

PETER KROPOTKIN

THE CONQUEST OF BREAD

OF



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PETER KROPOTKIN

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PREFACE

ONE of the current objections to Communism, and Socialism altogether, is that the idea is so old and yet it could never be realized. Schemes of ideal States haunted the thinkers of Ancient Greece; later on, the early Christians joined in communist groups; centuries later, large communal brotherhoods came into existence during the Reform movement. Then, the same ideals were revived during the great English and French Revolutions; and finally, quite lately, in 1848, a revolution inspired to a great extent with Socialist ideals, took place in France. "And yet, you see," we are told, "how far away is still the realization of your schemes. Don't you think that there is some fundamental error in your understanding of human nature and its needs?"

At first sight this objection seems very serious. However, the moment we consider human history more attentively, it loses its strength. We see, first, that hundreds of millions of men have succeeded in maintaining amongst themselves, in their village communities, for many hundreds of years, one of the main elements of Socialism — the common ownership of the chief instrument of production, the land, and the apportionment of the same according to the labour capacities of the different families; and we learn that if the communal possession of the land has been destroyed in Western Europe, it was not from within, but from without, by the governments which created a land monopoly in favour of the nobility and the middle classes. We learn, moreover, that the mediaeval cities succeeded in maintaining in their midst for several centuries in succession a certain socialized organization of production and trade; that these centuries were periods of a rapid intellectual, industrial, and artistic progress; and that the decay of these communal institutions came mainly from the incapacity of men of combining the village with the city, the peasant with the citizen, so as jointly to oppose the growth of the military states, which destroyed the free cities.

The history of mankind, thus understood, does not offer, then, an argument against Communism. It appears, on the contrary, as a succession of endeavours to realize some sort of communal organization, endeavours which were crowned with a partial success of a certain duration; and all we are authorized to conclude is, that mankind has not yet found the proper form for combining, on communistic principles, agriculture with a suddenly developed industry and a rapidly growing international trade. The latter appears especially as a disturbing element, since it is no longer individuals only, or cities, that enrich themselves by distant commerce and export; but whole nations grow rich at the cost of those nations which lag behind in their industrial development.

These conditions, which began to appear by the end of the eighteenth century, took, however, their full swing in the nineteenth century only, after the Napoleonic wars came to an end. And modern Communism had to take them into account.

It is now known that the French Revolution, apart from its political significance, was an attempt made by the French people, in 1793 and 1794, in three different directions more or less akin to Socialism. It was, first, *the equalization of fortunes*, by means of an income tax and succession duties both heavily progressive, as also by a direct confiscation of the land in order to subdivide it, and by heavy war taxes levied upon the rich only. The second attempt was to introduce a wide *national system of rationally established prices of all commodities*, for which the real cost of production and moderate trade profits had to be taken into account. The Convention worked hard at this scheme, and had nearly completed its work, when reaction took the overhand. And the third was a sort of *Municipal Communism* as regards the consumption of some objects of first necessity, bought by the municipalities, and sold by them at cost price.

It was during this remarkable movement, which has never yet been properly studied, that modern Socialism was born — Fourierism with L'Ange, at Lyons, and authoritarian Communism with Buonarotti, Babeuf, and their comrades. And it was immediately after the Great Revolution that the three great theoretical founders of modern Socialism — Fourier, Saint Simon, and Robert Owen, as well as Godwin (the No-State Socialism) — came forward; while the secret communist societies originated from those of Buonarotti and Babeuf, gave their stamp to militant Communism for the next fifty years.

To be correct, then, we must say that modern Socialism is not yet a hundred years old, and that, for the first half of these hundred years, two nations only, which stood at the head of the industrial movement, i.e. Britain and France, took part in its elaboration. Both — bleeding at that time from the terrible wounds inflicted upon them by fifteen years of Napoleonic wars, and both enveloped in the great European reaction that had come from the East.

In fact, it was only after the Revolution of July, 1830, in France, and the Reform movement of 1830–32, in England, had shaken off that terrible reaction, that the discussion of Socialism became possible for the next sixteen to eighteen years. And it was during those years that the aspirations of Fourier, Saint Simon, and Robert Owen, worked out by their followers, took a definite shape, and the different schools of Socialism which exist nowadays were defined.

In Britain, Robert Owen and his followers worked out their schemes of communist villages, agricultural and industrial at the same time; immense co-operative associations were started for creating with their dividends more communist colonies; and the Great Consolidated Trades' Union was founded — the forerunner of the Labour Parties of our days and the International Workingmen's Association.

In France, the Fourierist Considérant issued his remarkable manifesto, which contains, beautifully developed, all the theoretical considerations upon the growth of Capitalism, which are now described as "Scientific Socialism." Proudhon worked out his idea of Anarchism, and Mutualism, without State interference. Louis Blanc published his *Organization of Labour*, which became later on the programme of Lassalle, in Germany. Vidal in France and Lorenz Stein in Germany further developed in two remarkable works, published in 1846 and 1847 respectively, the theoretical conceptions of Considérant; and finally Vidal, and especially Pecqueur — the latter in a very elaborate work, as also in a series of Reports — developed in detail the system of Collectivism, which he wanted the Assembly of 1848 to vote in the shape of laws.

