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Rebuilding the World

An Outline of the Principles of Anarchism

John Beverley Robinson

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1916–17

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1916–17

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Sex jealousy, the only strong remaining incentive to violence, will tend to disappear when property in women, along with other forms of property, shall have been abolished; and, with absolute freedom of separation, it will be unnecessary to kill an objectionable husband in order to get rid of him.

Such few cases of murder as might occur would meet with such deep horror and avoidance that the guilty man might well prefer imprisonment. It is the glorification of killing through war, and its sanctification through official legalized killing by the State, that makes us tolerate killing at all.

With the abolition of the spirit of subordination to a superior, upon which both Property and Government are based, and with the rise of the new spirit of universal and international brotherhood, the real social development of man will begin, and will carry the world to heights of perfection that we can now hardly imagine clearly enough to prefigure them.

I. The Social Question.

What is the Social Question? The question is this: Why are working people poor people? We are taught to think that anybody can earn an honest living by work; and can gain wealth by hard work; yet we know very well that this is not true. We know that very nearly the opposite is true, that the harder the work is, the poorer is the man who does it. So much so that, as just said, to say that a man belongs to the "working class" means that he is of the poorer class.

Why this contradiction?

"Oh, well, you will say, the poor could be rich if they were clever. It needs not only work but ability to make money. If we were all clever, we should all be rich.

Is this really so?

At first glance it seems so. We look about us, and find that the rich men are often those who have risen from the ranks by their ability. We find the head of a business concern a rich man. We find a corporation lawyer, a leading medical specialist, a noted architect, all rich men. We know that they are all distinguished for their ability in their various branches and we conclude that their ability has made them rich.

It has; but there are able men who are not rich. The bricklayer who is skilled at his trade can do something that the cleverest lawyer cannot do: why should he not be as rich as the lawyer? The moulder who makes a mould for a great casting, the men who pour the metal, the carpenter who sets a mortise lock accurately, are all doing things that require just as much skill and brains, too, as the things that lawyers and doctors do; and things that are needed just as much as the lawyers' and doctors' work is needed, in fact, far more.

Take such a trade as that of the "sand-hogs" who dig out the ground beneath the foundation caissons on which many of our great buildings stand, under such heavy air pressure that they can work only an hour or two a day. Would any bank president

do their work for twice his twenty thousand a year salary? And could he if he would?

If we think that education brings riches, how about teachers in schools and colleges? The great majority of these receive less than a mason or plumber.

We begin to find ourselves forced from our first opinion that education and ability bring riches.

Inquiring farther, we find that of all the inventors who have devised the wonderful machinery of modern days, only a few have become rich. Westinghouse may be a name noted for the riches secured by his air brake invention, but how about the Wright brothers, who perfected the flying machine, or Langley, who invented it? The Western Union Telegraph Company may be an enormously rich corporation, but who ever heard of the inventor of the telegraph as a rich man? The money has gone, not to the clever inventor, but to the clever promoters, who often show their cleverness by skinning the inventor himself first as a preliminary.

When we come to the richest of all, we find that, so far from being especially clever, "they do nothing at all. They spend their time in amusing themselves, playing golf in Florida in the winter, yachting in the North in the summer.

Nobody, nowadays, ever thinks of urging that the poverty of the workers is caused by any general lack of the means of life. Everybody knows that all the things needed for comfortable living are superabundant. Millions of tons of food are destroyed every year for fear that the price might be lowered by its abundance. Millions more rot in the fields, because the cost of carrying it to market is greater than the impoverished workers can pay for it. We even suffer from producing too much, if we may believe the wails of our newspapers and "economists" about overproduction.

Nor can we justify the frequent sneer at the "improvidence" of the workingman, as an explanation of his impoverished condition. People who live "from hand to mouth", as the phrase

By one means or another, liberty leagues will prevail in the end; and will proceed to work out all the details of the new order.⁹

The reign of contract being established: the law of contracts will be abrogated. A contract is an agreement between two parties that each will do certain things for the advantage of the other. It is for the benefit of all concerned. There is a good chance that one or the other of the parties will find out that what he had expected would be to his advantage will not be so; and that he will accordingly want to avoid carrying out his part of the agreement. The present law is intended to force him to carry it out.

Under the new order, there will be no attempt to force him to do so. Instead of being veiled enemies, as the law now makes them, people will be associates and friends. They will not wish to see a comrade injured by forcing him to carry out an agreement which would be injurious to him.

Yet the impossibility of working with people who fail to carry out their agreements will deter them from associating with the defaulter again: and the defaulter, if he repeats his default too often, will find himself automatically barred from the advantages of association. Consequently default will be rare, although there will be no penalty, save such as inheres in itself, just as in the case of the infraction of natural laws.

Crimes of violence will almost disappear. With the removal of the pressure of poverty, which is the usual incentive, robbery will disappear. Men have already learned fairly well not to kill nor attack one another through anger. At first it was held disgraceful to attack an unarmed man, and the duel came into vogue. Presently the absurdity of the duel was seen, and that, too, fell into disrepute.

⁹ Very probably the farmers' and other workers' associations will be the only liberty leagues needed.

bers who have withdrawn form a new liberty league to suit themselves.

In a government the society is the boss of the individual; in a liberty league the individual is the boss of the society.

You form your liberty league for certain definite purposes; to back you up in your refusal to pay rent, for instance; or to aid you in setting up a mutual bank, and ignoring the “laws.” against such banks.

When these two ends, the freeing of the land and the freeing of the money, shall be attained, the main work of the Revolution will have been accomplished. The immediate improvement in the economic situation will lead the great majority to support the liberty leagues. Nevertheless, although they have become a majority, they will not attempt to force their will on those who withhold adherence. The minority may do anything it chooses, as long as it does not invade the liberty of others.

In all probability, the propertied class will organize whatever remnant of the soldiery it can still retain in its pay; and will make all kinds of attacks upon the liberty leagues—seize their funds, break up their meetings, assassinate their leaders, just as they do now to less radical bodies.

What measures the liberty leagues will take to resist, such invasions will depend upon the circumstances of the moment. Passive resistance—that is, the simple refusal to obey—is the strongest possible resistance, if it can be carried out persistently. If four million people should refuse to pay rent, it would be impossible to make them pay. If as many should join to start a mutual bank, their enterprise could not be prevented by military force.

While military resistance is a gambler’s resort. It stakes everything on the result of a battle, which, after all, decides nothing.

runs, are necessarily improvident. They are so poor that they cannot save. To save, implies some superfluity. Where there is but a bare living, at the best, saving is impossible.

