

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Anarchism Versus Socialism

William C. Owen

1922

William C. Owen
Anarchism Versus Socialism
1922

Retrieved on 15 June 2011 from www.anarchyisorder.org
Printed and Published by the **Freedom Press**, 127, Ossulston
Street,
London, N.W.1.

theanarchistlibrary.org

“Anarchy versus Socialism,” which **Freedom** now reissues, after it has run through its columns (1921–22), was published first some eighteen years ago. Emma Goldman was then one of the most popular lecturers in the United States, and, being questioned constantly as to the difference between the Anarchist and Socialist philosophies, felt the need of a treatise that would explain that difference. At her suggestion I undertook the task.

The title showed my conviction that between these two philosophies of life no honest alliance is possible. I considered then that both sides suffered seriously from the persistent efforts made to reconcile the incompatible, for thought grew more and more confused, and action degenerated into sterile opportunism. I think so more than ever now. As I see it, either you believe in the right of the Individual to govern himself, which is the basis of Anarchism, or you believe that he must be governed by others, which is the cornerstone of all those creeds which should be grouped generically as Socialism. One or the other must be the road to human progress. Both cannot be.

To me Man is manifestly destined to be master of himself and his surroundings, individually free. His capacity for achievement has

shown itself practically boundless, whenever and wherever it has been permitted the opportunity of expansion; and no less an ideal than equal and unfettered opportunity — that is to say, individual freedom — should satisfy him. I accept Turgenev's saying that "human dignity is the goal of life," and consider all forms of slavery a refusal to recognise Man's dignity or native worth.

At this epoch-making moment men stand irresolute, distracted by opposing counsels. It would be, indeed, more accurate to say that for the most part they squat, as they have squatted for centuries untellable, distrustful of their own capacity to think correctly, and believing that the solution of life's problems is the proper business of a few wiser heads. So long as this self-distrust prevails, so long as the ordinary individual remains unconscious of his proper dignity as the great thinking animal, slavery, in my judgment, will continue. The first essential business, therefore, is to awaken thought; to get men to look at things as they are; to induce them to hunt for truth. Whatever is not true, whatever cannot stand the test of investigation, should die.

We are passing through a period of intense suffering, from which none of the so-called civilised countries is exempt. As I see things, however, it is not by any iron law of Nature that millions to-day are starving. It is not because the earth is niggardly, or because industrial development is backward, that grinding poverty, with all the mental and spiritual degradation grinding poverty entails, is still the almost universal lot. Poverty exists because, even to-day, the masses regard themselves as doomed to helplessness, and are well satisfied if some outside power gives them a chance to make a living. Yet Man is not naturally helpless. By his inventive genius he has now conquered his environment, and want and the fear of want are to-day unnatural and artificial ills.

Thus, as I understand it, do Anarchists regard the social problem, and here our quarrel with the Socialists comes immediately into full view. To us the problem is not merely economic. We do not think that a certain stage of industrial development must be

poverty-stricken forefathers lived, and, on the other hand, the crass immobility of the ruling class, which still believes itself entitled to rule as did the Caesars, to live at the expense of others, to fence in for its own private enjoyment what should be, and what ultimately must be, for the use of all. I am for the overthrow of Monopoly, of all Monopolies; I am for tearing down the bars, all bars; and this I conceive to be the great task to which the Anarchist movement has set its hand and on which it should never allow itself to turn its back.

This is the dream; but it is not a dream. The abolition of human slavery is essentially the most practical of things. The adjustment of individual and social life to conditions that have been completely revolutionised by the advance of human knowledge is an adjustment that must be made. When the inevitability of that adjustment is understood, it will, in my humble judgment, be made, and not till then. In the hope of hastening, however infinitesimally, the thought that this great step must now be taken I wrote this pamphlet originally, and have revised it slightly. For the elaboration of details I have had no space; but, as it appears to me, when Humanity feels the necessity of learning it will learn, and when the spirit of Liberty burns fiercely Slavery will perish in its flame.

reached before men are ripe for freedom. Still less do we believe in the fatalistic dogma that by the necessary evolution of the present system the problem will solve itself. We hold that man is servile because he has been drilled into servility, and remains helpless because he accepts his helplessness as unalterable. To us, therefore, the promotion of individuality, and the encouragement of the spirit of revolt against whatever institutions may be unworthy of humanity, are everything. We are rebels against slavery, and we understand that men will win their way to freedom only when they yearn to be free.

For my part, I take the sombre view that Freedom's great struggle has yet to come. I see the masses caught in a net woven so cunningly that they do not sense their danger; trapped by the mechanism of a system they cannot understand, divorced from the control of their own lives by forces as impalpable as are the fancied deities before whom the Savage grovels. The Man of the People is thrown on the street to-day because the law of demand and supply ordains it, because the exchanges are topsy-turvy, because certain of his economic rulers calculate that they can make money by restricting production. He is the mere plaything of the speculator, and if he ventures to protest Government claps him into gaol as a disturber of the peace or hangs him as a rebel. That means unceasing discontent and, ultimately, Civil War. It is utterly unhealthy and unstable. It cannot last.

Back of all this infamy stands always the Government machine; dead to all human sympathy, as are all machines; bent only on increasing its efficiency as a machine, and enlarging its power; organised expressly to keep things, in all essentials, precisely as they are. It is the arch-type of immobility, and, therefore, the foe of growth. It is the quintessence of compulsion, and, therefore, the enemy of freedom. To it the individual is a subject, of whom it demands unquestioning obedience. Necessarily we Anarchists are opposed to it. We do not dream, as do the Socialists, of making it the one great Monopolist, and therefore the sole arbiter of life. On the contrary,

we seek to whittle away its powers, that it may be reduced to nothingness and be succeeded by a society of free individuals, equipped with equal opportunities and arranging their own affairs by mutual agreement.

The Anarchist type of social structure is the industrial type, and for it the true industrialist, the working man, should stand. On the other hand, he who cries for more Government is declaring himself an advocate of the military type, wherein society is graded into classes and all life's business conducted by inferiors obeying orders issued by the superior command. That offers the worker only permanent inferiority and enslavement, and against that he should revolt. Man is, by the very essence of his being and by the quality of his natural gifts, too fine to be treated as an inferior. He is meant to be a co-operator, uniting with his fellow-creatures on a basis of equality and clothed, as a member of the human race, with equal rights. This is his proper due, and I am very positive that nothing less than this can bring us social peace. Here no compromise is possible, and if established institutions bar the way, Man owes it to his own dignity to abolish or model and remodel them, until they are brought into harmony with this fundamental law of life.

Obviously this line of thought carries us far, and I desire to point out that it involves the whole future of our race. In our opinion, the man who thinks of himself as inferior, and is content to be classed as such, thereby becomes inferior; and it is by inferiority that civilisations are wrecked. By the Barbarian within their own gates they are destroyed, and the barbarism fatal to them is not the violence of the rebel but the growing inertia and cowardice of the ordinary citizen, who accepts life on the lower level because he lacks the energy and courage to accept personal responsibility and to lead the higher life personal responsibility demands. Thus the whole tone of the community's life is lowered; its vitality ebbs more and more; decay sets in and death ensues.

We Anarchists are fully conscious of this appalling and completely established historical fact; and we hate the State because

markets in order to keep its own population in some sort of work. The wars so engendered the masses necessarily support, because, under the reign of Monopoly, jobs they must have at any price.

