniment of frauds, wars and diseases occasioned by

continual work and insufficient nourishment, decimating them and preventing them from eating each other by making them perish of misery and hunger.

Now nothing can be more false than this calculation, for, apart from all the uncultivated land that may be rendered productive, it has been demonstrated that the present system of cultivation on comparatively small patches of land prevents us from applying to the soil all that which it would be possible to do by farming on a large scale, with steam power machinery and chemical manure.<sup>1</sup> We may instance America in regard to this, with its immense plains, the soil of which, turned over with steam ploughs, even though cultivated without any science, gives so much better results than the English or French farms, and with so much less work that it is no longer possible for us to compete with them. We may also instance the innumerable flocks of South America, which are only killed for their skins, the meat being thrown away, not for want of markets, but because the low price caused by importation would be prejudicial to the interests of certain individuals who here at home raise cattle for the purpose of selling the flesh to us as dear as possible.<sup>2</sup>

The study of natural history shows us that the prolific power of animals is in an inverse ratio to their degree of development, that is to say, the lower the species are in the social scale the more they multiply, in order to make up for the losses occasioned in the war made upon them by the superior species; so that man who has succeeded in subduing and domesticating most of the species useful to him for food, is always assured of being able to supply his needs by organising reproduction according to his wants for consumption.

As we have seen, nothing is easier than to refute the theories of the middle-class economists by their own arguments. Thus, when they tell us that “a society of equals cannot exist because certain cerebral inequalities exist; that, the intelligent man being naturally superior to the unintelligent, he certainly cannot be the equal of the brute; that the people of superior intelligence must be able to find a greater amount of enjoyment since by their works they give more to society,” we can boldly reply that this again is a mistake, for from a purely philosophical point of view it is not humanity, which is indebted to the intelligent man, but the intelligent man who is indebted to humanity, by the mere fact that he has monopolised a greater amount of brain matter, and that if he has been able to develop his brain he has only done so by drawing upon the stock of knowledge and discoveries which has resulted from the work of past generations. Consequently the more society has enabled him to develop himself, the more he is indebted to it. But we only say this by the way, for, looking at the thing from the point of view of plain fact, we see that man finds his recompense in his intelligence itself and the enjoyment given him by the work which it causes him to undertake. In fact, the more intelligent he is the more easy he finds it to satisfy his wants; for in consequence of his intelligence he has created intellectual wants imperceptible to those who are termed unintelligent, and which consequently will not be disputed with him.

Then, again, by what right does a man, because he is more intelligent than another man, dictate laws to him?” In spite of his intelligence, the so-called superior man has all the defects, or at least a part of the defects, inherent to human nature, There are no perfect beings, and one who will

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<sup>1</sup> Or by applying the “intensive” gardening system, under which, by individual science and skill, small patches of carefully pulverized and artificially made soil, either in the open or under glass, can be made to yield crops which seem incredible to persons accustomed to the slovenly cultivation general to-day.—*Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> See “Les Produits de la Terre,” “Les Produits de la Industrie,” and “Richesse et Misère,” published by *La Révolte*, Paris.

reason in a superior manner in the most abstract sciences, will often cut a very small figure in the most ordinary affairs of life. Educated men themselves, even, do not deny it.

“So, in the case of certain men of learning, intellectual development has completely extinguished the life of the affections. For them there is no longer either friend, family, country, humanity, moral dignity, or sentiment of justice. Indifferent to everything which passes outside the intellectual realm in which they combat and enjoy, the greatest social iniquities do not trouble their quietude. What does tyranny matter to them, so long as it respects the phials and retorts of their laboratory? So we see them pampered and caressed by the shrewdest despots. They are being of luxury, whose existing and presence honor the master, serve as a passport for his bad actions, and are besides not able to trouble him in the least.” (Letourneau, “Physiologie des Passions,” page 108.)

Moreover, we cannot make people happy in spite of themselves. Every one has his own ideas of the happiness he requires; every one looks at it from his own point of view, according to his temperament, according to the degree of development which he has reached. Consequently there is no single rule for the happiness of individuals, and we can only let everyone arrange it in his own way. Let us destroy all the institutions which are able to serve the ambition of individuals, let us see that the happiness of each results from the general well-being, and then individuals, no longer pressing upon one another—since no one will press upon them, and anyone whom others may wish to oppress will always be in a position to send about their business those who strive to press upon him—then everyone will seek to accommodate himself in the best way, in accordance with his tendencies, by associating himself with those who sympathise with him or who look at things from the same point of view; and as all these individuals will be held together by no laws, as they will be there only by their own will, and will be free to leave it when it no longer responds to their ideas, an understanding between them will be easy.

Far from desiring to return to a state of nature, as we have been accused of doing, we fully understand that only a state of association will permit of our utilizing all the inventions and discoveries put at man’s disposal by science, and which ought to enable him to obtain the greatest sum of enjoyment for the least expenditure of strength; only if science demonstrates that, it also shows us that there can be no lasting association except between elements possessing the same affinities, the same character, or like properties.

Thus, far from looking at society as a vast battle-field, where the victory belongs to those who have the largest appetites, and in which so many intelligences are lost, because the social organization has not allowed them to develop, we think that man ought to stop these murderous and stupid wars which they make under the hollow pretexts of patriotism, etc., and in which they waste so much ill-directed force, and that they ought rather to unite their efforts to make way—yes, but war against nature, in order to draw from it all the enjoyment possible.