It is not that nature is reluctant, or that man is sinful. Nature yields abundantly; more abundantly than ever, through the increasing power of using the gifts of nature, which has come with the increase of scientific knowledge, and the industrial arts based upon that knowledge. The same human nature which by its courage, perseverance and industry conquered the wilderness, and built cities and railroads, is still ours, ready to achieve, greater triumphs, as soon as the obstacles to its advance are removed.

What, then, are these obstacles? We are learning that they are not the insuperable obstacles which a refractory material universe and an incurable depravity of mankind would present; but obstacles which our own thoughtlessness has carelessly permitted to be erected and which our own thoughtfulness, whenever we choose to exercise it, is capable of removing; that they are, in short, not conditions but institutions.

To obtain an idea of what is meant by an institution, let us look at Mexico, where an institution is established that is unknown in most modern communities, the institution of peonage.

Peonage is based upon a law that when a man owes a debt and cannot pay it, the creditor may take possession of his body and force him to work for him until the debt is paid off. But the creditor, by skillful bookkeeping, makes out that the board and clothing and lodging of the peon cost more than what he earns by his labor; so that the unfortunate peon grows deeper and deeper in debt, the harder he works. He is reduced to a condition indistinguishable from chattel slavery.

Most of the workers in Mexico are already peons. The tendency of the institution is to reduce all the laboring class to peonage, and to make a few peon-owners excessively rich. Even the free laborers who remain can hardly make a living, because

where peons can be forced to do the work for their board and clothing, it is hard for anybody to get more. The result is a population of slaves, with all the vices of slaves—recklessness, improvidence, irresponsibility.

It is useless to preach to peons that they can rise to affluence by industry, self-denial, saving. No virtues can have the slightest effect toward changing their condition.

Not long ago we had a similar institution in this country—Negro slavery—which tended to produce similar results where it prevailed, an impoverished and disreputable class of workers, with a few overrich and overluxurious owners.

Therefore when we find ourselves suffering again with the same symptoms, the growth of an impoverished laboring class, together with an accumulation of vast riches by a few, we naturally look about us to see what institution it is among ourselves that produces these results.

II. Property.

Both peonage and slavery are forms of an institution which exhibits itself in many other forms, and which the lawyers call “property”. Where slavery is a recognized form of “property”, a slave becomes the “property” of the owner. He is made so by the law. The owner could never hold his “property” without the aid of the law. If a slave escaped, the owner could not hunt him down singlehanded. If the owner held more than one slave, as his “property”, they could unite to withstand his demands.

But the law—the righteous and just law, that we are all taught to revere—the law puts a club in the owner’s hands. It offers its sheriffs, its judges, its jailers, to aid in catching the fugitive slave and forcing him to work for his owner. Under the law, slave-holding was a sacred and respected form of property holding. The “property” of the slave-holder was the most lucrative form of property, and the slave-holders were

indulged in. Murder, robbery, rape, arson—all, as a matter of course, may not be done.

But many doubtful cases occur, in which the solution is not so easy. How far is it proper to carry on a business that disturbs others by the noise, or dust, or smell that it makes? Or, if it be agreed that a little noise or dust or smell must be borne; there is the question of just how much must be tolerated.

Therefore we get together, with as many others as we can induce to join us, and form an association for, first, the definition of liberty, and secondly, for the establishment of liberty. We call it, perhaps, the “Liberty League”. Such liberty leagues are destined to supersede and replace all governments.

The main difference between a liberty league and a government is this: that a liberty league does not force you to belong to it, while a government does. You can join a liberty league and withdraw from it, just as you can from a club or society of any kind. Membership in it is voluntary; while membership in a government is compulsory.

The liberty league exists for the benefit of each individual belonging to it; while in a government the individuals are regarded as existing only for the benefit of the government.

The function of both the government and the liberty league is to establish and protect liberty; but when a government begins to protect your liberty according to its own ideas, by building fortresses, for instance, called armories, and training soldiers with “riot guns” to shoot you down if you refuse to work for the proprietors, you have no remedy; you are forced to pay taxes, although indirectly and secretly, to defray the cost of shooting you.

But if a liberty league does not defend your liberty according to your own idea of what constitutes liberty, and not according to its idea, you simply stop paying your dues, or whatever the subscription for membership is called; and when a certain number of members have withdrawn, the liberty league either reforms, and they come back, or it falls to pieces, and the mem-

freezing; but no one calls necessities such as these slavery, because no other person compels our action.

So, again, as long as each one of us can live an entirely isolated life, his liberty of action is complete: the solitary dweller on an island has none to control him. But the moment that we try to live in association with others, we must make concessions: we can no longer do certain things.

The question at once arises: What are the things that we may do? what are the things we may not do? Absolute liberty cannot be attained in society: the problem is to obtain as much liberty as possible—as little restriction as possible—for all associates.

The result is that the liberty we seek is not a dream, incapable of realization; it is rather of the nature of a compact or agreement to the following effect:

I will not attempt to prevent you from doing anything you want to do,

provided

You will not attempt to prevent me from doing anything I want to do.

Or, to put it affirmatively:

I may do anything I want to do, provided it does not deter you from doing anything you want to do.

You may do anything you want to do, provided it does not deter me from doing what I want to do.

There are many acts that each party must refrain from, because such acts would detract from the liberty of the other. All the more flagrant attacks upon another, of course, cannot be

men of the greatest wealth and highest standing. Nevertheless, that form of property had to go.

Peonage, above alluded to, is another form of law-supported property, identical in its results with slavery, and dependent, like slavery, upon law for its existence. Neither slavery nor peonage is now lawful in the United States nor in most countries; but other forms of property are still recognized and established by law, with the same general approval that the laws upholding slavery once enjoyed.

Property in land, for instance.

A farmer, let us say, has a farm as large as he can work with his own hands, perhaps in Massachusetts. With reasonable exertion he can make from it a comfortable living for himself and his family, with something to spare. Instead of keeping the surplus for a rainy day, or spending it for luxuries, he may buy with it another farm in Texas. Of what use will this Texas farm be to him? He has already as large a farm as he can use. He cannot be in two places at once. It is of no direct use to him at all.

Why, then, does he want to own it?