We do not believe for one moment that without the Capitalist or Monopolist we could not live. On the contrary, we are extremely positive that the Capitalist, the Landlord, the man who has cornered the means of life, is the one who has made it impossible for us to support ourselves. He holds the key which we must have. He lies growling in the manger from which we have to feed. In the desert created by himself he bars us from the springs at which, on his own terms, we are compelled to drink. It should not be a desert. Let us have but liberty to irrigate it and it will be transformed into a boundless oasis of inexhaustible fertility.

We are for abolishing Capitalism by giving all men free and equal access to capital in its strictest and most proper sense, viz., the chief thing, the means of producing wealth — that is, the well-being of themselves and the community. For my part, I look at the world thus. The few, the comparatively very few, by facing facts and courageously pursuing knowledge, have put within our reach the possibility of lifting the race, once and for all, above all fear of want. The work of their brains — these few who “scorned delights and lived laborious days” — has put into our hands a capacity to produce which is practically illimitable, and a power to distribute which laughs at physical obstacles and could, by the exercise of ordinary humanity and common sense, knit the entire world into one harmonious commonwealth and free it for ever from the mean and sordid struggle that keeps it in the sewer. These few, knowing no God but Truth and no religion but loyalty to Truth, have made Nature, which was for ages untellable Man's ruthless master, to-day his docile slave. In all history there is nothing to compare with the Industrial Revolution wrought by Science, but the harvest of that mighty sowing we have not as yet even begun to reap.

What blocks the way? Simply, on the one hand, the servile stupidity of the masses, who still deem it their duty to live as their

Africa, thinks himself thrice blessed. An astounding system, but more astounding still the fact that it has lasted even one short century. To-day it is breaking down, beyond redemption.

The markets are failing, as, sooner or later and War or no War, they were bound to fail. By no possibility can the English master class prevent that of other countries from starting its own factories, exploiting its own territory, and barring out by protective tariffs the unwelcome competitor who still wishes to share, and at one time monopolised, the spoil. That is the evolution now in process, and all the Labour organisations ever formed and all the Labour leaders ever born are powerless to stop it. Before me lies the report of the debate in the House of Commons on the lock-out of the engineers, and Mr. Gould, who presented the employers' case made the following declaration: — "The engineering and shipbuilding industries are to-day faced with a practically total cessation of work within the next six or nine months in any event. In the engineering trade there is not the slightest prospect of getting orders; the shipbuilding industry is paralysed, and yet there is a dispute manifesting total ignorance of economic conditions and of the position in which employers are placed." It will be retorted that Mr. Gould is a biased witness, and it may be granted; nevertheless he voiced unquestionably a general truth. Shorn of markets, England's entire industrial machine is slowing down, steadily and surely. In the Amalgamated Engineers' Union alone 90,000 members were out of work before the lock-out.

Anarchism rests on the conviction that human beings, if granted full and equal opportunity to satisfy their wants, could and would do it far more satisfactorily than can or will a master class. It is inconceivable to us that they could make such a failure of it as the master class has done. We do not believe that the peoples, having once become self-owning, would exhaust all the resources of science in murdering one another. That particular insanity springs, as we see it, from the fact that the master class in each and every manufacturing country finds itself compelled to capture foreign

it deprives men of personal responsibility, robs them of their natural virility, takes out of their hands the conduct of their own lives, thereby reduces them to helplessness, and thus insures the final collapse of the whole social structure. The last seven years have shown conclusively that we are right. By no possibility could the hideous slaughter of the War have taken place had not the towering governments, which had been permitted to take all power into their clutches, previously reduced the mass to helplessness. There it still is held, and its State-created helplessness is still its most pitiful undoing.

These were the thoughts that occupied my mind when I was writing this pamphlet, eighteen years ago. Later experiences have strengthened the convictions I then tried to express. I see no reason, therefore, for changing in one iota the general structure of the pamphlet; but in certain places I have substituted illustrations which seem to me more up to date. I still say to every human being: "Your first and most important business is to be master of your own life." I need hardly add that, in my opinion, Anarchism is at once the most destructive and constructive of philosophies, the uncompromising foe of the Barbarism now triumphant, and the architect of the Civilisation still struggling to be born.

This pamphlet endeavours to explain the positions occupied respectively by Anarchism and Socialism in their efforts to interpret Life. It presents the Anarchist interpretation as based on the conception that the Individual is the natural fount of all activity, and that his claim to free and full development of all his powers is paramount. The Socialist interpretation, on the other hand, is presented as resting on the conception that the claim of the Collectivity is paramount, and that to its welfare, real or imagined, the Individual must and should subordinate himself.

On the correct interpretation of Life everything depends, and the question is as to which of these two conflicting interpretations is correct. Always and everywhere the entire social struggle hinges on that very point, and every one of us has his feet set, however unconsciously, in one or other of these camps. Some would sacrifice the Individual, and all minorities, to the supposed interests of the collective whole. Others are equally convinced that a wrong inflicted on one member poisons the whole body, and that only when it renders full justice to the Individual will society be once more on the road to health.

The dispute, therefore, between Anarchism and Socialism is precisely as to the point from which we should start and the direction in which we should move, since start and move we must. No one is satisfied with things as they are, and no one can be satisfied; for the existing system is a miserable compromise between Anarchism and Socialism with which neither can be content. On the one hand, the Individual is instructed to play for his own hand, however fatally the cards are stacked against him. On the other hand, he is adjured incessantly to sacrifice himself to the common weal. Special Privilege, when undisturbed, preaches always individual struggle, although it is Special Privilege that robs the ordinary individual of all his chances of success. Let Special Privilege be attacked, however, and it appeals forthwith to the Socialistic principle declaring vehemently that the general interests of society must be protected at any cost. Such a hotch-potch of illogical opportunisms obviously

As I go to and fro in this huge metropolis of London there is dinned continually into my ears a never-ending discussion of wages, hours of work, the greed of employers, the tyranny of Unions, all the anxieties and miseries natural to a society that has outgrown its past but not thought out its future. That in itself is something. It is something that the sufferer recognises that his health is not what it used to be, but I see little sign of his understanding that life as he has known it hitherto is now becoming impossible. Hardly ever is it suggested that the garment, to-day a hundred times too small, is no longer wearable. Almost always it is taken for granted that, somehow, we shall be able to go on indefinitely multiplying our capacity for production while still leaving to the masses only such opportunities of consuming as just enable them to live; that, somehow, the hordes of unemployed we are thus begetting will be taken care of by the police or fade away quietly and die; that a good God has so arranged it that when there is too much the ordinary man must starve, and that always he should go down on his knees and thank the Monopolist for granting him the privilege to toil and live. That is the existing system as it has worked itself out; and in that system the people, their leaders, and their rulers still believe. They think that they can patch it up, and we Anarchists regard it as beyond all patching.

Consider the case of England — a country which most deliberately has evicted ninety-nine hundredths of her population from their native soil, herded them into cities, forced them into factories, and compelled them to stake their very lives on the capacity of a master class to furnish them with work in supplying the wants of other peoples. What tenure of existence could be more precarious, and what mode of transacting Life's great business more sordid or more senseless? The man works, when he gets the chance, not to minister to his own proper needs but to satisfy the whims of nations and races whose very names are to him unknown. He takes what comes, and if he gets a steady job in some Birmingham foundry, casting brazen images for voodoo worshippers in South

It seems to me imperative that we should be clear upon this fundamental fact, and understand that our suffering and danger do not come from Free Industrialism but from an Industrialism that is not free because it is enslaved by Monopoly and caught fast in the clutches of that invasive military machine — the State. Monopoly is the enemy, the most dangerous enemy the world has known; and never was it so dangerous as now, when the State has made itself well-nigh omnipotent, Monopoly is State-created, State-upheld, and could not exist were it not for the organised violence with which everywhere the State supports it. At the behest of State-protected Monopoly the ordinary man can be deprived at any moment of the opportunity of earning a livelihood, and thrown into the gutter. At the command of the State, acting always in the interests of Monopoly, he can be converted at any moment into food for powder. Show me, if you can, a tyranny more terrible than that!