We do not know that we can do better than conclude by quoting from a writer who could not possibly be suspected of revolutionary ideas, although it is true that we do not accept the sentimentalism which guides him:—

“To-day the strongest, the richest, the most elevated in social position, and the most learned, exercise an empire almost absolute over the weak, the ignorant, the lower orders, and it seems to them quite natural to put the strength of those others to their own individual profit. Society as a whole must necessarily suffer from such a state of things. It ought to understand that it is much better for all individuals to unite their efforts, assist each other with the same end in view—that is to say, to shake off the oppression of natural forces, instead of wasting their energy in struggling



with each other, in mutually exploiting one another. Rivalry, so useful in itself, should continue to exist, but the ancient rude form of war and extermination in the struggle for life should be cast aside, and competition should take the nobler and really human form of emulation having for its end the general interest. In other words, instead of the struggle to live, the struggle for life in general, general harmony; instead of universal hate, universal love! In proportion as man progresses in this direction, he moves further away from his animal past, from his subordination to natural forces and their inexorable laws, and approaches the ideal development of humanity. In this direction also man will find again that paradise which, according to the legend, has been lost to us through sin; with this difference, however, that the future paradise is not imaginary, but real, that it is to be found not at the beginning, but at the end of human evolution, that it is not the gift of a God, but the result of work, the gain of man and of humanity." (Buchner, "Man according to Science.")

## XIV. The Individual In Society

That the earth is a common property, that its products ought to supply without distinction the needs of everybody, these are truths which are still denied by some and regarded a utopian by others, but which are accepted by all those who think and have succeeded in getting rid of some of the prejudices instilled into them by the injurious education received from the present society. This is then acknowledged, but another truth which has not been clearly brought to light is that sentiment of liberty which exists in an absolute form in the brain of every individual but which most people do not try to fully understand, as it has not yet been clearly defined and at present amounts to this, that, whilst claiming complete liberty for himself, each wishes laws to regulate the actions of his neighbours, and as a consequence of that fatal prejudice which desires that the individual shall be the slave of the society in which chance has caused him to be born, being himself considered only a part of that society which is looked upon as a complex being entitled to swallow up the whole of humanity.

This is wherein lies the error of all those who speak of Humanity, of Society, etc. Influenced by the present situation, they look upon humanity only as a whole to which each individual finds himself attached from his birth and cannot remove himself without making an attempt upon the rights of this entity, society, created by themselves. We Anarchists on the other hand consider humanity as a vast field of evolution offering to all temperaments, to all ideas, to all conceptions, the place and the means of evolving freely according to their tendencies and their manner of looking at things.

It is this mistake which up to the present has misled all makers of social systems and which has caused them to regard the individual only as an accessory, more or important, of society, whom they may consequently more or less sacrifice to the organization of their social system.

It is evident that every group that is formed ought to associate itself on a basis arranged beforehand, it is evident that every individual who enters this group engages himself to respect its internal regulations from the moment that he freely enters it, that he engages himself to conform to its methods of work whilst he remains a member of it, but if this group no longer responds to the aspirations of the individual, why shall he not be free to leave? Why from this union of forces, which is made only for the purpose of improving the condition of individuals, may not the contrary result to some: the loss of their individuality and of their self-government?

Certain socialists claim as a support for their centralizing ideas the expression of opinion put forward by Haeckel. "Let anyone," they say,<sup>1</sup> "look at any order of facts whatsoever: for instance, in very different categories, take the cosmogonic theory, drawing, by means of a progressive condensation of scattered particles of matter furrowed by eddying currents, the starry worlds, whose masses mutually submit to one another's action. Take again the perfection of the nervous system and consequently of the intelligence, growing with the concentration of the cells which subdivide according to the various limitations imposed by a central organ ; take the linguistic

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<sup>1</sup> Gabriel Deville, "L'Anarchisme."

development going from the succession of invariable and independent words to the union of words with the constituent elements of their active or passive relation and the modification of the words themselves according to the agreements existing between them. From all these points of view evolution operates always by the form becoming more and more consolidated, passing from a diffused state to a concentrated state, and in proportion as the concentration of parts becomes greater their reciprocal dependence augments, that is to say that less and less can they extend their individual activity without the help of the others.”

To this pretended scientific affirmation we shall let a middle class man reply.

“I will not insist on the real autonomy which it is manifest that every cell of every pluricellular organism enjoys; neither Mr. Haeckel nor any one else has in fact denied this autonomy, but it is important to point out plainly the nature of the limits in which it is exercised. We shall thus see that it is much more considerable than is generally admitted and that if it is true that all the cells depend upon each other it is also true that none commands the others and that the pluricellular organisms, even the highest, are in no particular to be compared to a monarchy or to any other authoritarian and centralised government.” — J. de Lannesson, “Le Transformisme,” page 183,

Further on he says: “Autonomy and Solidarity, these two words resume the conditions of existence of the cells of all pluricellular organisms; autonomy and solidarity would be the basis of a society constructed on the model of living beings.” (Id. page 196.)