Because, though he may not be able to use it himself, if he owns it he can prevent anybody else from using it, unless they pay him his price. Then, if he saves what he receives for the use of it, he may by-and-by purchase another farm in Missouri, and another in Michigan, until he ultimately may own a dozen farms, which he cannot use, but which other people are using and paying him for permitting them to.

Then he may stop working his own farm, and live off the labor of his tenants. He has become “a man of property”; he belongs no longer to the “working class”: he belongs to the “propertied class”.

So, you see, “property” does not mean owning what you use only: it means owning what somebody else is using.

We thus see the force of the definition of property according to the Roman law—the right to use and to abuse what you

have.¹ As long as you use it yourself, it is in your possession, and is called possession, as distinguished from property. So far, it is only the right to use that you exercise. But when, being unable to use, it yourself, you, refuse to allow anybody else to use it unless they pay you for your permission; this is the “right of abuse”; this is, not possession, but “holding” property. You are a “property holder”; even though you never saw the land that you “hold”.

This privilege of “holding” what you don’t want, and can’t use is the full “right of property”, which lies at the root of our present civilization.

Just as, in the case of slavery, it would be impossible for an individual to hold a slave, unless he were aided and abetted by the law; it would be impossible for our farmer to do as we have supposed were he not protected by the law in so doing. He could not go to all the different farms that he “owned”, and force the people who were using them to pay the rent he demanded. He could not personally eject them if they refused. It is only because he can call upon the sheriffs and judges and policemen, and ultimately upon the armed soldiery if necessary, to eject recalcitrant tenants and seize their belongings to satisfy his claims, that he is able to maintain his “property rights” at all.

Land holding, like slavery, is a privilege conferred by law.

Land holders constitute one of the privileged classes.

The “privileged class”, the “propertied class”, the “upper class”, the “ruling class”, the “capitalist class”, and what Socialists call “the bourgeois” are all the same thing.

Let the right to use land remain as it is, and every man is entitled to all that he can use. Take away the right to “hold” land that he does not use, and does not expect to use, and cannot use, and you deprive him only of a weapon wherewith to rob and enslave others: you deprive him of nothing that is prop-

¹ Jus utendi et abutendi re sua quatenus juris ratio patitur.

for education, wealth, good clothes.⁸—all the things that mark “the upper class”.

Just remember, when you are tempted to think well of them, that it is their boasted education and wisdom that has brought to the world nothing but poverty and misery and war. Remember that even now, they have no remedy to offer, but threats to hang anybody who raises a voice against their deviltry, threats to mow down with their precious Maxim guns anybody who acts otherwise than as they dictate. All they know is force and bloody murder!

It is time for the “lower classes” to try their hand at reconstructing a world which has been wrecked by the “upper classes”.

V. Practical Workings.

After you have achieved liberty from yourself—from the foolish sentiments and emotions of “reverence” which enthrall you—you will find it an easy matter in comparison to achieve physical freedom from the control of others which constitutes practical government. When your “respect” for their high-mightinesses no longer brings your willing obedience to their commands, their arms will fall nerveless, and will drop the whip which they now hold over you. It is your acquiescence in the righteousness of their rule which gives them power over you.

Bear in mind that it is freedom from the physical compulsion of other men that you seek. To the necessities of their environment all men must bow. We must all eat when we are hungry, if we would avoid starving; and we must wear clothing and take shelter and build fires in cold weather, if we would avoid

⁸ Education is a good thing and good clothes are a good thing, but respect for them isn’t.

advocate it, notwithstanding their affected predilection for peace. The reason is that both Church and State are based upon “authority”—that superstitious deference which makes men willing slaves.

You may safely be as “religious” as you please, provided you remain master of your religion, and do not allow your religion to master you. You may entertain any “belief” in things you don’t know anything about that you choose, provided that it is your belief, and that you retain the power to change it or cast it away.

But if you do things that you don’t want to do because the Church tells you to, you are still a slave to your religion. Nor must you fear for such magic words as “duty”, “right”, “ought”, with which religion seeks to subdue you.

Apart from the deference to authority which characterizes religion, and which makes it the most deadly foe of liberty, it is a backward force in two other ways. First: it teaches that men are naturally depraved, ignoring the hand that Property has in depraving them. Secondly: it holds that life is a “vale of tears” and cannot be made anything but wretched, in order that it may be a “trial” and “preparation” for the joys of a hypothetical future life; thereby paralyzing the hand and brain that would make life here a heaven on earth, and are quite willing to let the future take care of itself. The sooner you are clear of it, the happier you will be.

When you have freed your mind from fear of anything, from “respect” for anything, from “reverence” for anything, then—and not till, then—may you think of achieving complete physical freedom. You must be free from yourself before you can be free from others.

Besides the reverence for abstractions that you must discard—abstractions such as The State, The Government, The Church—you must also discard all the respect that you feel

erly “his”: you take away from him only what is really other people’s, because it is used by them.²

Suppose that property in land were abolished; that the good common sense of the people clearly saw the unfairness of allowing any man to “hold” more land than he could use, and the corresponding fairness of letting him hold all that he could possibly use by his own personal efforts, what would happen?

Along comes a band of harvest hands, who expect to be out of work all winter, and who must take refuge in the cities, dragging out a precarious existence on charity, scorned and denounced as “tramps” and “hoboes.” Since last harvest time the laws upholding property in land have been done away with.

They come to a farm of 1000 acres. The owner welcomes them warmly, for he depends upon them to get his crops in. No, no, they say, not this time! You are entitled to all that you can work yourself, but no more. You may have about fifty acres: the rest we will harvest for ourselves. Yes, we owe you something for the seeding and cultivation, but next spring we will pay you for it, and do it afresh for ourselves. Meanwhile we are going to sell this crop and build some shacks and spend the winter here. There is plenty for us all and for you, too.

Well, replies the farmer, I suppose I can lend you my machines and horses and so on, and you can pay me out of what you sell the crop for, and I’ll go in along with you, for I can’t do much single handed. Thus a co-operative farming association would spontaneously form itself.

But besides property in land, the law recognizes property in other things, in buildings of all kinds, in ships, in railroads, both rails and rolling stock, in factories and the machinery they contain. One never hears of a factory or railroad which is owned by the men who run it. It is not even owned by the men

² It is against property in land that the efforts of the disciples of Henry George are directed. They object strenuously to private property in land, but wish to make the State virtually the sole proprietor, under the impression that the State is a less exacting landlord than a private individual.

who manage it: it is owned by a lot of stockholders and bondholders scattered throughout the country, who probably never saw the factory, possibly never even the railroad which they own. Doesn't that seem curious? If it does not, it is because custom has dulled our apprehension.