I call myself an Anarchist because, as it appears to me, Anarchism is the only philosophy that grips firmly and voices unambiguously this central, vital truth. It is either a fallacy or a truth and Anarchism is either right or wrong. If Anarchism is right, it cannot compromise in any shape or form with the existing State régime without convicting itself thereby of dishonesty and infidelity to Truth. Tyranny is not a thing to be shored up or made enduring, but a disease to be recognised frankly as unendurable and purged out of the social system. Personally I am a foe to all schemes for bolstering up the present reign of violence, and I cannot regard the compulsions of Trade Unionism, Syndicalism, and similar States-within-States, as bridges from the old order to the new, and wombs in which the society of the future is being moulded. Such analogies seem to me ridiculous and fatally misleading. Freedom is not an embryo. Freedom is not a puling, helpless infant struggling into birth. Freedom is the greatest force at our command; the one incomparable constructor capable of beating swords into ploughshares and converting this war-stricken desert of a world into a decent dwelling-place.

has no solid foothold, cannot and should not last; is a mere transition stage through which, thanks to thoughtless indifference, we are passing all too slowly. The downfall of the present ruin, sooner or later, is inevitable. It is of the first importance, therefore, to clarify our minds as to the form of social structure that should succeed it. Between ignorant change and ignorant opposition to change we stand to-day in deadly peril.

In this pamphlet Anarchism is treated at the greater length for two reasons: First, because it is by far the less understood of the two philosophies; and, secondly, because a full analysis of the Anarchist position will be found to have cleared the way for a consideration of the claims of Socialism.

When a man says he is an Anarchist he puts on himself the most definite of labels. He announces that he is a “no rule” man. “Anarchy” — compounded of the Greek words “ana,” without, and “arche,” rule — gives in a nutshell the whole of his philosophy. His one conviction is that men must be free; that they must own themselves.

Anarchists do not propose to invade the individual rights of others, but they propose to resist, and do resist, to the best of their ability all invasion by others. To order your own life, as a responsible individual, without invading the lives of others, is freedom; to invade and attempt to rule the lives of others is to constitute yourself an enslaver; to submit to invasion and rule imposed on you against your own will and judgment is to write yourself down a slave.

Essentially, therefore, Anarchism stands for the free, unrestricted development of each individual; for the giving to each equal opportunity of controlling and developing his own particular life. It insists on equal opportunity of development for all, regardless of colour, race, or class; on equal rights to whatever shall be found necessary to the proper maintenance and development of individual life; on a “square deal” for every human being, in the most literal sense of the term.

Moreover, it matters not to the Anarchist whether the rule imposed on him is benevolent or malicious. In either case it is an equal trespass on his right to govern his own life. In either case the imposed rule tends to weaken him, and he recognises that to be weak is to court oppression.

It was inevitable that all exercisers, or would-be exercisers, of power should condemn in the most unqualified terms a philosophy so fatal to their pretensions. As they consider that they themselves keep the entire social machinery in motion, it was entirely natural that they should think and say: "Why! 'No rule' will produce general disorder" — and that they should at once twist the meaning of this most exact word, giving it the sense of universal chaos. The masses are governed far more by ingenious misrepresentation than by club or bullet.

Anarchism used to be called Individualism, and under that title it was considered more than respectable, being, in fact regarded as the special creed of culture. But the term was weak, because it did not define. People called themselves Individualists just as they called themselves Liberals, without understanding what "individualism" really implied, or the freedom inherent in the word "liberalism." So, from the exact Greek language the precise and unmistakable word "Anarchy" was coined, as expressing beyond question the basic conviction that all rule of man by man is slavery.

The pages of the world's foremost teachers — its scientists, its philosophers, its poets and dramatists — swarm with passages emphasising the vital importance of liberty; the necessity of providing a favourable environment for each and every individual; the imperative demand for equality of opportunity for individual development, but in too many cases these writers fail to sum up the case and apply their principles to present conditions as Anarchists unhesitatingly sum them up and apply them.

The entire Anarchist movement is based on an unshakeable conviction that the time has come for men — not merely in the mass, but individually — to assert themselves and insist on the right to

tary régime of authority to the domain of individual freedom. It is this movement with which we have allied ourselves, convinced that there is nothing too fine for man, and that it is only under conditions of freedom that man has the opportunity of being fine. The tendency must be toward a finer, which means a freer, more self-governing life.

What men desire to do they strive to do, and it is foolish to look for revolutionary action if revolutionary conceptions and aspirations remain unborn. Always the idea must lead the way, and if the idea be muddled and indecisive the action it begets will lose itself in a wilderness of uncertainties and end by arriving nowhere. For example, what made the late War possible? Obviously the infamous but clear and clearly-grasped idea, into which the masses had been miseducated, that their lives belonged to their rulers and must be sacrificed unquestioningly when those rulers so ordered it. This is the State fallacy, and none could be more fatal, for, having hypnotised his subjects into this delusion, any ruler has it in his power to start and carry on a war. He organises an invasion, the invaded resist, and Hell once more breaks loose.

My own hatred of State Socialism, in all its forms, springs from my conviction that it fosters in the Individual this terrible psychology of invasion; that it denies the existence of Rights which should be secure from assault; that it teaches the Individual that in himself he is of no account and that only as a member of the State has he any valid title to existence. That, as it seems to me, reduces him to helplessness, and it is the helplessness of the exploited that makes exploitation possible. From that flow, with inexorable logic, all wars, all tyrannies, all those despotic regulations and restrictions which to-day are robbing Life of all its elasticity, its virility, its proper sweetness. State Socialism is a military creed, forged centuries ago by conquerors who put the world in chains. It is as old as the hills, and, like the hills, is destined to crumble into dust. Throughout the crisis of the past eight years its failure as even a palliative policy has been colossal.

Mexico and Russia, where the capitalistic system was in its infancy, the middle class has been small in numbers and insignificant in power. On the other hand, in proportion as the capitalistic system develops the numbers and influence of the middle class increase, until in America — the country in which Capitalism has attained its greatest growth — it is well nigh omnipotent.

The same tendency — the rebellion of the individual against the centralising influences that seek to convert him into a mere cog in a machine — is equally apparent in the political field. Necessarily, as education progresses, the individual voter becomes more and more desirous of relying on his own judgment; he is less willing to vote the old ticket because his father and grandfather did so; he takes other papers and attends other meetings than those in which only one creed is preached; he becomes more independent.

On a still larger scale the same tendency for individual expression is manifest in the affairs of nations, the frantic struggles of the weaker nationalities to break away from the crushing, intolerable centralised domination of great and despotic empires being one of the most pronounced developments of modern times. With all these efforts we Anarchists sympathise profoundly, and to them we lend all the aid in our power, recognising the claims of individual life that is struggling desperately for expression. But, whatever they may say here and there and from time to time for the purpose of catching votes, the Socialists do not truly and whole-heartedly sympathise with such efforts, and they cannot, because they are wedded to the doctrine of centralisation of power and the suppression of the individual for the supposed good of the larger collective body.