However, there is one feature, common to all Socialist schemes, of the period, which must be noted. The three great founders of Socialism who wrote at the dawn of the nineteenth century were entranced by the wide horizons which it opened before them, that they looked upon it as a new revelation, and upon themselves as upon the founders of a new religion. Socialism had to be a religion, and they had to regulate its march, as the heads of a new church. Besides, writing during the period of reaction which had followed the French Revolution, and seeing more its failures than its successes, they did not trust the masses, and they did not appeal to them for bringing about the changes which they thought necessary. They put their faith, on the contrary, in some great ruler. He would understand the new revelation; he would be convinced of its desirability by the successful experiments of the phalansteries, or associations; and he would peacefully accomplish by the means of his own authority the revolution which would bring well-being and happiness to mankind. A military genius, Napoleon had just been ruling Europe. . . . Why should not a social genius come forward and carry Europe with him and transfer the new Gospel into life? . . . That faith was rooted very deep, and it stood for a long time in the way of Socialism; its traces are ever seen amongst us, down to the present day.

It was only during the years 1840–48, when the approach of the Revolution was felt everywhere and the proletarians were beginning to plant the banner of Socialism on the barricades, that faith in the

people began to enter once more the hearts of the social schemers: faith, on the one side, Republican Democracy, and on the other side in *free* association and the organizing powers of the working-men themselves.

But then came the Revolution of February, 1848, the middle-class Republic, and — with it, broke hopes. Four months only after the proclamation of the Republic, the June insurrection of the Paris proletarians broke out, and it was crushed in blood. The wholesale shooting of the working-men, the mass deportations to New Guinea, and finally the Napoleonic *coup d'état* followed. The Socialists were prosecuted with fury, and the weeding out was so terrible and so thorough that for the next twelve or fifteen years the very traces of Socialism disappeared; its literature vanished so completely that even names, once so familiar before 1848, were entirely forgotten; ideas which were then current — the stock ideas of the Socialists before 1848 — were wiped out of the memories and were taken later on, by the present generation, for new discoveries.

However, when a new revival came, about 1866, when Communism and Collectivism once more came forward, the conception as to the means of their realization had undergone a deep change. The old faith in Political Democracy was gone, and the first principles upon which the Paris working-men agreed with the British trade-unionists and Owenites, when they met in 1866 at London, was that “the emancipation of the working-men must be accomplished by the working-men themselves.” Upon another point they also fell in. It was that the labour unions themselves would have to get hold of the instruments of production, and organize production themselves. The French idea of the Fourierist and Mutualist “Association” thus joined hands with Robert Owen’s idea of “The Great Consolidated Trades’ Union,” which was extended now, so as to become an International Working-men’s Association.

Again this new revival of Socialism lasted but a few years. Soon came the war of 1870–1871, the uprising of the Paris Commune — and again the free development of Socialism was rendered impossible in France. But while Germany accepted now from the hands of its German teachers, Marx and Engels, the Socialism of the French “forty-eighters” — the Socialism of Considérant and Louis Blanc, and the Collectivism of Pecqueur, — France made a further step forward.

In March, 1871, Paris had proclaimed that henceforward it would not wait for the retardations of the other portions of France, and intended to start within its Commune its own social development.

The movement was too short-lived to give any positive result. It remained communalist only. But the working-classes of the old International saw at once its historical significance. They understood that the free commune would be henceforth the medium in which the ideas of modern Socialism must come to realization. The free agro-industrial communes, of which so much was spoken in 1848, need not be small phalansteries, or small communities of 2000 persons. They must be vast agglomerations like Paris, or, still better, small territories. These communes would federate, even irrespectively of national frontiers (like the Cinque Ports, or the Hansa) ; and large labour associations might come into existence for the inter-communal service of the railways, the docks, and so on. Such were the ideas which began vaguely to circulate after 1871 amongst the thinking working-men, especially in the Latin countries. In some such organization, the details of which life itself would settle, the labour circles of these countries saw the medium through which Socialist forms of life could find a much easier realization than through the Collectivist system of the State Socialists.

These are the ideas to which I have endeavoured to give a more or less definite expression in this book.

Looking back now at the years that have passed since this book was written, I can say in full conscience that its leading ideas must have been correct. The State Socialism of the collectivist system has certainly made some progress. State railways, State banking, and State trade in spirits have been introduced here and there. But every step made in this direction, even though it resulted in the

cheapening of a given commodity, was found to be a new obstacle in the struggle of the working-men for their emancipation. So that we find now amongst the working-men, especially in England, the idea that even the working of such a vast national property as a railway-net could be much better handled by a Federated Union of railway employés, than by a State organization.