But that is the effect of "property". That is meant to be the effect of "property". It is intended to separate people into two groups, one composed of those who "own" everything in sight; the other of those who work for them. And it ends by making wage-slaves of the workers, and idlers of the owners".

Some fine morning, after property in things, as well as property in land, has been abolished, a party of factory workers comes along. No, we don't mean to go to work today, they say, we are going to build a factory for ourselves, and have all the product, without paying any dividend or any interest to anybody.. Your stockholders can come and work in their factory if they choose. If they leave it too long unused, they will be deemed to have abandoned it, and we, or anybody, can take possession of it and run it.

Just as a co-operative farming society would form, in the previous case of the farm; in this case, a co-operative factory association would spontaneously come into existence.³ The workers would appoint suitable men from among themselves as managers, or would employ the former manager if he were willing, paying him an equal share of the product. Thus the workers, working half the time, would have twice what they earned before; because now, half, or more than half, of what they produce must be turned over to people who produce nothing; who merely "own" the land and the factory building and machinery.

If they own them, and want to use them, well and good. Let them use them themselves. But if they already have so much

³ Thus a communistic arrangement would result, without the drawbacks of compulsory communistic organization.

in places of honor in our courts and schools and colleges and churches.

Your interests are those of the producers of all countries. It is only by standing together as associated individuals that you will eventually supersede the small superstition of "My Country" by the majestic sentiment that, throughout the world, all men are brothers.

Terrible words, at which Property trembles!

Another word which Property uses to cast a spell upon you and hypnotize you is "patriotism". You are taught from earliest infancy that it is a fine thing to be "patriotic". Your parents exhort you to it; your school teachers inculcate it, with much flag-waving and flag-worship. Understand that it is all a plot to undermine your self-confidence and to weaken the bonds of self-interest that bind the workers of all lands together.

Property thinks that it will fill you with a sacred reverence for "The Flag", so that by waving a flag in front of you, you will follow it as obediently as a donkey will follow a wisp of hay. Understand that a flag is but a piece of cloth, and that to "respect" it is sheer idolatry. It is supposed to symbolize liberty; but the first act of a free man is to abjure devotion to mere symbols. What the flag of each nation really symbolizes is the loyalty of the enslaved workers to the one master which in all nations rules them—Property!

One of the most powerful supports of Government and Property is the Church. Time was when Church and State were united financially. The State took upon itself the task of forcing people to pay taxes for the support of the Church, and of guaranteeing the salaries of its ministers. In most countries there are no longer "established" churches; but the loyalty of the Church, whether Catholic, Protestant or Jewish Synagogue, has never ceased.

Bishops will assure you that the State is Divine; and demand deference for it in the name of religion. In time of war, that brightest flower of Property, every pulpit will

of “The State.” You look up to the Government as your natural superior; just as the vassal of feudal times looked up to his “lord”.

When the “Government” orders you to register your name for conscription, in addition to the fear of imprisonment which is threatened should you fail to do so, you think that it has “a right” to give orders to you. You would deem yourself a disloyal wretch to think of disobeying. As long as you are thus a willing slave, glorying in your slavery, you need not dream of liberty. You cannot get it; and you would not know how to use it if you had it.

Instead of looking up to Tom, Dick and Harry, who call themselves by the lofty titles of President, Speaker of the House, Judge of the Supreme Court, you must learn to regard them as the employees of The Propertied Interests, which are the real power behind the scenes. You must learn to regard yourself as the only person that you are interested in; the only person who knows what your interests are. You must have courage enough and self-respect enough not to “look up” to anybody.

Most of all, you must get clear of your superstitious reverence for the abstraction that you call “My Country”.

In a vague way, you regard the “Government” as the same thing as “My Country”; and when Mr. Judson Jones, who happens to be the President, issues orders to you to come and be shot, you say: “My Country calls I must obey! I am called to “The Colors”! and you run along, like a good little boy, to do whatever you are ordered to do.

And *you* dream of liberty And *you* regard yourself as “a free citizen I” Know yourself for the slave that you are, and cease your chatter about “fighting for liberty”

Understand, once for all, that “My Country” means nothing at all; it is but a phrase which is taught to you at school, with which to fool you and bamboozle you in later life. Your country is no better than any other country. Your interests are not those of the employees of Property, who fill our legislatures and sit

that they cannot use all that they have, but must turn it over to others to use, let them abandon it entirely.

What they want is to eat their cake and have it, too, and that is precisely what the institution of “property” gives them.

So, again, it would be, say, with a railroad. The road has earned a million dollars in the past year, says the manager, but half of it must be given to the stockholders and bondholders. What have they done to get so much money? asks the committee of striking employees. Why, they own the road; don’t you understand? It is their road: it isn’t your road: they are very good to let you work on it at all, says the manager.

Oh, indeed! reply the strikers. Their road, is it? Let, them come and run it themselves if they want to; But if they abandon it to us to run, not a cent shall they get of what we earn by it. All shall be divided among us.

And when the workers understand this, and stand together, and act together, they will no longer need to work for a parcel of “owners”.⁴

There is one form of property that towers above all the rest in these days, although plain people do not come in daily contact with it, as they do with property in land and property in buildings and other things—I mean the money privilege, that rules everything.

It is a subject upon which we cannot enlarge here, but one or two things we must try to realize. In the first place, what we call money, is not nowadays, as it once was, a quantity of gold and silver and copper coins. It has become, through the development of the banking system, almost entirely a matter of credit. Suppose that everybody had a bank account and bank-book, workingmen as well as others, and that every week each

⁴ Karl Marx and his followers are chiefly concerned with the impracticability of property in the tools of production, just as the Single Taxers are with property in land. But, like the Single Taxers, they want to make the State the sole proprietor. They will find, if they Succeed in carrying out their programme, that the State is a harder master than the private proprietor.

worker had a certain amount put down in his bankbook to his credit. He could then pay for his groceries and most of his other expenses by writing checks for them. Almost all business could then be conducted by credit, as most large business is now. Some expenses, such as railroad fares, might still require cash; but a little ingenuity could soon find ways of using credit for these, too.

It is easy to see that whoever controls credit controls the whole of modern business, in all its vast extent. Now, this privilege of controlling credit has been made the “property” of the banks; and through the power which they have thus acquired they have become the masters, not only of us, the plain people, but of the government itself, which is the source of their power and which is supposed to control them.