Such a pamphlet as this is no place for scholastic disquisitions, but those who have studied the works of such profound writers as Herbert Spencer, Buckle, Sir Henry Maine, and others too numerous to mention are well aware that the history taught the Socialists through Marx and Engels is partisan history, and that the real movement of humanity has been to get away from the mili-

manage their own affairs without external interference; to insist on equal opportunities for self-development; to insist on a “square deal,” unhampered by the intervention of self-asserted superiors.

“The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.” We propose henceforth to make our own institutions and to be their masters. We have come to manhood As our brains now command Nature, it is high time that we should command ourselves. Naturally man is incomparably the most powerful of animals, able to bring into existence for himself all that is needed for a rich and ample life. But under the artificial conditions imposed on them by rulers, who portion out among themselves the means of life, millions of the powerful species known as “Man” are reduced to conditions of abject helplessness of which a starving timber-wolf would be ashamed. It is unspeakably disgusting to us, this helplessness of countless millions of our fellow creatures; we trace it directly to stupid, unnatural laws, by which the few plunder and rule over the many, and we propose to do our part in restoring to the race its natural strength, by abolishing the conditions that render it at present so pitifully weak.

For the last century, or more, we have been experimenting with the rule of democracy — the bludgeoning by governors whom majorities, drunk with power, impose on vanquished minorities. This last is probably the worst of all, for we stand to-day steeped to the lips in a universal corruption that is rotting every nation to the core. Is it not a fact that, whether it be a French Deputy or an English Member of Parliament, a Republican, a Democratic, or a Socialist candidate for office, each and every one of them sings exactly the same siren song: “Clothe me with power, and I will use it for your good?” It has been the song of every tyrant and despoiler since history began

Why should you part with power, making yourselves impotent that a favoured few may be omnipotent? By so doing you destroy the splendid equality of Nature, which sends us all into the world equally naked, equipped with what would be, under natural con-

ditions, practically equal possibilities of self-development? It is you yourselves, governed by the misrepresentations of superstition, and not daring to lift your heads and look life in the face, who substitute for that magnificent justice the hideously unjust inequalities with which society is sick well-nigh to death. Does not the experience of your daily life teach you that when, in any community, any one man is loaded with power it is always at the expense of many others, who are thereby rendered helpless? Do you not know that to be helpless means to be fleeced and flayed without mercy; to be hunted from land to land; to scour the farthest corners of the earth in a heart-breaking search for the opportunity to make a living? We describe in a few words the life of the proletariat, the working man of to-day – that enormous class that has given away its natural powers and is paying such an awful penalty for this, the sin of sins, that Nature punishes most unmercifully.

We have no other conception than that, so long as men remain powerless, they will be robbed remorselessly, and that no pity will be shown; for the simple reason that the robber, the strong man, in his heart of hearts despises his victim for his weakness. We recognise that the sole remedy is for the weak to win back their natural position of power by abolishing the conditions of helplessness to which they have been reduced by artificial laws and unjust privileges.

The helplessness of the masses is not a subject for pity or milk-and-water charity, but for the strongest indignation that men should be so false to their destiny and such unspeakable traitors to their great mother, Nature, who, with endless pains and through the evolution of countless ages, has raised them to a height at which they have infinite possibilities at command, which, in their cowardice, they spurn.

Let us not flatter ourselves that we can shirk this imperative call to self-assertion by appointing deputies to perform the task that properly belongs to us alone. Already it is clear to all who look facts in the face that the entire representative system, to which

of releasing a vast army of skilled and highly ingenious mechanics whose wits have been industriously at work devising simpler and simpler machinery which it will be possible for the individual to own and operate.

Locomotion is the industry of all others that seemed, by its very nature, doomed to centralisation, yet even in this department the tide of decentralisation has set in with extraordinary rapidity. With the advent of the bicycle came the first break the individual machine becoming at once a formidable competitor of the street car companies. The tendency received a further and enormous impetus with the introduction of the motor, which throws every highway open to the individual owner of the machine and does away with the immense advantage previously enjoyed by those who had acquired the monopoly of the comparatively few routes along which it is possible to lay down rails and operate trains. It is obvious that the motor, both as a passenger and freight carrier, is as yet only in its infancy; and when the flying machine comes, as eventually it will come, into general use the individualisation of locomotion will be complete.

In short, the philosophy that bases its conclusions on the conditions that happen to prevail at any given moment in the machine industry is necessarily building on quicksand, since the machine itself is undergoing a veritable revolution along the individualistic lines we have indicated.

This delusion respecting machinery has led the Socialists into ridiculous assumptions on the subject of centralisation in general, committing them for a couple of generations past to the pipe-dream that under the régime of Capitalism the middle class is doomed, by the natural development of the economic system, to speedy extinction. The fallacy of this position has been shown over and over again by irrefutable statistics taken from governmental income tax and similar returns; but it is Unnecessary even to quote figures in this matter. Any one who will take the trouble to put on his observation cap can see clearly for himself that in such countries as

majority it is necessary that all should be taxed to support a large standing army and navy, which will defend the fatherland; and it will not be difficult to take him a step farther and convert him into a warm advocate of military conscription. He will be easily persuaded that our barbaric treatment of criminals is necessary and highly desirable, by reason of the deterrent influence it exercises, for the protection and welfare of the majority. He will persuade himself that religion is a necessity, for the good of the masses, and should be accorded all the special privileges it now enjoys. Shortly you will find him with the crowd that clamours for the closing of all places of amusement on Sunday — for the good of the community. In economic matters you will find him endorsing a protective tariff policy, which, in the name of the good of the majority, takes from the individual his natural right of spending his earnings where he can do the best with them, taxes the great masses for the enrichment of the privileged few, and necessarily has resulted in the accumulation of those gigantic fortunes against which the whole world is in revolt to-day.

Apparently Socialists cannot conceive of a society run on other than the most strictly centralised principles. This seems to us a profound error.

The most important and powerful factor in production and every form of activity is the human factor. This factor, longing in constant rebellion against all efforts to reduce it to the level of a mere cog in a machine, economic or political. Being by far the strongest element it inevitably will win its way, sooner or later, no matter how adverse the conditions for the moment may seem to be.

It may have appeared within recent times as if the tide were setting in permanently toward centralisation, but, in reality, the forces of decentralisation, that make for the man becoming — as he should be — the master instead of the slave of the machine, are sweeping irresistibly forward. The excessive and unnatural centralisation, due entirely to the artificial laws of special privilege, which has resulted, for example, in the modern Trust has had the effect

the workers so fatuously looked for deliverance, has resulted in a concentration of political power such as is almost without parallel in history.

Our representative system is farce incarnate. We take a number of men who have been making their living by some one pursuit — in most cases that of the law — and know nothing outside that pursuit, and we require them to legislate on the ten thousand and one problems to which a highly diversified and intricate industrial development has given rise. The net result is work for lawyers and places for office-holders, together with special privileges for shrewd financiers, who know well how to get clauses inserted in measures that seem innocent itself but are always fatal to the people's rights.

Anarchism concentrates its attention on the individual, considering that only when absolute justice is done to him or her will it be possible to have a healthy and happy society. For society is merely the ordinary citizen multiplied indefinitely, and as long as the individuals of which it is composed are treated unjustly, it is impossible for the body at large to be healthy and happy. Anarchism, therefore, cannot tolerate the sacrifice of the individual to the supposed interests of the majority, or to any of those high-sounding catchwords (patriotism, the public welfare, and so forth) for the sake of which the individual — and always the weakest individual, the poor, helpless working man and woman — is murdered and mutilated to-day, as he has been for untold ages past.