On the other side, we see that countless attempts have been made all over Europe and America, the leading idea of which is, on the one side, to get into the hands of the working-men themselves wide branches of production, and, on the other side, always to widen in the cities the circles of the functions which the city performs in the interest of its inhabitants. Trade-unionism, with a growing tendency towards organizing the different trades internationally, and of being not only an instrument for improving the conditions of labour, but also to become an organization which might, at a given moment, take into its hands the management of production; Co-operativism, both for production and for distribution, both in industry and agriculture, and attempts at combining both sorts of co-operation in experimental colonies; and finally, the immensely varied field of the so-called Municipal Socialism — these are the three directions in which the greatest amount of creative power has been developed lately.

Of course, none of these may, in any degree, be taken as a substitute for Communism, or even for Socialism, both of which imply the common possession of the instruments of production. But we certainly must look at all the just-mentioned attempts as upon *experiments* — like those which Owen, Fourier, and Saint Simon tried in their colonies — experiments which prepare human thought to conceive some of the practical forms in which a communist society might find its expression. The synthesis of all these partial experiments will have to be made some day by the constructive genius of some one of the civilized nations, and it will be done. But samples of the bricks out of which the great synthetic building will have to be built, and even samples of some of its rooms, are being prepared by the immense effort of the constructive genius of man.

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THE CONQUEST OF BREAD

CHAPTER I

OUR RICHES

I

THE human race has travelled far since those bygone ages when men used to fashion their rude implements of flint, and lived on the precarious spoils of the chase, leaving to their children for the only heritage a shelter beneath the rocks, some poor utensils — and Nature, vast, ununderstood, and terrific, with whom they had to fight for their wretched existence.

During the agitated times which have elapsed since, and which have lasted for many thousand years, mankind has nevertheless amassed untold treasures. It has cleared the land, dried the marshes, pierced the forests, made roads; it has been building, inventing, observing, reasoning; it has created complex machinery, wrested her secrets from Nature, and finally it has made a servant of steam. And the result is, that now the child of the civilized man finds ready, at its birth, to his hand an immense capital accumulated by those who have gone before him. And this capital enables him to acquire, not merely by his own labour, combined with the labour of others, riches surpassing the dreams of the Orient, expressed in the fairy tales of the Thousand and One Nights.

The soil is cleared to a great extent, fit for the reception of the best seeds, ready to make a rich return for the skill and labour spent upon it — a return more than sufficient for all the wants of humanity. The methods of cultivation are known.

On the wide prairies of America each hundred men, with the aid of powerful machinery, can produce in a few months enough wheat to maintain ten thousand people for a whole year. And when man wishes to double his produce, to treble it, to multiply it a hundred-fold, he *makes* the soil, gives each plant the requisite care, and thus obtains enormous returns. While the hunter of old had to scour fifty or sixty square miles to find food for his family, the civilized man supports his household, with far less pains, and far more certainty, on a thousandth part of that space. Climate is no longer an obstacle. When the sun fails, man replaces it by artificial heat; and we see the coming of a time when artificial light also will be used to stimulate vegetation. Meanwhile, by the use of glass and hot water pipes, man renders a given space ten and fifty times more productive than it was in its natural state.

The prodigies accomplished in industry are still more striking. With the co-operation of those intelligent beings, modern machines — themselves the fruit of three or four generations of inventors, mostly unknown — a hundred men manufacture now the stuff to clothe ten thousand persons for a period of two years. In well-managed coal mines the labour of a hundred miners furnishes each year enough fuel to warm ten thousand families under an inclement sky. And we have lately witnessed twice the spectacle of a wonderful city springing up in a few months at Paris,* without interrupting in the slightest degree the regular work of the French nation.

And if in manufactures as in agriculture, and as indeed through our whole social system, the labour of the discoveries, and the inventions of our ancestors profit chiefly the few, it is none the less certain

that mankind in general, aided by the creatures of steel and iron which it already possesses, could already procure an existence of wealth and ease for every one of its members.

Truly, we are rich, far richer than we think; rich in what we already possess, richer still in the possibilities of production of our actual mechanical outfit; richest of all in what we might win from our soil, from our manufactures, from our science, from our technical knowledge, were they but applied to bringing about the well-being of all.

II

We, in civilized societies, are rich. Why then are the many poor? Why this painful drudgery for the masses? Why, even to the best paid workman, this uncertainty for the morrow, in the midst of all the wealth inherited from the past, and in spite of the powerful means of production, which could ensure comfort to all in return for a few hours of daily toil?

The Socialists have said it and repeated it un-wearyingly. Daily they reiterate it, demonstrating by arguments taken from all the sciences. It is because all that is necessary for production — the land, the mines, the highways, machinery, food, shelter, education, knowledge — all have been seized by the few in the course of that long story of robbery, enforced migration and wars, of ignorance and oppression, which has been the life of the human race before it had learned to subdue the forces of Nature. It is because, taking advantage of alleged rights acquired in the past, these few appropriate to-day two-thirds of the products of human labour, and then squander them in the most stupid and shameful way. It is because, having reduced the masses to a point at which they have not the means of subsistence for a month, or even for a week in advance, the few only allow the many to work on condition of themselves receiving the lion's share. It is because these few prevent the remainder of men from producing the things they need, and force them to produce, not the necessaries of life for all, but whatever offers the greatest profits to the monopolists. In this is the substance of all Socialism.