“From every point of view,” we are told, “evolution always operates by passing from an incoherent form to a more or less consolidated form.” But we Anarchists have never said the contrary. We have always said that we recognise that in leaving to the individual autonomy the work of production it is probable that in the beginning the attempts would not be very logical, that a good many mishaps may take place in the establishment of the new social order. But seeing the evils from which we suffer under the present social organisation, it is preferable to pass through this elementary stage, to undergo these mishaps rather than to have recourse once again to authority. Let us leave people free to search for themselves, let us permit all ideas to come to light, and we shall see in a very little time all the vagueness, hesitation, errors and troubles disappear to make way for a better understanding and a better form of organisation,

Society is not an organism existing by itself; its existence is not independent of the individuals who compose it, it is nothing by itself. Destroy the individuals and there is no longer any society. If the association is dissolved, if the individuals return to an isolated condition, they will live badly, they will return certainly to the savage state, falling back again to an animal condition, but they will still continue to exist. Society then has no reason for its existence except on condition that those who form a part of it find in it a greater degree of comfort and of liberty; it has only one end: to produce a greater amount of enjoyment with a less expenditure of strength. Moreover, as wants are various, as temperaments are not the same, it follows that this state of association may include many forms; innumerable may be the groups that will certainly be formed whenever the free initiative of individuals is able to follow the course; it results then that it is a mistake to make the efforts of all converge towards a social improvement that does not regard the happiness of the individual. It is going against common sense.

If we develop the field of evolution of individuality, we shall obtain a good social evolution. If we wish that the operation of this association of forces which we recognize as indispensable may not be hindered, it is necessary that the individual in this association may not be wronged in any of his aspirations, hampered in any of his movements. The only reason as far as he is concerned for the existence of the social state is that it gives him an advantage, and social harmony can only

exist if all find these advantages in it. if a class of individuals find themselves wronged, they can no longer see any necessity for the association and they must have as a consequence the right to retire or to revolt against this organization if anyone desires to impose it upon them.

If we examine the history of humanity we shall see that, arrived at a certain period of development, man has sought out the society of his fellows urged by an ill-defined want of sociability, but certainly also because he found in this association a greater security, a greater well-being, with a relatively smaller expenditure of force.

There can be no doubt that the first human societies were temporary associations on the basis of the most perfect equality, to which each contributed his portion of effort; and this attempt to pass from the natural isolated state to the state of association indicated only that man understood that it was only by uniting his forces that he would be able to resist his enemies who were better armed than he for the "struggle for life," but when he allowed himself to be dominated that was in no respect a mark of progress. Because the cleverest and the strongest knew how to turn to their exclusive profit these first attempts at association, to the detriment of a great part of humanity that cannot be taken to mean that this exploitation is therefore the more legitimate.

And if these attempts have from the beginning gone wrong, does it follow that they ought to continue so? If our ancestors have been simple enough to accept the yoke of servitude which the exploiters of the time have imposed upon them, or if they have been too feeble to be able to resist, must their descendants who now understand their rights and know their strength continue to suffer the burden which crushes them? No!

All the revolutions which have marked the halts of the working class, all the revolutions which have been made against the powers that be, prove to us that if it has been possible to repress the demands, it has not been possible to destroy the sentiment of independence that lies deep in the heart of every individual, a sentiment which may sleep but which reawakes when the individual is directly oppressed.

If after every revolution we fall back into the rut of oppression and authority it is due to the prejudices of which we have before spoken; but now when these prejudices are attacked, when these sentiments of independence are clearly formulated, we have good reason to believe that on the day of the Revolution people will know how to organise themselves very well without any direction or authority whatsoever.

## XV. Autonomy, According To Science

Whatever anyone may have said, science itself comes to the support of the Anarchist theories and demonstrates that everything in nature moves according to the law of affinities and consequently is self-governing. Nature is a vast crucible in which the various bodies are transformed as they acquire new properties, but it is all done without any preconceived will and, as we have said, by the law of affinities.

It is certain that in nature, in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, everything is linked together. It is true that the movements and the developments of some are regulated by the movements and the developments of others, that consequently the individual depends on the society in which he moves and develops, but, as far as the middle class and the authoritarians of all kinds are concerned, this society is resumed and condensed in a certain organisation that represents it under the form of constituted power, and it is this which we reject. It is not the individual, as we have just seen, who ought to give way before the caprices of society, for this latter is only the result of individual agreement.

It is also true that science demonstrates to us that everything in nature is ruled by those immutable laws which are called natural laws, laws which cause all the molecules having the same affinities to seek out one another and to unite themselves so as to form, according to the manner in which they are juxtaposed, according to the surroundings in which their association is made, maybe a mineral or perhaps some sort of organism. But who has made these laws? For the priest it is a supernatural being to whom he has given the name of God. For the learned man, if he has succeeded in getting rid of all the superstition by which he has been surrounded in infancy and during his education, these laws are the result of their properties themselves which are possessed by the different materials of which the universe is composed and they are contained in these very properties.

But law here does not imply a means of ruling different parts of a whole. It is simply used to explain that if these phenomena are produced in a certain particular manner it is so because by very force of the qualities of the bodies it could not be otherwise. Social laws in our opinion can have no other meaning than natural laws; they can only explain the relations between individuals. But then there is no necessity for an oppressive authority to put them into execution, seeing that they are only the authentication of an already accomplished fact. It is therefore only necessary to make the surroundings such as will permit these laws to apply themselves by the very fact of the free evolution of individuals.

In chemistry, for example, when it is desired to associate two bodies is it the will of the that acts and causes the two bodies to be associated? No, he has had to study beforehand the properties of these bodies in such a way that he has ascertained that in employing such quantities in such conditions such a result will be obtained. It is imperative that every time the operation should be carried on under the same conditions.