Anarchism demands imperatively that full and complete justice shall be done to each and every individual; that there shall be accorded to all full and equal opportunities for the development, conduct, and enjoyment of their lives; and it declares, as an incontestable truth, that the first step toward this inevitable goal is the absolute overthrow of all those artificial and life-destroying privileges by which a favoured few are to-day permitted to gather into their hands unbounded wealth and power at the price of the impoverishment and slaughter of the masses.

Let no one delude you with the fable that we Anarchists are opposed to co-operation, that we wish to reduce mankind to conditions of primitive isolation. On the contrary, we see with perfect clearness that the favoured few, who have at their command the means of so doing, co-operate constantly on a larger and larger scale, as the improved methods of communication enable them more and more to make the world the scene of their operations. We understand that it is only necessary to shake off the shackles of poverty and helplessness in order to enable mankind, as a whole, to rise to a vast, true voluntary co-operation, in which the entire earth and its fruits will be used in the fullest, wisest, and most economical way for the satisfaction of the wants of the men, women, and children born into it.

We are of the firmest opinion that the only goal worthy of consideration by clear-sighted and earnest men and women is the winning of such individual freedom as will render possible such a co-operation as we have just described.

We hold that the bold, straight, and direct way will be found infinitely the shortest, easiest, and most successful. We are convinced that if any other course is pursued, and it is sought by a series of make-shift compromises to pave the way for changes to be wrought out in a vague and distant future, it will be discovered finally that the time so spent has been wasted. Only by a direct attack on monopoly and special privilege; only by a courageous and unswerving insistence on the rights of the individual, whoever he may be; on his individual right to equality of opportunity, to an absolutely square deal, to a full and equal seat at the table of life, can this great social problem, with which the whole world now groans in agony, be solved.

In a word, the freedom of the individual, won by the abolition of special privileges and the securing to all of equal opportunities, is the gateway through which we must pass to the higher civilisation that is already calling loudly to us.

not helplessly at the mercy of the triumphant majority. It is imperative, and especially for the weaker — those who are now poor and uneducated — that the “inalienable” rights of man be recognised; and that, while he is now “supposed” to be guaranteed absolute right of free speech and assemblage, and the right to think on religious matters as he pleases, in the future he shall be really guaranteed full opportunities of supporting and developing his life — a right that cannot be taken away from him by a dominant party that may have chanced to secure, for the time being, the majority of votes.

This is the rock on which Socialism everlastingly goes to pieces. It mocks at the basic laws of life. It denies, both openly and tacitly, that there are such things as individual rights; and while it asserts that assuredly, as civilised beings the majorities of the future will grant the minority far greater freedom and opportunity than it has at present, it has to admit that all this will be a “grant,” a “concession” from those in power. There probably never has been a despot that waded through slaughter to a throne who has not made similar promises.

The way in which a man looks at a subject determines his treatment of it. If he thinks, with the Socialists, that the collectivity is everything and the individual an insignificant cipher, he will fall in willingly with all those movements that profess to be working for the good of the majority, and sacrifice the individual remorselessly for this supposed good. For example: Although he may admit, in theory, as the Socialists generally do, that men should be permitted to govern their own lives, his belief in legislating for the majority, and the scant value he puts on the individual life, will lead him to support such movements as Prohibition, which, in the name of the good of the majority, takes away from the individual, absolutely and in a most important matter — as in the question of what he shall and shall not drink — the command of his own life.

Such a man will readily be brought to think, by the arguments of those who are seeking their own advantage, that for the good of the

every phase of slavery and oppression, has its root in the ambition of the few to rule and fleece, and the sheepish willingness of the many to be ruled and fleeced.

What is the course that the Socialists are pursuing in the political campaigns to which their entire movement has dwindled? In private they will tell you that they are rebels against the existing unnatural disorder as truly as are we Anarchists, but in the actual conduct of their movement they are autocrats, bent on the suppression of all individuality, whipping, drilling, and disciplining their recruits into absolute conformity with the ironclad requirements of the party. They declare themselves occupied with a campaign of education. They are not. In such a contest as this, wherein the lines are drawn so sharply; where on the one side are ranged the natural laws of life, and on the other an insanely artificial system that ignores all the fundamental laws of life, there can be no such thing as compromise; and he who for the sake of getting votes attempts to make black appear white is not an educator but a confidence man. We are aware that there are many confidence men who grow into the belief that theirs is a highly honourable profession, but they are confidence men all the same.

The truth is that the Socialists have become the helpless victims of their own political tactics. We speak correctly of political "campaigns," for politics is warfare. Its object is to get power, by gathering to its side the majority, and reduce the minority to submission. In politics, as in every other branch of war, the entire armoury of spies, treachery, stratagem and deceit of every kind is utilised to gain the one important end — victory in the fight. And it is precisely because our modern democracy is engaged, year in and year out, in this most unscrupulous warfare that the basic and all-essential virtues of truth, honesty, and the spirit of fair play have almost disappeared.

We realise further that if politics could, by any miracle, be purified, it would mean, if possible, a still more detestable consummation, for there would not remain a single individual right that was

It is urged that we Anarchists have no plans; that we do not set out in detail how the society of the future is to be run. This is true. We are not inclined to waste our breath in guesses about things we cannot know. We are not in the business of putting humanity in irons. We are trying to get humanity to shake off its irons. We have no co-operative commonwealth, cut and dried, to impose on the generations yet unborn. We are living men and women, concerned with the living present, and we recognise that the future will be as the men and women of the future make it, which in its turn will depend on themselves and the conditions in which they find themselves. If we bequeath to them freedom they will be able to conduct their lives freely, as the changed and improved conditions, brought about by the growth of human intelligence and the added mastery of Nature that will spring from such intelligence, may dictate.

To overthrow human slavery, which is always the enslavement of individuals, is Anarchism's one and only task. It is not interested in making men better under slavery, because it considers that impossible — a statement before which the ordinary reader probably will stand aghast. It seems, therefore, necessary to remind him once again that Anarchists are realists who try to see Life as it is, here on this earth, the only place where we can study it, indeed the only place whereon, so far as hitherto discovered, human life exists. Our view is that of the biologist. We take Man as we find him, individually and as a member of a species. We see him subject to certain natural laws, obedience to which brings healthy growth while disobedience entails decay and untimely death. This to us is fundamental, and much of Anarchism's finest literature is devoted to it.

Now, from the biological standpoint, Freedom is the all-essential thing. Without it individual health and growth are impossible, and wherever the development of the Individual is thwarted the progress of all Humanity receives a check. We cannot measure the innumerable checks, or show by exact figures the injury inflicted

on our own liberties when the pendulum swings back to slavery elsewhere. Nevertheless, beyond all question the injury is there. It must be. Biologically we are all parts of one organic whole — the human species — and, from the purely scientific standpoint, an injury to one is the concern of all. You cannot have slavery at one end of the chain and freedom at the other. In our view, therefore, Special Privilege in every shape and form, must go. It is a denial of the organic unity of mankind; of that oneness of the human family which is, to us, a scientific truth. We refuse to ignore or flout it, as the Churches have ignored and flouted human brotherhood, by professing which they gained the support of the disinherited and climbed to power. Internationalism is, to us, a biological fact a natural law which cannot be violated with impunity or explained away. The most criminal violators of that natural law are modern Governments, which devote all the force at their command to the maintenance of Special Privilege, and, in their lust for supremacy, keep nations perpetually at war. Back of all this brutal murdering is the thought: “Our governing machine will become more powerful. Eventually we shall emerge from the struggle as rulers of the earth.”