The profit which the banks make upon their transactions is called interest; and when the banking monopoly is abolished interest will be abolished also. As it is, every man-jack of us pays his interest to the banks, without knowing it, on every purchase that he makes. Nobody can buy a loaf of bread or a pound of butter without the banks coming in for their slice.

The storekeeper is absolutely dependent upon the banks, and the interest that he must pay them, he necessarily must add to the selling price of his goods.

And this must continue until the workers understand matters well enough to start banks of their own, which cannot charge interest, because they will not be supported in their demands by law and government.

Just to illustrate how such a free bank would operate, conceive the revolution accomplished, property in land and things and credit abolished, Rent and Interest and Profit things of the past.

The employees of a certain factory have got out, and left the stockholders to do the work of running the factory if they choose. They propose to build a new factory of their own, to put in the machinery, and to run it themselves. If they have

destructive interest which they now levy, and the dangerous power which they now wield.

A few will at first fail to pay their share, expecting to benefit at the expense of the rest; but the abundance of material wealth which will come to all when property is abolished will soon make an end of the petty stinginess that property has engendered.

All that is needed is liberty from the control of government, and property will die a natural death, and equality and brotherhood will arise, springing aloft, full-winged, from its rotten Carcass.

IV. Liberty.

All the privileges which go to make up the “rights of property” are conferred upon certain individuals by Government. They are conferred not by grants to the individuals who hold them, but in the form of restrictions upon those who do not hold them.

Thus, the land-holding privilege is really a prohibition to all to use the land without the permission of the proprietor, It is the same with the privilege of holding out of use other things—buildings and such—and the same with the greatest privilege of all—the money privilege. It takes the form of a prohibition to all others from issuing money. So that what is wanted is liberty from the restrictions imposed by a government that uses its power to grant privileges which cause inequality and poverty and crime and war.

The question is how to obtain this liberty.

Fight for it! you say? Arm the people and let them rise against their oppressors! Mere folly! Liberty can never be achieved by fighting for it. Liberty must come from within.

The trouble is that most people, including yourself probably, *respect* the parcel of politicians which you dignify by the name

retaining the liberty to retire from the association whenever they like. Thus each factory will become an association of individuals, and factories may associate internationally if they choose: there is no limit to the possibilities of association when it is voluntary.

But once give the association power over you, and you have a master. And a master means a proprietor. And a proprietor means the product for the proprietor, and not for the producer.

The practical distinction between an association and a government, is that a government has sovereign power over the bodies of all who live within certain boundaries. It may conscript them for war or labor; it may imprison or kill them for any opposition to it—which it calls “sedition”—it may take their products without consulting them—which it calls “taxation”.

An association, on the other hand, has no power over the bodies of its members. It has no sovereignty over any territory. It is the servant of its members, not their master. They contribute to its support as long as they think that they are benefited by it, and withdraw from membership whenever they feel like it.

With the abolition of Property and Government—the fall of the two-headed giant that devours us—a new day will dawn. Capitalists and laborers as distinct classes will no longer exist, because the capital—the surplus of his product—will belong to the laborer himself, and workers will associate to build factories and railroads, as capitalists do now.

National distinctions will be wiped out: everything will spontaneously become international. Lighthouses and coast life-saving service will be maintained by international associations of mariners and merchants by free subscriptions, as the coast service of England is maintained now. Roads will be maintained by road associations. Banks will be maintained by mutual associations of merchants, and will embrace the world even more efficiently than banks do now, without the

their own bank also, they can go to their bank, and, upon the strength of the product of cloth or paper or shoes, or what not, that they expect to turn out, they can get all the credit they need to build and equip their factory; just as now the country store furnishes the farmer with supplies on the strength of his expected crops.

Then the brickmakers would get to work to make the bricks to build the factory, and the machine makers would make the machines, and all would be paid through the credit of the men who were going to run the factory, redeemed afterward by the product of the factory itself.

Just try to start such a mutual bank now, and you will find out what “property” means. The Federal Government will tax you 10 per cent, and then the State Government will finish up the job by either fining or imprisoning you, according to which State you are in.

We have thus sketched briefly the three overshadowing forms of property, that are the causes of the three different forms of tribute, which the producers must pay to the propertied class—Rent, Interest and Profit.

Rent, by which the books always mean ground-rent only. Interest, which includes the payment for the use of both money and things. Profit, which is not the profit of the dealer, by which he is paid for his labor, but the profit that is paid, often in the form of dividends, to the stockholders or owners, although they may do no work at all.

It is by Rent, Interest and Profit that the increasing horde of do-nothings—the upper classes, don’t you know—is supported.

Besides these greater forms of property, there are lesser forms which aid in plundering the people. The patent system, for instance, by which ideas are made property; and on which are based the telegraph and telephone monopolies, the Pullman car monopoly, and I know not how many other concerns that enrich a few and despoil the many.

Property invariably has its root in law-conferred privilege, often seemingly harmless or even beneficial in the beginning, when its effects are small, but developing its full power of destruction as it grows to maturity. Thus the patent privilege, originally conferred in order to stimulate invention, has become the foundation of such vast properties as we have mentioned.

Indeed, it behooves us to beware how we permit the smallest privilege to be granted to anybody. It is always upon such small beginnings that ruinous growths of property have reared themselves in the end. The last and greatest and most terrible form of property—the Money Power—which we all feel is crushing us, began with a simple and apparently innocent little clause in the Constitution, giving to the Federal Government the power to control money.

As a result, the bankers of Wall Street have got hold of the money privilege, and control, not only the money, but the Government itself into the bargain, as well as all us plain people, whom the Government conscripts and orders about as it chooses.

Of whatever kind property may be, it is always the privilege of getting more than is given.

The proprietor who has the privilege of slave-holding, gets all that the slave produces and gives the slave the least that will suffice to keep him alive and in working order. The proprietor who has the privilege of land-holding gets all the rent that can possibly be exacted from the workers who are his tenants, after the other proprietors have squeezed out their share of the plunder.

And so with the proprietors of the privilege of holding material wealth—buildings, machinery, etc.—and the proprietors of the credit and money privileges, they all join with the landlords, and among them barely leave the worker his skin. They have not even the regard for his health that the slaveholder

stop all written communication—as absolute as any satrap ever exercised. Without even giving a reason, any communication may be withheld or destroyed. And this power is habitually used to stop all agitation against the existing state of affairs.