If, on the contrary, the operator wished to employ other substances, gifted with different properties, these substances would destroy each other. It will always be just the same in human so-

cieties so long as it is attempted to organize them arbitrarily, without taking into account the temperament, the ideas, and the affinities of individuals.

The chemist then has to limit himself to preparing the conditions under which certain combinations which he desires to produce will work, and it ought to be the same in sociology. Anarchist and revolutionists have a similar part to play. Their work is to prepare the conditions under which individuals will be able to freely develop themselves.

When the molecules, the cells, the universe, have been able to freely associate themselves with each other, when nothing has hindered them in the evolution which ought to result in the formation of an organism of some kind, then their association, their amalgamation, takes place, and the result is a complete, perfectly-constituted being. On the other hand, when this association has not been able to take place freely, when the evolution has been hindered, when the autonomy of the different molecules has been violated, the result has been what is called a monster.

And it is precisely because we Anarchists wish to see a healthy and perfectly constituted society that we demand that the autonomy of the individuals, these molecules of society, should be respected. It is precisely because we wish that all who have the same affinities should be able to associate themselves freely together in accordance with the tendencies of each that we rebel against all authority which seeks to reduce every individual to the same pattern, even though this authority should call itself "scientific."

Moreover, we have already said and we repeat it, there is no brain vast enough to be able to include all human knowledge. However much we may profess to esteem learned men, we are compelled to recognise that, as far as most of them are concerned, they are indifferent to the greatest social inequalities. It is only necessary to follow the arguments of many amongst them to see that when they have given themselves up to such and such a study, to such and such a branch of human knowledge, they make it a hobby which they are continually riding; they make it the motive of everything, and consider the other sciences only as accessories, if not useless as any rate of very little importance. No, no, science is a good thing but only when it keeps its place, which is to verify the phenomena which occur, to study their effects, to trace their causes, but let everyone be free to assimilate the discoveries according to his aptitudes and his degree of development.

Besides, is it not presumptuous to wish to regulate everything "scientifically," seeing that so many points of interrogation rise before the true man of science who is eager to know? And then is it not precisely because so many attempts have been made to regulate this association of interests causing individuals to act, that this formless monster has been called into being which we term the "society" of to-day?

It has even been asserted that the more man is developed, the more science widens her domain, the more man will lose his freedom, for the employment of machinery and the motive powers put at his service by science compel him to associate, and thus take away his freedom of action by subordinating his will to that of his fellow workers. It is declared that if we seek for a society: wherein the complete harmony of the individual exists, we shall have to go back to primitive man, or else to go amongst the lowest of the existing races; so that it would be safe to conclude that the ideal society of these eager authoritarians (who after all desire authority only in order to impose their own ideas upon those who think differently to them) would be a society in which the individual would no longer be free to take a walk without first of all asking permission.

We believe, on the contrary, that the more science is developed the more she will enlarge the freedom of the individual, and that if at the present time each scientific discovery brings the

workers more into the power of the capitalist, it is simply because the existing institutions turn all the common efforts to the profit of the few; but that in a society based on justice and equality these discoveries would continually add to the autonomy of the individual. One must indeed be blinded by the authoritarian mania to dare to pretend that we have either to go back to primitive man or to seek the existing inferior races, in order to find freedom. Was man free at a time when he was naked and defenceless, had only a rudimentary intelligence and was subject to all the risks of life, forced to struggle against nature, which he had not yet learned to understand, compelled to fight for his food against ferocious beasts whose strength was greater than his own? What amount of freedom could man have possessed then, compelled as he was every moment to engage in a rough struggle for existence? And the man of the so-called inferior races still existing, who represents fairly well to our fancy the idea of that struggle, shows us well enough to keep constantly on the alert the little faculty he possesses in order to satisfy his material wants.

We recognize certainly that the discovery of steam has destroyed the boundaries, which formerly separated communities and peoples, to put in their place universal solidarity, and that is so evident to us that we do not think the social revolution is possible unless it be international. But because the workers have to associate their efforts so as to overcome the obstacles which nature has raised against them, does it follow that their autonomy should be lessened in any sense of subordination whatsoever? We do not think so. On the contrary, we think that steam having put communities and people in constant communication, any authority for the purpose of establishing this communication and imposing its will so as to socialize the efforts of individuals and groups becomes all the more injurious.

If in the early days of humanity the federation of isolated groups and the socialisation of efforts has been made by means of an authority, to-day this expression of solidarity takes place spontaneously, without making any attempt to interfere with the autonomy of the groups, and it is precisely due to steam and to the progress of mechanical arts that this condition of constant and mutual interdependence has been established between those who formerly learned to know one another only when they fell under the yoke of the same master. Is the independence of individuals and groups lessened by this interdependence? We do not think so in the least, considering that steam and mechanism, in putting at the service of man tremendous forces which enable him to conquer distance and time, have come to increase this independence, reducing the amount of time necessary to be expended in the struggle for existence (we mean the struggle against nature; do not confound it with the struggle for life of the self-styled followers of Darwin) and thus enables him to expend the greater part of his time in a recreative employment in the midst of a society based on justice and equality.

Yes, we fully recognise it, the scientific discoveries of man lead him more and more towards the association of efforts and the solidarity of interests. It is precisely on that account that we wish to destroy the present state of society, based as it is on the antagonism of interests. But between that and admitting the necessity of an authority there is a great difference. Whence then have the authoritarians arrived at the conclusion that there can ever be solidarity of interests between those who command and those who obey?