Take, indeed, a civilized country. The forests which once covered it have been cleared, the marshes drained, the climate improved. It has been made habitable. The soil, which bore formerly only coarse vegetation, is covered to-day with rich harvests. The rock-walls in the valleys are laid out in terraces and covered with vines bearing golden fruit. The wild plants, which yielded nought but acrid berries, or uneatable roots, have been transformed by generations of culture into succulent vegetables or trees covered with delicious fruits. Thousands of highways and railroads furrow the earth, and pierce the mountains. The shriek of the engine is heard in the wild gorges of the Alps, the Caucasus and the Himalayas. The rivers have been made navigable; the coasts, carefully surveyed, are easy of access; artificial harbours, laboriously dug out and protected against the fury of the sea, afford shelter to the ships. Deep shafts have been sunk in the rocks; labyrinths of underground galleries have been dug out where coal may be raised or minerals extracted. At the crossings of the highways great cities have sprung up, and within their borders all the treasures of industry, science, and art have been accumulated.

Whole generations, that lived and died in misery, oppressed and ill-treated by their masters, and worn out by toil, have handed on this immense inheritance to our century.

For thousands of years millions of men have laboured to clear the forests, to drain the marshes, and to open up highways by land and water. Every rood of soil we cultivate in Europe has been watered by the sweat of several races of men. Every acre has its story of enforced labour, of intolerable toil, of the people's sufferings. Every mile of railway, every yard of tunnel, has received its share of human blood.

The shafts of the mine still bear on their rocky walls the marks made by the pick of the workman who toiled to excavate them. The space between each prop in the underground galleries might be

marked as a miner's grave; and who can tell what each of these graves has cost, in tears, in privation, in unspeakable wretchedness to the family who depended on the scanty wage of the worker cut off his prime by fire-damp, rock-fall, or flood?

The cities, bound together by railroads and waterways, are organisms which have lived through centuries. Dig beneath them and you find, one above another, the foundations of streets, of houses, of theatres, of public buildings. Search into their history and you will see how the civilization of the town, its industry, its special characteristics, have slowly grown and ripened through the co-operation of generations of its inhabitants before it could become what it is to-day. And even to-day, the value of each dwelling, factory, and warehouse, which has been created by the accumulated labour of millions of workers, now dead and buried, is only maintained by the very presence and labour of legions of the men who now inhabit that special corner of the globe. Each of the atoms composing what we call the Wealth of Nations owes its value to the fact that it is a part of the great whole. What would a London dockyard or a great Paris warehouse be if they were not situated in these great centres of international commerce? What would become of our mines, our factories, our workshops, and our railways, without the immense quantities of merchandise transported every day by sea and land?

Millions of human beings have laboured to create this civilization on which we pride ourselves to-day. Other millions, scattered through the globe, labour to maintain it. Without them nothing would be left in fifty years but ruins.

There is not even a thought, or an invention, which is not common property, born of the past and the present. Thousands of inventors, known and unknown, who have died in poverty, have co-operated in the invention of each of these machines which embody the genius of man.

Thousands of writers, of poets, of scholars, have laboured to increase knowledge, to dissipate error, and to create that atmosphere of scientific thought, without which the marvels of our century could never have appeared. And these thousands of philosophers, of poets, of scholars, of inventors, have themselves been supported by the labour of past centuries. They have been upheld and nourished through life, both physically and mentally, by legions of workers and craftsmen of all sorts. They have drawn their motive force from the environment.

The genius of a Séguin, a Mayer, a Grove, has certainly done more to launch industry in new directions than all the capitalists in the world. But men of genius are themselves the children of industry as well as of science. Not until thousands of steam-engines had been working for years before all eyes, constantly transforming heat into dynamic force, and this force into sound, light, and electricity, could the insight of genius proclaim the mechanical origin and the unity of the physical forces. And if we, children of the nineteenth century, have at last grasped this idea, if we know not how to apply it, it is again because daily experience has prepared the way. The thinkers of the eighteenth century saw and declared it, but the idea remained undeveloped, because the eighteenth century had not grown up like ours, side by side with the steam-engine. Imagine the decades that might have passed while we remained in ignorance of this law, which has revolutionized modern industry, had Watt not found at Soho skilled workmen to embody his ideas in metal, bringing all the parts of his engine to perfection, so that steam, pent in a complete mechanism, and rendered more docile than a horse, more manageable than water, became at last the very soul of modern industry.

Every machine has had the same history — a long record of sleepless nights and of poverty, of disillusion and of joys, of partial improvements discovered by several generations of nameless workers, who have added to the original invention these little nothings, without which the most fertile idea would remain fruitless. More than that: every new invention is a synthesis, the resultant of innumerable inventions which have preceded it in the vast field of mechanics and industry.

Science and industry, knowledge and application, discovery and practical realization leading to new discoveries, cunning of brain and of hand, toil of mind and muscle — all work together. Each

discovery, each advance, each increase in the sum of human riches, owes its being to the physical and mental travail of the past and the present.