The retention of the whole product by the producer, which is the end in view, will be completely accomplished by the general recognition that no man can give and keep at the same time. At present, we think that if a man has more than he can use, he may legitimately lend the surplus, and get back, not only what he lent, but a premium for the use of it. It is this view which is the foundation of property, on which the present state of affairs rests.

By the reversal of this view, so that men at large will see its injustice and impracticability, the opposite view will take its place—that a man may have all that he can use of everything—land, buildings, or anything else; but that if he has more than he can use and lends it to somebody else to use, he can look for what he lent only back, without any payment for the use of it.

Thus there will no longer be a separate class which owns things, while the workers own nothing; but the workers themselves will own everything, and everybody will be comfortable and happy.

It is quite unnecessary that the government should take possession of everything—land, factories, railroads, and all the rest of it, and treat the people as employees. If the men who work the farms own the farms, and the men who dig the coal own the mine, and the men who run the machines own the factory, they will receive their whole product, without the government having anything to say about it.

It is vain to speak of the “Collectivity” as if it were distinct from Government. If it forces people to belong to it and to pay taxes to it, it is a Government, no matter what you may call it. But if it only asks for contributions, without compelling anybody to pay, it becomes a free association. Free men will always be able to associate for such purposes as they may choose;

to shoot them down. Hark! I hear them now, practising with their riot guns, and the rattle of their rapid-fire machine guns, warranted to disperse any street meeting in thirty seconds!

Soldiers are the tools of tyranny. As long as they are willing to shoot down their brothers at the order of their master, revolution is impossible.

It is when the Swiss Guard refuses to fire upon the people; when the Cossacks refuse to ride them down, that revolutions are peacefully accomplished.

The conception of government as a necessary agent of the community, to do things which can be better done by the community than by the individual, is an erroneous one; because it is based upon the assumption that present conditions will continue, even after property is abolished.

Governments have carried on free schools, because there is an impoverished class, which otherwise could not afford to send its children to school; but when all are rich, everybody will prefer private schools, and will have abundant money to pay for them. They will prefer them for at least two reasons; the first, that only by such schools can the dull uniformity, the mind-deadening monotony of institutional schools be avoided; the second, that governmental schools are used largely to inculcate in the child mind a superstitious reverence for the Government, which makes the achievement of a Revolution doubly difficult. The Adoration of the Flag, with bowed head and hands on hearts, is precisely equivalent to the Adoration of the Cross of the religious schools, only, if anything, a more deeply superstitious ceremony.

Carrying the mails may be done cheaply by government, because it always has the power to meet a deficit by taxation; but when everybody is rich, even if the mail service costs more, it will not cost more than it is worth, and there will be plenty of money to pay for it. Moreover, the tremendous power which the Government now wields in controlling the mails will be ended. For now, the Government has the absolute power to

must have: they kill off thousands, knowing well that there are other thousands coming along to take their places.

Property necessarily means the utter ruin and destruction of its victims. A system that takes more than it gives is mathematically impossible: the only system that can endure is that in which equal is given for equal.”⁵

Over and over again Property has eaten out its own vitals in its mad hunger for gain, and dragged down with it flourishing cities and prosperous nations. The destructive effects of Property are cumulative; they are not seen at first, but gradually and more and more rapidly they pile up. At first the proprietor appears as a benefactor, who kindly lends his tools to the poor workman who hasn't any. It is only after a while, as the poor workman finds himself growing poorer and poorer, that he begins to suspect that the institution of property is the cause of his distress.

Invariably the poor, deprived of their possessions by Property, have been forced to borrow from the rich, thus creating the classes of lenders and borrowers, of creditors and debtors. Thus the history of ancient Greek civilization is but the history of the struggles between the rich and the poor, the creditors and debtors. Each great law-giver, summoned to calm the strife—Draco, Lycurgus, Solon—began by abolishing all debts. History fails to tell how they reconciled the creditors to this wholesale cancellation; but it is certain that they never went to the root of the matter by abolishing that which caused creditors and debtors, the ever-present institution of Property, des-

⁵ This institution of Property accounts for all the anomalies at which we wonder. Why does there seem to be too many people in the world? Why are there always some people “out of work”? Evidently if we give all the land and all the machinery and all the buildings and all the ships and all the everything to one set of people and take them away from the rest of the people, the owners have the rest of the people completely under their thumb. They can let them go to Work or forbid them to, just as they please. Is it any wonder that the earth seems too small? Is it any wonder that people are Out of work?

tined to spring up again and again from the root which had been cut off, but not dug up.

Thus ancient Rome, having ravaged Italy by land-holding and slave-holding, and having driven the former free Roman farmers from their farms, replaced them by slaves and reduced them to starvation, was forced to undertake a career of foreign conquest. And when the known world had been subjugated and plundered, the Roman Empire fell to its merited doom.

Thus modern nations, when they have exhausted the purchasing power of the people, find themselves forced to make war, in order to obtain new subject tributaries to whom to sell.

Ever since the beginning of history, civilizations have arisen, one after the other, and, one after the other, have fallen, always from the same cause—Property. In the books you will read that they were overthrown by wealth and luxury, and the demoralization that comes from luxury. Nothing of the sort. It is not luxury alone that destroys a civilization: it is one-sided luxury, the luxury of the rich, and its invariable accompaniment, the deprivation and degradation of the poor.

While Property continues any further advance in civilization is impossible. The next step must be the abolition of property. It is Property that causes the impoverishment of the workers, and the demoralization of the propertied idlers; and that, through poverty and demoralization, creates crime and War.

It is Property that divides men into two hostile camps, the haves and the haven't's, perpetually arrayed against each other. It is Property that distorts men's faces with fear, that displaces the natural friendliness and kindness of man with cupidity and cruelty, and, being a man-eating Ghoul itself, turns its victims into ghouls before slaying them.

To abolish Property no physical force will avail. The bloody devastation in which Property rejoices cannot be used against it. To fight the devil with fire is an ancient error: the devil must be fought with water.

those who use it. No claim for rent or purchase money will be upheld.

So, again, today the Law says: The factory belongs to the stock holders. They are entitled to demand and receive rent from whoever occupies it. Nobody can work in it without their permission.

In the future, the rule will be that they who have built the factory may work in it themselves, or sell it; but that if it is held unused for more than a reasonable length of time, anybody may take possession of it and use it.

Thus landlords and proprietors in general will be swept from the face of the earth; and commerce will no longer be war, as it is called at present, but the just exchange of products, in easy, joyful and spontaneous co-operation.