Is not the interest of the one entirely opposed to that of the other? And the progress of humanity, is it not entirely due to that spirit of insubordination and rebellion to discipline which has urged man to free himself from the obstacles that injure his development, to that sublime spirit of revolt that has led him to struggle against custom and the STATUS QUO, to investigate

the most obscure corners of science, to get a knowledge of the secrets of nature, and to learn to triumph over them?

In fact, who can tell what degree of development we have attained to-day if humanity had been able to freely evolve? Who does not know that many of the discoveries of which the nineteenth century is so proud were made long ago but that the learned men had to keep them secret in order to avoid being burned as wizards? If the human brain has not been braised in this vice of authority with its two jaws, temporal and spiritual, if progress has been possible in spite of this oppression under which humanity has existed since man began to be a thinking being, it is because the spirit of insurrection has been stronger than the compression itself.

The authoritarians say that they desire an authority only for the purpose of guiding this evolution of ideas and of men. But do they not then see that in wishing to compel all men to undergo the same process of evolution (which will inevitably be the case if any authority is charged with the task of directing it) they will stereotype civilisation as it is today? Where should we be now if among the un-selfconscious beings of the first ages of humanity there had been some "scientific" minds strong enough to direct the evolution of humanity according to the knowledge which they possessed at that period?

It must not be imagined that our own ideal is that which the partisans of Darwin in sociology have called the "struggle for life." No, the destruction of the weakest species by the strongest may have been one of the forms of human evolution in the past, but to-day when man is a self-conscious being, to-day when we begin to see and understand the laws by which humanity is ruled, we think that evolution should take a very different form. As we have said before, this form is the solidarisation of individual interests and efforts in order to arrive at a better future. But we are convinced also that this solidarisation of aim and of efforts can only be the outcome of the free autonomy of individuals, who, free to choose amongst themselves and to unite their efforts in the sense which will best respond to their aptitudes and their aspirations, will no longer need to be a burden upon anyone, since nobody will be a burden upon them. And as man is sufficiently developed to-day to recognise the good or the bad side of a thing, it is evident that in a society where authority does not exist the groups or the individuals who get into a bad way of doing things, seeing at their side groups better organized, will know how to abandon bad methods and to adopt methods of action which appear to them the best. In this way the progressive development of humanity being disembarassed of the obstacles that have hindered it up to the present time, the evolution of ideas and individuals will present to us in the future merely a pacific struggle in which the only rivalry will consist in a zeal to produce better than the others and will lead us to the final end: the Happiness of Humanity.



## XVI. Conclusion

If there is a doctrine that has been able to arouse the fury and induce the calumny of all the political parties, it certainly is the doctrine of Anarchy. Terrified at the progress which the new ideas make in the minds of the exploited, all those who live only by exploitation, whether it be industrial, financial, or political, have joined together fraternally for the purpose of falling upon these new comers, who venture to trouble their peace by putting forward theories subversive of everything which they desire to have respected.

Not being able to refute theories that, for the most part, their intellectual weakness will not permit them to understand, they still feel that if the new ideas take root, exploitation, and the privileges they enjoy thereby, will be done away with. Their belly threatened, seeing no chance for their parasitism to be perpetuated in a new condition of things, they have recourse to the prison and to calumnies in order reply to us.

“The Anarchists,” they say in every variety of tone, “are not a party, they have no ideas of social organization, they have only appetites, they wish to make us return to the time of brute force,” and these insults and calumnies enable them to dispense with arguments. In their newspapers they have given the Anarchists such a name for insanity and unreasonable violence that all the imbeciles—and they are unfortunately very numerous—whose ideas are derived from the newspapers they have read, have accepted this heap of rubbishy lies as the truth, and see in the Anarchists only a band of madmen who do not know what they wish for.

It is indeed fine for these big bellies to come talking to us of appetites and covetousness; they who have kept for themselves all the joys of life and who have no appetite left.

They are so satiated with the enjoyment fortune has procured for them that they are almost sick of it, that they are reduced to seek further pleasures in unnatural and abnormal passions. Poor creatures!

Men of greedy appetite, these Anarchists who sacrifice their existence and their liberty in the endeavor to conquer a social organization which will leave free play to the evolution of all! Men of appetite, when, with the absence of prejudices which characterizes them, they might make an opening for themselves and carve out a large place in the institutions of existing society, open to every ambition, to every appetite, to every monstrosity derived from a false and corrupt education, provided that he who wishes to succeed pays no attention to those he upsets in his path, and stops his ears so as not to hear the cries and the complaints of those he tramples under foot in the mad chase after prey.

Men of greed and of appetite these Anarchists whom we have seen pass in numbers before the magistrates and receive sentences by which it was thought the party would be crushed: middle-class men who have thrown over their class and sacrificed their position (although these are not very numerous among use, it is true): workers, who after a day of toil and weariness have encroached on their time of rest in order to go to their brothers in misery and point out the better future they see dimly in their dreams, or to unmask their real enemies by showing them the true causes of their poverty. Are all these men of appetite, when for most of them it would have been

sufficient to accept society as it is, and, with a little twisting, they would have been able to enter the ranks of our exploiters!