By what right then can any one whatever appropriate the least morsel of this immense whole and say — This is mine, not yours?

III

It has come about, however, in the course of the ages traversed by the human race, that all that enables man to produce, and to increase his power of production, has been seized by the few. Sometime, perhaps, we will relate how this came to pass. For the present let it suffice to state the fact and analyse its consequences.

To-day the soil, which actually owes its value to the needs of an ever-increasing population, belongs to a minority who prevent the people from cultivating it — or do not allow them to cultivate according to modern methods.

The mines, though they represent the labour of several generations, and derive their sole value from the requirements of the industry of a nation and the density of the population — the mines also belong to the few; and these few restrict the output of coal, or prevent it entirely, if they find more profitable investments for their capital. Machinery, too, has become the exclusive property of the few, and even when a machine incontestably represents the improvements added to the original rough invention by three or four generations of workers, it none the less belongs to a few owners. And if the descendant of the very inventor who constructed the first machine for lace-making, a century ago, were to present himself to-day in a lace factory at Bale or Nottingham, and demand their rights, they would be told: “Hands off! this machine is not yours,” and they would be shot down if they attempted to take possession of it.

The railways, which would be useless as so much old iron without the teeming population of Europe, its industry, its commerce, and its marts, belong to a few shareholders, ignorant perhaps of the whereabouts of the lines of rails which yield them revenues greater than those of medieval kings. And if the children of those who perished by thousands while excavating the railway cuttings and tunnels were to assemble one day, crowding in their rags and hunger, to demand bread from the shareholders, they would be met with bayonets and grape-shot, to disperse them and safeguard “vested interests.”

In virtue of this monstrous system, the son of the worker, on entering life, finds no field which he may till, no machine which he may tend, no mine in which he may dig, without accepting to leave a great part of what he will produce to a master. He must sell his labour for a scant and uncertain wage. His father and his grandfather have toiled to drain this field, to build this mill, to perfect this machine. They gave to the work the full measure of their strength, and what more could they give? But the heir comes into the world poorer than the lowest savage. If he obtains leave to till the fields, it is on condition of surrendering a quarter of the produce to his master, and another quarter to the government and the middlemen. And this tax, levied upon him by the State, the capitalist, the lord of the manor, and the middleman, is always increasing; it rarely leaves him the power to improve his system of culture. If he turns to industry, he is allowed to work — though not always even that — on condition that he yield a half or two-thirds of the product to him whom the land recognizes as the owner of the machine.

We cry shame on the feudal baron who forbade the peasant to turn a clod of earth unless he surrendered to his lord a fourth of his crop. We call those the barbarous times. But if the forms have changed, the relations have remained the same, and the worker is forced, under the name of free contract, to accept feudal obligations. For, turn where he will, he can find no better condition. Everything has become private property, and he must accept, or die of hunger.

The result of this state of things is that all our production tends in a wrong direction. Enterprise takes no thought for the needs of the community. Its only aim is to increase the gains of the speculator. Hence the constant fluctuations of trade, the periodical industrial crises, each of which throws scores of thousands of workers on the streets.

The working people cannot purchase with their wages the wealth which they have produced, and industry seeks foreign markets among the monied classes of other nations. In the East, in Africa everywhere, in Egypt, Tonkin or the Congo, the European is thus bound to promote the growth of serfdom. And so he does. But soon he finds everywhere similar competitors. All the nations evolve on the same lines, and wars, perpetual wars, break out for the right of precedence in the market. Wars for the possession of the East, wars for the empire of the sea, wars to impose duties on imports and to dictate conditions to neighbouring states; wars against those "blacks" who revolt! The roar of the cannon never ceases in the world, whole races are massacred, the states of Europe spend a third of their budgets in armaments; and we know how heavily these taxes fall on the workers.

Education still remains the privilege of a small minority, for it is idle to talk of education when the workman's child is forced, at the age of thirteen, to go down into the mine or to help his father on the farm. It is idle to talk of studies to the worker, who comes home in the evening crushed by excessive toil with its brutalizing atmosphere. Society is thus bound to remain divided into two hostile camps and in such conditions freedom is a vain word. The Radical begins by demanding a greater extension of political rights, but he soon sees that the breath of liberty leads to the uplifting of the proletariat and then he turns round, changes his opinions, and reverts to repressive legislation and government by the sword.

A vast array of courts, judges, executioners, policemen, and gaolers is needed to uphold the privileges; and this array gives rise in its turn to a whole system of espionage, of false witness, spies, of threats and corruption.

The system under which we live checks in its turn the growth of the social sentiment. We all know that without uprightness, without self-respect, without sympathy and mutual aid, human kind must perish, as perish the few races of animals living by rapine, or the slave-keeping ants. But such ideas are not to the taste of the ruling classes, and they have elaborated a whole system of pseudo-science to teach the contrary.

Fine sermons have been preached on the text that those who have should share with those who have not, but he who would act out this principle is speedily informed that these beautiful sentiments are a very well in poetry, but not in practice. "To lie is to degrade and besmirch oneself," we say, and yet a civilized life becomes one huge lie. We accustom ourselves and our children to hypocrisy, to the practice of a double-faced morality. And since the brain is ill at ease among lies, we cheat ourselves with sophistry. Hypocrisy and sophistry become the second nature of the civilized man.