This earth is not to be ruled by the few. It is or the free and equal enjoyment of every member of the human race. It is not to be held in fee by old and decaying aristocracies, or bought up as a private preserve by the newly rich — that hard-faced and harder-conscienced mob which hangs like a vulture over every battlefield and gorges on the slain. It is to be used, freely and equally, by all the living. For, just as the human species is one organic whole, so the earth, this solid globe beneath our feet, is one economic organism, one single store-house of natural wealth, one single workroom in which all men and women have an equal right to labour.

In these few words I have endeavoured to display the standpoint from which Anarchism views the Land Question, and to explain why, of necessity, it cannot view it otherwise. To every Anarchist the right to free and equal use of natural opportunities is an indi-

The institutions, economic and political, of any set of people do not depend on written documents — witness the purely Anarchistic Declaration of Independence of the United States, which is the deadest of all dead letters — but upon the individual characters of the individuals who compose that set of people. They are human creations, and the Humanity that made them can unmake them. If the people are infused with the genuine revolutionary spirit, they will win freedom and so mould and simplify their institutions that tyranny will be impossible. Contrariwise, so long as they think they can enjoy all the inestimable blessings of freedom while remaining timid sheep, avoiding all personal danger and trusting to a few politicians to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them, they will be doomed to perpetual disappointment. Shakespeare says: “Alas, poor Caesar! Caesar would not be a wolf if Romans were not sheep.” The sheep beget the wolves that prey on them.

Our quarrel with the Socialists, therefore, is largely over the spirit of the movement; for the spirit shapes the movement and directs its course. The Socialists declare loudly that the entire capitalistic system is slavery of the most unendurable type, and that landowning, production, and distribution for private profit must be abolished. They preach a class war as the only method by which this can be accomplished, and they proclaim, as fervently as ever did a Mohammedan calling for a holy crusade against the accursed infidel, that he who is not with them is against them. For this truly gigantic undertaking they have adopted a philosophy and pursue means that seem to us childishly inadequate.

To us it is inconceivable that institutions so deeply rooted in the savagery and superstitions of the past can be overthrown except by people who have become saturated to the very marrow of their bones with loathing for such superstition and such savagery. To us the first indispensable step is the creation of profoundly rebellious spirits who will make no truce, no compromise. We recognise that it is worse than useless to waste our breath on effects; that the causes are what we must go for, and that every form of monopoly,

equal partners, working for a common end in which all are alike interested, is among the things that make life worth living. On the other hand, the association of men who are compelled by the whip of authority to live together in a prison is about as near hell as it is possible to get.

To be associated in governmentally conducted industries, whether it be as soldier or sailor, as railroad, telegraph, or postal employee, is to become a mere cog in a vast political machine, and this also seems to us undesirable. Under such conditions there would be less freedom than there is even now under the régime of private monopoly; the workers would abdicate all control of their own lives and become a flock of party sheep, rounded up at the will of their political bosses taking what those bosses chose to give them, and, in the end being thankful to be allowed to hold a job on any terms.

Let no one delude himself with the fallacy that governmental institutions under Socialist administration would be shorn of their present objectionable features. They would be precisely what they are to-day. If the workers were to come into possession of the means of production to-morrow, their administration under the most perfect form of universal suffrage — which the United States, for example, has been vainly trying to doctor into decent shape for generations past — would simply result in the creation of a special class of political managers, professing to act for the welfare of the majority. Were they as honest as the day — which it is folly to expect — they could only carry out the dictates of the majority, and those who did not agree slavishly with those dictates would find themselves outcasts. In reality, we should have put a special class of men in absolute control of the most powerful official machine that the world has ever seen, and should have installed a new form of wage-slavery, with the State as master. And the workingman who was ill-used by the State would find it a master a thousand times more difficult to overthrow than the most powerful of private employers.

vidual right, conferred by Nature and imposed by Life. It is a fundamental law of human existence; and because our present so-called Civilisation obstinately refuses to recognise that law it is bleeding to-day at every pore and the death-rattle is already in its throat. A house so bitterly divided against itself is bound to fall. A society of wolves, each tearing at the other's throat, is not a society to be preserved but one to be extirpated as speedily and painlessly as mercy and intelligence can do it.

It is a question of intelligence, and to Anarchists the methods generally proposed for restoring the land to the use of the living do not appear intelligent. Clearly Nationalisation will not do; for Nationalisation ignores the organic unity of the human species, and merely substitutes for monopoly by the individual monopoly by that artificial creation, the State, as representing that equally artificial creation, the Nation. Such a philosophy lands us at once in absurdities so obvious that their bare statement suffices to explode them. For example, the district of Tampico, in Mexico, embraces one of the richest oil fields yet discovered. Is it maintained that the few Mexicans are entitled to monopolise that great gift of Nature solely because it lies within the territory at present marked on the maps as Mexico?

Even Capitalism knows better than that. If Mexico shut down her oil wells she would be warned promptly that the world had need of them, and the warning would be enforced. In theory, as in practice, Capitalism is international, for it recognises that what is needed by the world at large must pass into the channels of international trade and be distributed for the satisfaction of racial needs. That, however, does not prevent individual capitalists from locking up their own private properties, nor does it prevent capitalist rings from decreeing that an entire industry shall be brought to a standstill in order that their personal profits may be enhanced. Similarly, Capitalism would not permit England to starve the world by shutting down her coal mines, but it does permit a few monopolists of coal lands to hamper production by levying tribute on English min-

ers who want to work. Nothing more unsatisfactory, more unjust, or more illogical can be imagined. What good interest is served by allowing the Duke of Northumberland, for example, to exact £80,000 a year for allowing Labour to dig out what he is still permitted to call his coal? Biologically the man is a parasite of the most deadly type. Economically he is a huge leak through which social and individual effort goes to waste.

To all Anarchists, therefore, the abolition of Land Monopoly is fundamental. Land Monopoly is the denial of Life's basic law, whether regarded from the standpoint of the individual or of the species; and by no human ingenuity can we successfully evade that law. So long as certain individuals are allowed to corner land on or by which others have to live, those others are at their mercy. They are helpless and, therefore, helplessly enslaved. They are robbed, and cannot escape the robbery. They are ruled, and cannot get away from the rule. They must work on the terms offered them, or starve. From this fate no organisation, however complete, no skill or learning, however profound, no private virtue or public philanthropy, can rescue them. Here, if anywhere, action is needed. A huge boulder blocks the path, and until that boulder is removed progress remains unthinkable.

In some way or another the Individual must assert and maintain his free and equal right to life, which means his free and equal right to the use of that without which life is impossible, our common Mother, Earth. And it is to the incalculable advantage of society, the whole, to secure to each of its units that inalienable right; to release the vast accumulations of constructive energy now lying idle and enslaved; to say to every willing worker — "Wherever there is an unused opportunity which you can turn to account you are free to use it. We do not bound you. We do not limit you. This earth is yours individually as it is ours racially, and the essential meaning of our conquest of the seas, of air and space, is that you are free to come and go whither you will upon this planet, which is at once our individual and racial home."

and maintained, if necessary, by the extirpation of the slave. I put the case as bluntly as I can, and say plainly that no honest mind can question the conclusion drawn. The slavery may be excused, as it is habitually, on the ground of necessity. It cannot be denied.