In short, are they men of greed and appetite all those workers who sigh after a better state of things, those who in the existing society produce all the articles of luxury and enjoyment for their exploiters and go short themselves all year long? Men of greed and appetite all those who claim their share in the wealth which they produce?

But those who oppress us? They are far from being greedy, covetous men, are they not? Listen to them, when coming from a night of debauch, they preach to us of morality or of temperance and sobriety in a discourse punctuated by hiccups due to a lengthy repast, at which each one has absorbed the substance of several families. Are they greedy men? The poor creatures, how badly you understand them. If they consent to stuff themselves in this way, at the risk of perishing through indigestion, it is certainly not for their personal satisfaction, oh dear no, it is for the sake of humanity! Is it not necessary that they should circulate the money they have gained in commerce and manufacture by the sweat of the brow—of their slaves of the soil, of the mine or of the workshop? Come, come, rejoice, you poor devils, who tremble, wan and ragged, in the biting cold which makes you shiver, with empty belly pressed by hunger, rejoice! In order to please you and to procure work for you, your exploiters cover themselves with fine clothes, muffle themselves up in furs, enjoy themselves in consuming expensive repasts, all on your account; and in the evening, when you stretch yourselves on your miserable beds, your limbs aching after a day of toil, they, after leaving their mistresses, very often on of your own daughters, whom they have carried off and covered with gold and precious stones purchased with the fruits of your labor, or else leaving their club, where in gambling they may have lost the fortune of a family, will softly stretch their carcass disordered by excesses, upon a bed of down and will sleep happily. Have they not well gained their sleep? They have worked to chain you more and more to the land or to the factory.

Oh, we know very well what, you Anarchist will say it would be better not to exploit the workers and to leave to them the care of expending the fruit of their labors as they may think fits but we know that you are only robbers, whose sole object is pillage, murder, and arson; you have only appetites, that replies to everything and dispenses with the need of reasons.

That which all parties unite so touchingly to fall upon the Anarchists is that, forming part of the present exploiting class, or hoping to form part of it, they are compelled to undertake the defense of that from which they hope to draw an advantage some day, and to try and get rid of those who bar their way. Now, to stir up the simple against them, what can be better than to make the Anarchists pass for ambitious individuals whose sole-aim is to throw themselves upon the wealth of “those who by their work and their economy have assured to themselves a little bread for their old age.” Unfortunately, this stereotyped phrase is no longer in accord with the workers’ ideas. The respect for private property is dying out the worker no longer believes in capital as the “result of the savings of labor,” when he himself is not able to put together enough to feed himself properly whilst working hard all the time.

The Anarchists have only desires? How do you hope to get this believed? When every day they say to the workers “This earth to which you are denied access belongs to you. No one has a right to monopolise it for his own wants and to say: This is mine, that belongs to me. The fruits of the earth belong to all. Everyone has the right to eat his fill so long as there is food provided at the banquet of nature.” Men of desires? When they are always trying to make the workers understand that a society must be established where everyone can find the satisfaction

of his physical and mental wants, a society in which we shall no longer see these monstrosities in which we are obliged to take part in the present society: individuals in the prime of life dying of anguish of hunger, when at their side vast sums are spent in nameless orgies which would secure them a good living for the rest of their lives.

Are the Anarchists men of selfish greed when their principal propaganda is to make individuals understand that they must destroy the positions which enable intriguers to rule over the others, when every instant they are seeking to make it understood that whoever the men in power may be that power must necessarily be arbitrary, since it only serves the will of a few individuals who maintain the authority of divine right, of the right of the sword, or of the right to vote?

This is really what stirs you up against us. This is what really makes you cry out. That we teach the workers to attend to their own affairs, and not to hand over to any one else the work which has to be done. Not to delegate their sovereignty, if they wish to preserve it. You feel that in the propaganda we are making we leave no room for the gratification of the desires of the pack of starvelings who are hunting after places and honors and, above all, wealth. You feel, in short, that your position is being slowly undermined, and being too debased to put yourselves frankly on the side of the workers, you drivel against all those who seek to bring about their emancipation.

Very well, drivel as much as you please. Neither your insults nor your calumnies will stop us in our work of propaganda. Yes, we have desires. What of it? it is only a matter of coming to an understanding as to the signification of the word "desire." Yes, we wish a society in which everyone will be able to satisfy his physical and intellectual needs. Yes, we dream of a society where all the enjoyments of the body but will be at the free disposition of all. Yes, we are men and we have the desires of men. We do not seek to be other than in accordance with our nature. But we have also such a thirst for justice and liberty that we wish a society in which there will be no judges, governors, or parasites, such as constitute the monstrous social organization with which humanity is now afflicted.

As to the reproach of not having an ideal, the declarations made by the Anarchists in their journals, before your tribunals, and wherever they have been able to speak to the public, are sufficient to prove the falsity of your affirmations. We have endeavored in the course of this book to prove that the society we wish for is not as impossible as you pretend, and in passing we have shown that all your institutions are only designed for the advancement of your private interests and your preservation against those who have been plundered. That, far from being normal institutions, they rest only on arbitrary will and are absolutely contrary to the laws of nature. Then, finally, we think we have proved that science and nature are in accord in proclaiming the complete autonomy of the individual.

To conclude, it remains for us to demonstrate that if we desire the Revolution it is not only because we recognize it as the only efficacious means of getting our freedom, but also because it is inevitable and because the bad social organization under which we live leads us fatally towards it.