But a society cannot live thus; it must return to truth or cease to exist.

Thus the consequences which spring from the original act of monopoly spread through the whole social life. Under pain of death, human societies are forced to return to first principles: the means of production being the collective work of humanity, the product should be the collective property of the race. Individual appropriation is neither just nor serviceable. All belongs to all. All things are for all men, since all men have need of them, since all men have worked in the measure of their strength to produce them, and since it is not possible to evaluate every one's part in the production of the world's wealth.

All things are for all. Here is an immense stock of tools and implements; here are all those iron slaves which we call machines, which saw and plane, spin and weave for us, unmaking and remaking, working up raw matter to produce the marvels of our time. But nobody has the right to seize a single one of these machines and say, "This is mine; if you want to use it you must pay me a tax on each"

your products,” any more than the feudal lord of medieval times had the right to say to the peasant
“~~This hill, this meadow belong to me, and you must pay me a tax on every sheaf of corn you reap, on
every rick you build.~~”

All is for all! If the man and the woman bear their fair share of work, they have a right to their fair
share of all that is produced by all, and that share is enough to secure them well-being. No more
such vague formulas as “The Right to work,” or “To each the whole result of his labour.” What we
proclaim is **THE RIGHT TO WELL-BEING: WELL-BEING FOR ALL!**

* For the International Paris Exhibitions of 1889 and 190c.

CHAPTER II

WELL-BEING FOR ALL

I

WELL-BEING for all is not a dream. It is possible, realizable, owing to all that our ancestors have done to increase our powers of production.

We know, indeed, that the producers, although they constitute hardly one-third of the inhabitants of civilized countries, even now produce such quantities of goods that a certain degree of comfort could be brought to every hearth. We know further that if all those who squander to-day the fruits of other toil were forced to employ their leisure in useful work, our wealth would increase in proportion to the number of producers, and more. Finally, we know that contrary to the theory enunciated by Malthus — that Oracle of middle-class Economics — the productive powers of the human race increase at a much more rapid ratio than its powers of reproduction. The more thickly men are crowded on the soil, the more rapid is the growth of their wealth-creating power.

Thus, although the population of England has only increased from 1844 to 1890 by 62 per cent, its production has grown, to say the least, at double that rate — to wit, by 130 per cent. In France, where the population has grown more slowly, the increase in production is nevertheless very rapid. Notwithstanding the crises through which agriculture is frequently passing, notwithstanding State interference, the blood-tax (conscription), and speculative commerce and finance, the production of wheat in France has increased fourfold, and industrial production more than tenfold, in the course of the last eighty years. In the United States the progress is still more striking. In spite of immigration, rather precisely because of the influx of surplus European labour, the United States have multiplied their wealth tenfold.

However, these figures give yet a very faint idea of what our wealth might become under better conditions. For alongside of the rapid development of our wealth-producing powers we have a corresponding and overwhelming increase in the ranks of the idlers and middlemen. Instead of capital gradually concentrating itself in a few hands, so that it would only be necessary for the community to dispossess a few millionaires and enter upon its lawful heritage — instead of this Socialist forecast proving true, the exact reverse is coming to pass: the swarm of parasites is ever increasing.

In France there are not ten actual producers to every thirty inhabitants. The whole agricultural wealth of the country is the work of less than seven millions of men, and in the two great industries — mining and the textile trade, you will find that the workers number less than two and one-half millions. But the exploiters of labour, how many are they? — In England (exclusive of Scotland and Ireland), only one million workers — men, women, and children — are employed in all the textile trades, rather more than half a million work the mines, rather less than half a million till the ground, and the statisticians have to exaggerate all the figures in order to establish a maximum of eight million producers to twenty-six million inhabitants. Strictly speaking the creators of the goods exported from Britain to all the ends of the earth comprise only from six to seven million workers. And what is the sum of the shareholders and middlemen who levy the first fruits of labour from far and near, and heap up unearned gains by thrusting themselves between the producer and the consumer, paying the former not a fifth, nay, not a twentieth, of the price they exact from the latter?

Nor is this all. Those who withhold capital constantly reduce the output by restraining production. We need not speak of the cartloads of oysters thrown into the sea to prevent a dainty, hitherto reserved for the rich, from becoming a food for the people. We need not speak of the thousand and one luxuries

— stuffs, foods, etc. etc. — treated after the same fashion as the oysters. It is enough to remember the way in which the production of the most necessary things is limited. Legions of miners are ready and willing to dig out coal every day, and send it to those who are shivering with cold; but too often a third, or even two-thirds, of their number are forbidden to work more than three days a week, because forsooth, the price of coal must be kept up? Thousands of weavers are forbidden to work the loom though their wives and children go in rags, and though three-quarters of the population of Europe have no clothing worthy the name.