The stand taken by Mr. Lloyd George, as representing the British Empire, is the one all Governments take. No Government tolerates disruption of its machine, and secession means disruption. Great Britain fought against the secession of what is now the United States, and granted independence only when defeated on the field of battle. The United States Government in its turn fought the seceding Southern States. The ecclesiastical Government of Rome fought the seceding Protestants just as the British Empire to-day puts down by force of arms would-be secessionists in India or Egypt. This is in the nature of things and, therefore, beyond the reach of argument. Every organism struggles with all the vitality at its command against extinction; and every Government, whatever it may call itself, is an organism composed of human beings. It exists, and can exist, only by compelling other human beings to remain a part of it; by exacting service from them, that is to say, by making them its serfs and slaves. The organism's real basis is human slavery, and it cannot be anything else.

This prelude will, I hope, enable the reader to examine more clear-sightedly the position of Socialism, which also declares that its mission is to free mankind. The first difficulty, however, lies in the fact that while the word "Anarchy," signifying "without rule," is exceedingly precise, the word "Socialism" is not. Socialism merely means association, and a Socialist is one who believes in associated life and effort. Immediately a thousand questions of the greatest difficulty arise. Obviously there are different ways in which people can associate; some of them delightful, venue quite the reverse. It is delightful to associate yourself, freely and voluntarily, with those to whom you feel attracted by similarity of tastes and pursuits. It is torture to be herded compulsorily among those with whom you have nothing in common. Association with free and

cause, in my opinion, the merits or demerits of Anarchism and Socialism respectively must be judged, not by comparative analyses of Marx or Proudhon, Bebel or Bakunin, but by their capacity or incapacity when confronted by the struggles now rending society. Books, however able, represent only their writers' views, whereas the struggles are Life itself. For example, to me it is of no importance whether what I write agrees with the teaching of some well-known Anarchist, but it is of the very greatest importance that I should be, as nearly as I can be, true to Life.

On the Irish question I confine myself to one established fact. We know that the Sinn Fein delegates signed the so-called "Treaty" under a threat of war. Mr. Barton, one of the five, reported to the Dail Eirann, December 20, 1921 as follows: — "Mr. Lloyd George claimed that we were plenipotentiaries, and must either accept or reject. The signature of every member of the delegation, he said, was necessary, or war would follow immediately. He gave us until ten o'clock to make up our minds. It was then half-past eight. "Mr. Barton added that he and Mr. Gavan Duffy were for refusal, war or no war; but that, inasmuch as an answer which was not unanimous would have involved the country in war, they did not feel justified in standing out against the majority. "For myself," he said, "I preferred war; but for the nation, without consultation, I dared not accept that responsibility."

I am not criticising Mr. Barton or Mr. Lloyd George. I am simply pointing out that here again, as always, the governing organisation, brought to a final showdown, said: "We compel you to remain a part of our machine, whether you like it or not. We force you to remain in this partnership, however hateful it may be to you. We own you, and the proof of our ownership is that we refuse to allow you to become your own masters and set up in business for yourselves." It is an explicit declaration by the stronger that they consider the weaker their property, to be disposed of according to their will. In the opinion of every Anarchist it is an affirmation that human slavery is an institution to be defended by terrorism

The Land Question, viewed biologically, reveals wide horizons and opens doors already half ajar. Placed on the basis of equal human rights, it is nobly destructive, for it spells death to wrongs now hurling civilisation to its ruin. Were free and equal use of natural opportunities accepted as a fundamental law — just as most of us accept, in theory, the Golden Rule — there would be no more territory-grabbing wars. Racial conflicts, now looming up so threateningly, would die of themselves. Free exchange, so essential to international prosperity, would follow automatically, and with it we should shake off those monstrous bureaucracies now crushing us. We should be plagued neither with the multi-millionaire whose evil fortune is always founded on Monopoly, nor with that degeneracy-breeding army of paupers whom Monopoly, first rendering them helpless, drags down to pauperdom. Hate, to-day righteous in its indignation, would be lifted from the heart of Labour, because Labour, no longer tied to the chariot wheels of Plutocracy, would claim and get its own. We Anarchists indorse and make our own Tolstoy's great statement that "the rich will do everything for the poor except the one thing needful — get off their backs." We understand thoroughly that when the hive no longer harbours parasites, the honey, increased enormously in quantity, will go where it belongs.

These doors already are standing more than half ajar. War! Science has revolutionised it, as it previously revolutionised industry, and War henceforth means racial suicide. Frontiers and national divisions, those hothouses of ignorant fanaticism and of that narrow patriotism which is always the first resort of scoundrels! Science, annihilating distance, has made, potentially at least, the human family one. What sense is there in fencing off countries by protective tariffs when the very purpose of the railway and the steamship, the cable and the wireless station, is to break through those fences? If rule by the sword is to endure, and if the masses are still to be governed with a rod of iron, we should stop educating them for the first result of education is that the pupil becomes eager

to manage his own life. If our rulers want the workers to remain content with poverty, they should call a halt to invention, for no intelligent human being is satisfied to starve because production has outstripped consumption.

All intelligent and courageous action along one line of the great struggle for human rights helps thought and action along other lines, and the contest that is certain to come over the land question cannot but clear the field in other directions. It will be seen, for example, that freedom of production will not suffice without freedom of distribution — which is only the final process of production — and the road will be made plain for a consideration of the money and other monopolies that reign supreme in that great department of human activity, thanks to the special privileges that Government confers upon them.

It will be seen also that it is ridiculous for us to talk about free and equal citizens when one child is permitted to be born into the world heir to millions and entitled by law to levy tribute for the rest of his life on thousands who will never have a chance. It is inevitable, therefore, that the unnatural law of inheritance — whereby the dead bind the living — must wither before the light of criticism, and this even the late President Roosevelt understood and urged repeatedly.

With the increasing appreciation of the value of the individual life will come an increasingly drastic criticism of all those schools of thought that bid the oppressed be contented with their lot, and find it in their hearts to visit the workers of the slums, or the prisoners in the modern hells we call “penitentiaries,” and exhort them to thank God for his mercies. The religion of submission will receive its death-blow. It is a craven, skulking thing, utterly incompatible with the dignity of man or with the energy and courage which Nature demands of those who desire to rise.

What, then, is our actual position? We stand for the realities of life, as opposed to the fine phrases on which the people starve; for the omnipotent laws of life, as opposed to the views we have

of Anarchism, which, keenly alive to the native worth and dignity of Man, abhors slavery in all its forms and regards the welfare of the Individual — physical, mental, and spiritual — as above all price. Eltzbacher, in his noted study of the seven great Anarchist writers he selects as typical — Tolstoy, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Proudhon, Stirner, Godwin, and Tucker — calls special attention to the fact that, although on innumerable points they differ widely, as against the crippling authoritarianism of all governing machines they stand a solid phalanx. The whole body of Herbert Spencer’s teaching, once so influential in this country, moves firmly toward that goal. His test of Civilisation was the extent to which voluntary co-operation has occupied the position previously monopolised by the compelling State, which he regarded as essentially a military institution. Habitually we circulate, as one of our most convincing documents, his treatise on “Man versus the State,” and in his “Data of Ethics” he has given us a picture of the future which is Anarchism of the purest type.