The Law now says: Only the Government may issue currency. In the future this restriction, and all other restrictions placed by a ruler upon his slaves, will be ignored. Mutual banks will be established, and money will become a mere means of exchanging products, without any power of "making money".⁷

For the abolition of Property and Government, one thing is necessary—the conversion of the soldiery, both the National Guard and the regular army. Government rests now, not on the consent of the governed, as it is supposed to, but on the suppression by military force of meetings at which any vital subject is discussed. Trivial matters may be talked about: Salvation Army bands may preach as much as they please; but if people assemble to discuss their rights, not under government, but against government, they will soon find out who their master is.

The National Guard, always composed of clerks and hangers-on of the propertied classes, will very quickly be ordered out

⁷ They who are interested in looking farther into the money question may consult the following books: *Instead of a Book*, by Benjamin R. Tucker. *Mutual Banking*, by William R. Greene. *Involuntary Idleness*, by Hugo Bilgram. These are out of print, but can be obtained by dealers.

nation to authority, has, since the early ages were past, sympathized with property.

The Law, to which we are all called upon to defer, as if it were something divine, is nothing but a set of rules designed to maintain property. By property are created the thieves and murderers whom the Law endeavors to suppress after having created them. Do away with the Law which Property sets up; depend upon the laws of nature and good sense, and there will be no need of laws to suppress dishonesty and violence; for there will be no dishonesty nor violence to suppress. The proof is that even now, with all the devilry of Property in full swing, there are many retired country places where property is less rampant than in the cities, and where the people sleep with doors open, and crimes of violence are almost unheard of. Crime is not natural: it is artificial.

The natural laws or customs of the future will usually be the direct opposite of the laws of today. Thus, today, the law of the land says: He has bought fifty thousand acres, and paid good money for them. They are his, whether he chooses to use them or not. If he lets somebody else use them, he is entitled to demand and receive as much as he can get from anybody who wants to use them.

In the future, custom—natural law—whatever you choose to call it—representing the newly awakened intelligence of mankind, will say: What, fifty thousand acres? How ridiculous! He cannot possibly use them himself! They contain forests of timber, rich tracts of farming land, mines of coal and lead: a hundred thousand people could easily live off them. And is this man, who is said to have bought them, to be permitted to keep all these hundred thousand off, or make them his serfs? Impossible! No money can purchase such a privilege. Let him come here if he chooses, and farm what he can, or cut what timber he can, all with his own hands; or associate himself with others if he likes, for general advantage; but this land is not his, nor can it belong to anybody except to

What will abolish Property easily and peacefully is a change in men's ideas. Human nature may be the same always, but human intelligence is always learning. Men now think that it is all right that whatever a man makes or obtains by just purchase should be his "to use and to abuse", as the law has it. When men see that this power of "abuse" really means the power to retain what the owner does not want and cannot use himself, and to keep everybody else from using it, in regular dog-in-the-manger style, they will understand that the right to use only, without the right to abuse, is all that can be fairly admitted.

In the future, users will be owners.

Against such a general conviction force is useless. Enough prisons cannot be built to contain the converts to the new ideas. The arms of soldiers sent out to shoot them fall powerless, for the soldiers are their friends and brothers, and they, too, understand the new ideas and are in accord with them.

Light!—light!—more light!

III. Government.

Government—otherwise called The State—is an organization of the propertied classes to maintain property—to protect propertied interests—to uphold the rule of property. The control of the ruling power by the propertied class constitutes it the ruling class, as we have before noted, and the control of wealth through property enables it to become the educated class—the upper class.

Whether Government is organized as an autocracy, or a monarchy, or a democracy, makes no difference, it is always the rule of the propertied class. Under an empire or a monarchy, the members of the ruling class constitute the aristocracy, of whom some have titles of superiority. Under a democracy, the aristocracy have no titles, but are distinguished by the

amount of their property only. Aristocracies—odious word, meaning the rule of the best, as if they would dare to call themselves the best, if they were the best—aristocracies are everywhere based on wealth, and are everywhere justly called plutocracies, meaning, the rule of wealth.

There is no real difference among the various forms of governmental organization, whether called aristocracies, monarchies, oligarchies, or democracies; they are all plutocracies. When first modern democracies were established, it was feared by the propertied class that a democratic government would be unable to control the lower class—the unpropertied class—“the mob”, as it is scornfully designated by the rulers. Experience has shown that there is little need of apprehension: the rule of property is successfully maintained, in spite of the votes of “the herd”.

It is popularly said that government is intended to protect the weak against the strong. It is; but it is the poor, weak plutocrats, who number not 5 per cent of the population, against 95 per cent of the disinherited. Were it not for government, property would long since have been abolished.

Governments everywhere are supported by two things; first, and by far the most important, by authority; and, secondly, by the force of armed troops. Woe to the government that lacks either!

Authority is a figment of the imagination; but all the more powerful because it is a figment of the imagination. The authority of the ruler is the reflection of the respect for him which exist in the minds of the ruled. If the ruled lose their respect for their ruler, he at once loses his authority.

Respect for an abstract idea is more powerful than respect for an individual, strong as the latter may be. “The Pope” is respected, but “The Church” is far more respected. “The President” is respected, but “The United States Government” is far more respected. That is why respect for the abstraction called “Government” persists, though the concrete government is

cause Property creates classes of the ruling and the ruled, that the ruling class is able to dominate the lower class, as absolute kings dominate their subjects, terrorizing them by penalties which no equal would dare to inflict. Penalties for a free man? What an absurdity! He agrees with his fellows that certain rules are desirable, but he retains full freedom to break the rules whenever he finds them undesirable.

The one thing that can turn a proprietary despotism, which is what we have now, into a free society, is the power of the purse. Give a man, or a set of men, the power to tax you, which means to take your possessions, without your consent, and you give them power over your life. Keep the money in your control, so that you may contribute or not, as you choose, for purposes that seem worth while to you; and you are above the society. The society exists for the benefit of the individual. Society exists as much as ever; but it is no longer the master of the individual. It can no longer conscript him for either war or labor. It is no longer the sovereign: each member of it becomes a sovereign.

On the other hand, let the society have power, as now, to take your money by force, and to spend it for such purposes as it sees fit; and you become the slave of the society, as you are now.

The free society of the future, which is to replace government, will know neither taxes, nor penalties, nor jails, nor galleys. The judges will be private arbitrators. The courts, where any are needed, spontaneous juries of individuals; the only penalty to be feared, ostracism and boycott.