Hundreds of blast-furnaces, thousands of factories periodically stand idle, others only work half time — and in every civilized nation there is a permanent population of about two million individuals who ask only for work, but to whom work is denied.

How gladly would these millions of men set to work to reclaim waste lands, or to transform idle cultivated land into fertile fields, rich in harvests! A year of well-directed toil would suffice to multiply fivefold the produce of dry lands in the south of France which now yield only about eight bushels of wheat per acre. But these men, who would be happy to become hardy pioneers in so many branches of wealth-producing activity, must stay their hands because the owners of the soil, the mines and the factories prefer to invest their capital — stolen in the first place from the community — in Turkish or Egyptian bonds, or in Patagonian gold mines, and so make Egyptian fellahs, Italian exiles and Chinese coolies their wage-slaves.

So much for the direct and deliberate limitation of production; but there is also a limitation indirect and not of set purpose, which consists in spending human toil on objects absolutely useless, destined only to satisfy the dull vanity of the rich.

It is impossible to reckon in figures the extent to which wealth is restricted indirectly, the extent to which energy is squandered, that might have served to produce, and above all to prepare the machinery necessary to production. It is enough to cite the immense sums spent by Europe on armaments for the sole purpose of acquiring control of the markets, and so forcing her own commercial standards on neighbouring territories and making exploitation easier at home; the millions paid every year to officials of all sorts, whose function it is to maintain the “rights” of minorities — the right, that is, of a few rich men — to manipulate the economic activities of the nation; the millions spent on judges, prisons, policemen, and all the paraphernalia of so-called justice — spent to no purpose, because we know that every alleviation, however slight, of the wretchedness of our great cities is followed by a very considerable diminution of crime; lastly, the millions spent on propagating pernicious doctrines by means of the press, and news “cooked” in the interest of this or that party, of this politician or of that company of exploiters.

But over and above this we must take into account all the labour that goes to sheer waste, in keeping up the stables, the kennels, and the retinue of the rich, for instance; in pandering to the caprices of society and to the depraved tastes of the fashionable mob; in forcing the consumer on the one hand to buy what he does not need, or foisting an inferior article upon him by means of puffery, and in producing on the other hand wares which are absolutely injurious, but profitable to the manufacturer. What is squandered in this manner would be enough to double our real wealth, or so to replenish our mills and factories with machinery that they would soon flood the shops with all that is now lacking to two-thirds of the nation. Under our present system a full quarter of the producers of every nation are forced to be idle for three or four months in the year, and the labour of another quarter, if not of the half, has no better results than the amusement of the rich or the exploitation of the public.

Thus, if we consider on the one hand the rapidity with which civilized nations augment the powers of production, and on the other hand the limits set to that production, be it directly or indirectly, by existing conditions, one cannot but conclude that an economic system a trifle more

enlightened would permit them to heap up in a few years so many useful products that they would be constrained to cry — “Enough! We have enough coal and bread and raiment! Let us rest and consider how best to use our powers, how best to employ our leisure.”

No, plenty for all is not a dream — though it was a dream indeed in those old days when man, for all his pains, could hardly win a bushel of wheat from an acre of land, and had to fashion by hand all the implements he used in agriculture and industry. Now it is no longer a dream, because man has invented a motor which, with a little iron and a few pounds of coal, gives him the mastery of a creature strong and docile as a horse, and capable of setting the most complicated machinery in motion.

But, if plenty for all is to become a reality, this immense capital — cities, houses, pastures, arable lands, factories, highways, education — must cease to be regarded as private property, for the monopolist to dispose of at his pleasure.

This rich endowment, painfully won, builded, fashioned, or invented by our ancestors, must become common property, so that the collective interests of men may gain from it the greatest good for all.

There must be EXPROPRIATION. The well-being of all — the end; expropriation — the means.

II

EXPROPRIATION, such then is the problem which History has put before the men of the twentieth century: the return to Communism in all that ministers to the well-being of man.

But this problem cannot be solved by means of legislation. No one imagines that. The poor, no less than the rich, understand that neither the existing Governments, nor any which might arise out of possible political changes, would be capable of finding a solution. We feel the necessity of a social revolution; rich and poor alike recognize that this revolution is imminent, that it may break out in a very few years.

A great change in thought has been accomplished during the last half of the nineteenth century; but suppressed, as it was, by the propertied classes, and denied its natural development, this new spirit must break now its bonds by violence and realize itself in a revolution.

Whence comes the revolution, and how will it announce its coming? None can answer the questions. The future is hidden. But those who watch and think do not misinterpret the signs: workers and exploiters, Revolutionists and Conservatives, thinkers and men of action, all feel that the revolution is at our doors.

Well! What are we to do when the thunderbolt has fallen?

We have all been studying the dramatic side of revolution so much, and the practical work of a revolution so little, that we are apt to see only the stage effects, so to speak, of these great movements: the fight of the first days; the barricades. But this fight, this first skirmish, is soon ended, and it is only after the overthrow of the old constitution that the real work of revolution can be said to begin.