In fact, that which particularly frightens away a large number of workers and sets them against Anarchist ideas is this word Revolution, across which they see an horizon of struggles, battles and the shedding of blood, making them tremble at the idea that one day they may be forced to descend into the street and fight against a power that now seems to them an invulnerable colossus against which it is useless to struggle violently and which it is impossible to vanquish.

The past revolutions, which have defeated their own end and left them as miserable as before, have also contributed greatly to make the people skeptical with regard to a new revolution. What,

they say, is the good of fighting and getting ourselves knocked about so that a band of new intriguers may exploit us instead of those who are not in power? It would be very stupid. And whilst moaning in their misery, and grumbling against the braggarts who have deceived them by promises which have never been fulfilled, they close their ears to the facts which urge upon them the necessity of manly action. They shut their eyes so as not to have to face the uncertainty of the struggle which is being prepared. They hide away in their fright of the unknown, while wishing for a change which they recognize is inevitable. They know very well that the misery which is striking down individuals all around them will reach them to-morrow, and will send them and theirs to increase the number of starving poor who live upon public charity. But they hope for some providential interference which will make it unnecessary for them to descend into the street, and cling with all their strength to those who induce them to hope for this change without struggle and fighting. They cheer those who wage a petty war with authority, who lead them to hope for reforms and give them a glimpse of a complete legislative change in their favor, pitying their misery and promising to alleviate it. Do they really believe more in them than in those who speak to them of Revolution? Probably not, but the half-and-half revolutionists have made them hope for a change without it being necessary for them to take a direct part in the struggle, that is enough for them at the present moment. They doze quietly, waiting to see the social reformers at work, and then recommence their complaints when they see them elude their promises or put further off the hour of their realization. But on the day when they are brought to a standstill by hunger, disgust and indignation being at their height, those who at present seem the most opposed to revolt will descend into the street.

Indeed, for those who reflect and study social phenomena, the revolution is inevitable. Everything urges it forward, everything contributes towards it, and even the resistance of the government can only put the date a little further off, or check its results. It cannot prevent it. In the same way the Anarchist propaganda may hasten the explosion, or contribute to render it efficacious by instructing the workers in the causes of their misery and putting them in the way of suppressing these causes, but it would be powerless to bring it about if it was not the result of the vicious social organization from which we suffer.

Therefore, when the Anarchists speak of revolution they do not delude themselves with the belief that it is their propaganda which will induce individuals to descend into the streets to uproot the paving stones and attack power and property, and that their words alone will enflame the crowd to such a point that they will rise in a body and fall upon the enemy. The times are past when the people were enflamed by the voice of tribunes and revolted on hearing their accents.

Our epoch is more positive. There must be causes, there must be circumstances to induce the people to revolt. To-day the tribunes are very few in number, and are rather a representation—more or less faithful—of the popular discontent than the inspirers of it. Thus if Anarchists speak of their desire for the revolution it is not because they hope the crowds will descend into the streets on hearing their voices, but only because they hope the people will comprehend that it is inevitable, and will be induced to prepare themselves for the struggle, to no longer look upon it with fear, but to habituate themselves to see in it their emancipation. Now this positivism of the crowd is so far good that it detaches it from the mere talkers and boasters. If it becomes infatuated with them it quickly disengages itself; in reality it seeks only one thing, its freedom, and it discusses the ideas submitted to it. It is of little importance that occasionally it wanders. Its education is going on every day, and it becomes more and more skeptical with regard to those whom for the moment it cheers as its saviours.

The Revolution does not create or improvise itself: this is an ascertained fact for Anarchists. For them it is a mathematical certainty, resulting from the bad organization of existing society. Their only object is that the workers may be sufficiently instructed as to the causes of their misery, to know how to profit by the Revolution they will certainly be brought to accomplish, and not to let themselves be robbed of its fruits by the intriguers, who will seek to substitute themselves for the existing government, and to substitute an authority which would only be the continuation of that which the people will have overthrown.

Therefore the situation cannot be indefinitely prolonged, everything leads us to the inevitable cataclysm.

The State may go on augmenting its police, its army, its functions, but the perfections brought by science, the developments of machinery, throw every day an additional number of unemployed workers into the street, and the army of the starvelings grows more and more, life becomes more and more difficult, the periods in which men are out of work become more and more frequent and longer and longer.

As we said just now, many workers at present reject all idea of revolution. When they are told to take the land and the instruments of production violently from those who monopolise them, misled by hope, although always deceived, by concessions in their favor on the part of the possessing classes, unquiet, although they have nothing to fear from the results of a revolution of which they cannot perceive the advantages, many workers recoil terrified before this idea of revolt. "Your ideas are very fine," they say to us, "but they cannot be realized. A revolution is no longer possible." And nevertheless if they were to reflect, if they carefully considered this vicious organization of society, which tends more and more to concentrate in the hands of a few all the social wealth—land and instruments of production—and to drive the workers more and more away from the workshop, to replace them by machines, by women, and by children!

Yes, if the middle-class society was to last a long time, if the middle-class were to succeed in imposing upon us for ever the yoke under which they now hold us, the element man would be seen little by little to disappear from amongst the workers. The middle-class society would preserve only a small number of men, charged to watch over their exploitation, and a certain number of women as machines of pleasure, and would devour whole generations of children whom they would take from the earliest years to throw as food to their machinery. Look at the industrial towns of France, principally in the East and North; look at the manufacturing towns of England, and tell us if we have overdrawn the picture.