The lordly attitude of superiors toward inferiors, which is the attitude of the proprietors’ courts today, will be a thing of the past; liberty will beget equality and equality, fraternity.

All the powers of the day are designed to support property. The bench and the bar are avowedly the tools of property: the universities are supported by rich proprietors, and dare utter nothing against property; the church, based on blind subordi-

An old and worn-out system is to be replaced by a new one. To vote for men or measures under the old system, advances not a step toward the establishment of the new one.

Far better simply to abstain from voting, and devote all energy to spreading the light! When elections are held and but a handful appears to vote, then indeed property and government will be doomed, and no armed force can save them.

But, you will urge, we must have rules of some kind, and as soon as we have rules, we have government. Not at all. You may have any number of rules, but no government. The difference is this: The rules of a free society need no enforcement; they appeal to the common sense of all. If anybody fails to observe them, he suffers inconvenience—that is all. Thus, at present, there is no “law” requiring people to keep to the right, when walking in the street, and there is no penalty for any one who keeps to the left; only he is jostled by the crowd going in the opposite direction.

In the same way the whole “law” of contracts can be abolished, while the validity of contracts is still fully recognized. Only there will be no way of “enforcing” them. No sheriff will be able to seize the goods of a defaulter—in order to enforce a contract: the only penalty will be that people will be very shy of making any more contracts with him, and, if he defaults often, he will find it impossible to do business.

Thus, even now, while there is no penalty for refusing a written receipt for money received, for none can be demanded under the law, yet nobody ever thinks of refusing to give one, because he could not do business if he should. Thus it was that in the old days, under the law of custom only, when a merchant’s note went to protest he was bankrupt and ruined; but now that the statute law has taken it up, bankruptcy is a daily, almost normal, and often profitable proceeding.

Government means the rule of force, exercised by a superior over an inferior. When all are equals, rules will be agreed upon, but nobody will have power to enforce them. It is be-

known to be but a parcel of politicians. So again, the king may be a dissipated and foolish specimen, but “The King”, with a big K, remains in full authority. Not until the “lower class” has lost all respect for “Government” will the authority of each concrete government vanish, and the rule of property come to an end.

The sentiment of respect rests very largely upon a conviction that the object of our respect is well disposed toward us. To a less extent, it rests upon an inculcated fear of it, more or less vague. It is love and fear combined, with love predominating. We have yet to learn that, with the most benevolent intentions in the world, no one can rule over another without oppressing him. Much as we love our rulers, and deeply as we trust their good intentions, we are learning by bitter experience that we cannot safely grant them any power over us. If we grant power to anybody to order us about, we soon find that their notion of what is good for us is very different from our own notion.⁶

Grant them power to tax us, that is to say, to take our money without consulting us, and they will each year increase their demands, until in self-defense we are forced to button up our pockets. Try to limit their power by a “constitution”, and their courts will soon “interpret” the constitution to death, and leave us helpless.

The “lower class” at present has unbounded respect for the “ruling” class, because the ruling class has wealth and education. “What do we know about public affairs?” say the workmen: “We are only poor, uneducated artisans; we will leave all such matters to our superiors.” Yes, in their minds they gladly admit it—superiors!

Men love to have a superior whom they can admire and respect: they must learn that there is nothing more dangerous

⁶ This is the reason why the rule of Love—the Golden Rule—is unavailable as a social guide. Every despot maintains that he loves his people so. The most tyrannical are those who would fight to enforce what they are pleased to call “righteousness.”

to their welfare; even to their existence. Let them reverse their views, and learn to despise wealth and to scorn education: thus only can they become free from the authority of government.

But, apart from wealth and education, both the “lower class” and the greater part of the “upper class” have much respect for the authority of government, simply because it is government. Ages of slavery have made them slaves by nature. They must have a “superior” to look up to. They know very well that a band of politicians is not their superior, but they idealize it, and call it “The Government”, with capitals, expressly that they may look up to it, and gratify the dog’s instinct of subordination.

This sentiment of subordination they call “loyalty”, and esteem it a virtue, cultivate it in themselves and instill it into the minds of their children as the loftiest emotion of which the human heart is capable. By an appeal to their “loyalty”, every government on earth, whenever it is necessary to accomplish its purposes, turns its subjects into raving lunatics, bent upon destroying each other.

But strong as is this sentiment of “loyalty”, and essential to the maintenance of its dominion over the “mudsills” of society, Property does not depend upon a sentiment alone, however strong it may be; but calls upon the material aid of force to sustain its rule. It appoints a whole mechanism of courts and jailers and hangmen, backed by a semimilitary troop of policemen, to carry out its commands; and, should these prove insufficient, it maintains an armed military force, trained to blind obedience, and capable of shooting down all who even raise their voices against it.

Property and government must be abolished together: one cannot stand without the other.

Imagine a settler in a new country about to plow some land. He is warned off by an onlooker: “You cannot plow that land; it is the property of Lord Astor, who lives in England. Or at least if you do plow and plant it, you must give him half the crop.”

“What nonsense!” replies the settler. “If he wants the land, let him come and plow it himself. Meanwhile I will use it, and I will not give him any of the crop, I can assure you!” And, in the absence of government, property would be powerless. Lord Astor could not collect his toll from the product. But government undertakes to do this for him, and sends its officers to enforce the demands of the proprietor, or jail the settler if he fails to comply.

Government can be abolished, not by forcible resistance; property can always win at that game; but by a clear understanding that property and government are brothers in arms; and by a steady refusal to take part in either, or to countenance either.

But, you observe, the lower class has votes: let them vote the representatives of property out, and their own representatives in!

Let them just try it! At present nine-tenths of the “representatives of the people” are lawyers, whose sole function it is to protect propertied interests. Suppose that the workers should stop voting for lawyers, and should vote a whole legislature full of workers of their own kind. What would result? Various “reform” measures would be passed. Perhaps the hours of labor would be reduced by law, women excluded from certain occupations, children forced more strictly than ever into governmental schools. What would all this accomplish? Absolutely nothing!

If the “reform legislature” should attempt any vital change, such as throwing open all unoccupied land, outlawing all rents, doing away with all tariffs, do you know what would happen? The proprietors would rally such soldiers as remained loyal to them, denounce the new legislators through such newspapers as they still controlled as cutthroats and rioters, turn loose the troops to shoot them down at sight, and call upon all other governments which might still remain in the hands of the proprietors to aid in suppressing the “disorder.”