Perhaps I may be allowed, in concluding this branch of my subject, to make a reflection of my own, viz., that the mother-principle of Anarchism — fidelity to one’s own individual judgment — is also the backbone of the Christian creed. In its doctrine of the Holy Ghost, the spiritual comforter, the inner guide, the Church originally taught that, above all else, to one’s own individual conscience one must be true, and that by that compass one must steer his course. Indeed, the Church went much farther, for it denounced, as the crime beyond all pardon, falsity to one’s own conviction, which it described as the sin against the Holy Ghost. The lines in which Shakespeare has immortalised the selfsame opinion I need hardly quote.

Before passing to a consideration of Socialism, let me refer, by way of prelude, to the Irish question. This seems to me desirable for two reasons. First, because in it we have a vivid illustration of the eternal conflict between Compulsion and Voluntarism, Authoritarianism and Freedom, Imperialism and Anarchism. Secondly, be-

understand that in ridding the world of this barbarous anachronism Science is clearing the road for a co-operation that, purged of the militaristic poison of compulsion, will be nobly free. Our faith is in Science, in knowledge, in the infinite possibilities of the human brain, in that indomitable vital force we have hitherto abused so greatly because only now are we beginning to glimpse the splendour of the uses to which it may be brought.

How, then, could we, seeing this so clearly, falter in our allegiance to Freedom, or fail to understand that 'this once conquered, all other things will come? For, how can Science discover except through free experiment? How can the mind of Man expand when it is laced in the straitjacket of authority and is forbidden independence? This question answers itself, and the verdict passed by history leaves no room for doubt. Only with the winning from Militarism and Ecclesiasticism of some measure of freedom did Science come to life; and if the world were to pass again into a similar thralldom, that life would fall once more into a stupor from which it could be shaken only by some social upheaval far greater and more bloody than the French Revolution ever began to be. It is not the champions of Freedom who are responsible for violent Revolutions, but those who, in their ignorant insanity, believe they can serve Humanity by putting it in irons and further happiness by fettering Mankind. We may be passing even now into such a thralldom, for Democracy, trained from time immemorial to servility, has not yet learned the worth of Freedom and Plutocracy would only too gladly render all thought and knowledge subservient to its own profit-making schemes.

In these pages I have not tried to express my own opinions but to record what I have learned from a long study of a literature that, in quantity, is not inconsiderable, and, in quality, is of the highest rank. I have endeavoured to show how simple are the economics of Anarchism, which demand equality of opportunity for all; and I remind the reader that simplicity is always the mark of strength. I have sought to convey something, at least, of the spirit

inherited from a barbaric past, dominated by the fantastic theories of priests and kings, under which the few have reigned supreme and the masses have been mud, trampled remorselessly under foot. From those dark ages we are only just beginning to emerge — but we are emerging.

The task is gigantic, but it is inevitable. If mankind is ever to be master of itself, scientific thought — which deals with realities and bases its conclusions on ascertained facts — must take the place of guess and superstition. To bring the conduct of human life into accord with the ascertained facts of life is, at bottom, the great struggle that is going on in society, and in this great struggle we Anarchists — we say it confidently — stand in the very front rank.

Since the first publication of this pamphlet Civilisation has made a violent effort to shed the antiquated skin that fitted well enough perhaps its earlier and smaller growth. The dam that held for centuries has given way, and we have had The War — probably the greatest social dislocation yet recorded and the herald of profoundly revolutionary readjustments yet to come. For the moment it has thrown us back into barbarism. For the moment it has afflicted us with Militarism and scourged us with all the tyrannies that military philosophy and tactics approve of and enforce. Necessarily Militarism believes in itself and in that physical violence which is its speciality. Necessarily it sympathises with all those barbarisms of which it is the still-surviving representative, and distrusts those larger views that come with riper growth. How could it be otherwise? By the essence of its being Militarism does not argue; it commands. Its business is not to yield but to conquer, and to keep, at any cost, its conquests. Always, by the fundamental tenets of its creed it will invade; drive the weaker to the wall, enforce submission. He who talks to it of human rights, on the full recognition of which social peace depends, speaks a language it does not and cannot understand. To Militarism he is a dreamer, and, in the words of the great German soldier, Von Moltke, it does not even regard his dream as beautiful.

At present we are being swept by a very tidal-wave of War. Every Government is a vast military machine, armed with all the resources of modern science. Every Government is invading ruthlessly the liberties of its own "subjects" and stripping them of elemental rights. Resolved on keeping, at any cost, its existing conquests, every Government treats as an outcast and criminal him who questions its autocracy. Obsessed perpetually by fear, which is the real root of military philosophy, every Government is guarding itself against popular attack; and with Governments, as with all living creatures, there is nothing so unscrupulous as fear. When Government punishes the man who dares to express honestly his honest thought, does it pause to consider that it is killing that spirit of enquiry which is the life of progress, and crushing out of existence the courageous few who are the backbone of the nation? Not at all. Like an arrant coward, it thinks only of its own safety. When, by an elaborate system of registration, passports, inspection of private correspondence, and incessant police espionage, it checks all the comings and goings of individual life, does it give a thought to personal liberty or suffer a single pang at the reflection that it is sinking its country to the level of France under Louis XIV or Russia under the Romanoffs — with consequences historically notorious? Not a bit of it. The machine thinks only of itself; of how it may increase and fortify its power.

Just as the Court sets the fashions that rule "Society," so the influence of the governmental machine permeates all our economic life. The political helplessness of the individual citizen finds its exact counterpart in the economic helplessness of the masses, reduced to helplessness by the privileges Government confers upon the ruling class, and exploited by that ruling class in exact proportion to their helplessness. Throughout the economic domain "Woe to the Conquered" is the order of the day; and to this barbaric military maxim, which poisons our entire industrial system and brutalises our whole philosophy of life, we owe it that Plutocracy is gathering into its clutches all the resources of this planet and imposing on

the workers everywhere what I myself believe to be the heaviest yoke they have, as yet, been forced to bear. It is many years since De Tocqueville, in his great work "Democracy," described the then budding plutocracy as "the worst rulers this world has ever had," to which he added, "but their reign will be short." Probably no truer words were ever written.

Anarchists believe all this is doomed; but they believe also that its dying struggles, even now visible, will be very hard. They regard Militarism as a straitjacket in which modern Industrialism, now struggling violently for expansion, cannot fetch its breath. And everything that smacks of Governmentalism smacks also of Militarism, they being Siamese twins, vultures out of the same egg. The type now advancing to the centre of the stage, and destined to occupy it exclusively, is, as they see it, the industrial type; a type that will give all men equal opportunities, as of human right, and not tolerate the invasion of that right, a type, therefore, that will enable men to regulate their own affairs by mutual agreement and free them from their present slavery to the militant employing class; a type that will release incalculably enormous reservoirs of energy now lying stagnant and, by eliminating as painlessly as possible the drones, secure the honey to the working bees. That such is the natural trend of the evolution now in process they do not doubt; but its pace will be determined by the vigour with which we shake off the servile spirit now paralysing us, and by the intelligence with which we get down to the facts that really count. At bottom it is a question of freedom or slavery; of self-mastery or being mastered.

Science, as we see it, is revolutionising our industrial system and will not rest until she has made it the obedient servant of the human race. As part of that great task she has now taken Militarism in hand, and there, within a few short years, her work already nears completion. Already the deathknell of the standing army and the battle fleet is ringing, for War can no longer be regarded as the toy of monarchs but as the national and racial suicide it has become. We are very confident that the race will not submit to this, and we