Many workers, struck by this brutal fact—their replacement by machinery,—have come to hate it and desire its suppression. They do not perceive that, in spite of its suppression, they would always remain in the condition of workers, in the condition of "producing machines," and that by the fact of this suppression they would see only a relative amelioration produced, very relative indeed, which would disappear altogether through the rapacity of the exploiters.

It is evident that in the existing society the machine does much harm to the workers; it augments the out-of-work periods by increasing the rate of production: it makes the worker more dependent on his employer by confining him to a speciality, which makes him unfit for any other work outside his speciality and very often of the workshop where he is employed; it lowers wages by enabling the exploiter to more easily do without the assistance of the worker; for where he desires it, he find, as we have said before, the means of replacing him by children. In fact, every improvement of machinery, every perfection of working is in the present society a cause of misery the more for the worker. And this state of things can only go on getting worse, for the

improvement of machinery which has been going on for the last few years enables us to foresee the degree of perfection at which it will be able to arrive.

What do we see in fact in many trades? The worker disappears to make way for the specialist, who is no longer anything but an unskilled laborer, that is to say, a worker who has no need to be apprenticed to be able to do the work at which he is occupied; we see machines do with ten, twenty, thirty workers the same amount of work as formerly required thirty, forty, fifty, one hundred; in certain trades, indeed, we see the employer supply in a few days orders which formerly would have required months of preparation.

Heretofore, the manufacturer was obliged to have the goods for which he anticipated orders made in advance, so as to be sure of being able to deliver them in time; there was scarcely any want of employment then. To-day, the capitalist knows that by the aid of machinery he can supply at once any orders which are given to him, the unemployed workers guaranteeing the necessary staff to keep his machinery at work. He has, therefore no need to work in advance, he turns his staff adrift without any apology as soon as the order is completed, if no others arrive. Orders also are only given at the last moment, so that for a long time past we have seen continual want of employment, general misery.

We may be told that it is not merely within the last few years that machinery has been in existence, and that formerly there was work enough. Yes, certainly, but it must be admitted that in the beginning the machine produced much less quickly; production having become cheaper and consumption increasing, the equilibrium was maintained for a time.<sup>1</sup> The machinery having been gradually perfected, the thirst for speculation having urged individuals to produce beyond measure, or, to be more exact, in spite of this transitory improvement, the workers not having been able to consume according to their needs, overproduction has soon made itself felt. At the present time the warehouses are swollen with products, commerce perishes of plethora and the workers of hunger by the side of the products of which they alone are makers.

Moreover, these colonial conquests to which the middle-class devote themselves, in order to create new markets, become more and more difficult, the old markets become producers in their turn, and contribute still more to the congestion of goods. Financial crises aid more and more to make capital flow into the hands of an ever-lessening minority, and to throw into the working-class the little capitalists and manufacturers. The time is not far distant when those who now fear the Revolution will begin to look upon it with less fear, and will begin to wish for it. And when this time arrives, revolution will be in the air. Every little thing will suffice to make it burst forth, bringing into its vortex, in the assault on power, in the destruction of privileges, those who at the present time look upon it with fear and mistrust.

Yes, workers, it is evident that the machines have done you an injury, that they take away the work from you, that they occasion your want of employment and the reduction of your wages. And it is they that at a given moment, by turning too great a number of your fellows into the street, will compel you to undertake this Revolution which to-day you repel with all your strength.... But is it really to them that you owe a grudge for all the evil? Is it really them that you should reproach for doing your work? Would you not be satisfied to have nothing more to do but to cross your arms and look at the machines producing all the objects necessary to your existence? Would it not be the finest ideal to give to humanity: to succeed in reducing natural

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<sup>1</sup> This refers specially to France. In England the introduction of machinery was accompanied by even greater misery than is caused by it to-day, witness the Luddite Riots. Ed.

forces to subjection so as to make them serve as a means of working the machinery and causing it to produce for men and in their stead?

Very well, comrades, that might be, that can be, that will be, if you wish it. if you know how to disembarass yourselves of the parasites, who absorb the product of your work. If you had not exploiters, who have known how to turn to their exclusive profit all the improvements that the genius and industry of man have made in the means of production, if these machines, in short, belonged to all instead of belonging to a few, you would consider them as a benefit.

Companions in misfortune, when enervated by long want of work, exasperated by privations of all sorts, you reach the point of cursing your situation and reflecting on the means of making it better, attack those who have monopolized the enjoyments of life, those who have made you the machine of machines, but do not curse the machinery itself, for that will give you freedom, that will give you well-being, if you know how to render yourselves masters of it.

The End

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Jean Grave  
Society on the Morrow of the Revolution  
1889

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*Translated from French.* Note from the transcriber Shawn P. Wilbur: One of the projects I've been pursuing for a long time now is the collection of various serialized book- or pamphlet-length works which have remained largely unknown in the pages of fairly well-known anarchist periodicals. This work by Jean Grave is one that I started to transcribe quite a number of years ago, after receiving page-scans from a friend, but a variety of factors kept me from completing the work. Readers will find that the third chapter—which probably appeared in the February, 1890 issue of *Freedom*—is missing, simply because it was missing in the set consulted by my collaborator. If anyone can provide a scan of the relevant pages, I'll complete the task. In the meantime, I have included the chapter in the original French.

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