Effete and powerless, attacked on all sides, the old rulers are soon swept away by the breath of insurrection. In a few days the middle-class monarchy of 1848 was no more, and while Louis Philippe was making good his escape in a cab, Paris had already forgotten her “citizen king.” The government of Thiers disappeared, on the 18th of March, 1871, in a few hours, leaving Paris mistress of her destinies. Yet 1848 and 1871 were only insurrections. Before a popular revolution the masters of “the old order” disappear with a surprising rapidity. Its upholders fly the country, to plot in safety elsewhere and to devise measures for their return.

The former Government having disappeared, the army, hesitating before the tide of popular opinion, no longer obeys its commanders, who have also prudently decamped. The troops stand by

without interfering, or join the rebels. The police, standing at ease, are uncertain whether to belabour the crowd or to cry: “Long live the Commune!” while some retire to their quarters “to await the pleasure of the new Government.” Wealthy citizens pack their trunks and betake themselves to places of safety. The people remain. This is how a revolution is ushered in. In several large towns the Commune is proclaimed. In the streets wander thousands of men, who in the evening crowd into improvised clubs asking: “What shall we do?” and ardently discuss public affairs, in which all take an interest; those who yesterday were most indifferent are perhaps the most zealous. Everywhere there is plenty of goodwill and a keen desire to make victory certain. It is a time of supreme devotion. The people are ready to go forward.

All this is splendid, sublime; but still, it is not a revolution. Nay, it is only now that the work of the revolutionist begins.

Doubtless the thirst for vengeance will be satisfied. The Watrins and the Thomases will pay the penalty of their unpopularity, but that is only an incident of the struggle and not a revolution.

Socialist politicians, radicals, neglected geniuses of journalism, stump orators, middle-class citizens, and workmen hurry to the Town Hall, to the Government offices, and take possession of the vacant seats. Some rejoice their hearts with galloon, admire themselves in ministerial mirrors, and study to give orders with an air of importance appropriate to their new position. They must have a red sash, an embroidered cap, and magisterial gestures to impress their comrades of the office or the workshop! Others bury themselves in official papers, trying, with the best of wills, to make head and tail of them. They indite laws and issue high-flown worded decrees that nobody takes the trouble to carry out — because the revolution has come. To give themselves an authority which is lacking they seek the sanction of old forms of Government. They take the names of “Provisional Government,” “Committee of Public Safety,” “Mayor,” “Governor of the Town Hall,” “Commissioner of Public Weal,” and what not. Elected or acclaimed, they assemble in Boards or in Communal Councils. These bodies include men of ten or twenty different schools, which, if not exactly “private chapels,” are at least so many sects which represent as many ways of regarding the scope, the bearing, and the goal of the revolution. Possibilists, Collectivists, Radicals, Jacobins, Blanquists, are thrust together, and waste time in wordy warfare. Honest men come into contact with ambitious ones, whose only dream is power and who spurn the crowd whence they sprung. Coming together with diametrically opposed views, they are forced to form arbitrary alliances in order to create majorities that can but last a day. Wrangling, calling each other reactionaries, authoritarians, and rascals, incapable of coming to an understanding on any serious measure, dragged into discussions about trifles, producing nothing better than bombastic proclamations, yet taking themselves seriously, unwitting that the real strength of the movement is in the streets.

All this may please those who like the theatre, but it is not revolution. Nothing yet has been accomplished. Meanwhile the people suffer. The factories are idle, the workshops closed; industry is at a standstill. The worker does not even earn the meagre wage which was his before. Food goes up in price. With that heroic devotion which has always characterized them, and which in great crises reaches the sublime, the people wait patiently. “We place these three months of want at the service of the Republic,” they said in 1848, while “their representatives” and the gentlemen of the new Government, down to the meanest Jack-in-office, received their salary regularly.

The people suffer. With the childlike faith, with the good humour of the masses who believe in their leaders, they think that “yonder,” in the House, in the Town Hall, in the Committee of Public Safety, their welfare is being considered. But “yonder” they are discussing everything under the sun except the welfare of the people. In 1793, while famine ravaged France and crippled the Revolution, whilst the people were reduced to the depths of misery, whilst the Champs Élysée were lined with luxurious carriages where women displayed their jewels and splendour, Robespierre was urging the

Jacobins to discuss his treatise on the English Constitution. While the worker was suffering in 1848 from the general stoppage of trade the Provisional Government and the House were wrangling over military pensions and prison labour, without troubling how the people were to live during this crisis. And could one cast a reproach at the Paris Commune, which was born beneath the Prussian cannon and lasted only seventy days, it would be for this same error — this failure to understand that the Revolution could not triumph unless those who fought on its side were fed, that on fifteen pence a day a man cannot fight on the ramparts and at the same time support a family.

The people suffer and say: “How to find the way out of these difficulties?”

III

It seems to us that there is only one answer to this question: We must recognize, and loudly proclaim, that every one, whatever his grade in the old society, whether strong or weak, capable or incapable, has, before everything, THE RIGHT TO LIVE, and that society is bound to share amongst all, without exception, the means of existence at its disposal. We must acknowledge this, and proclaim it aloud, and act up to it.

It must be so contrived that from the first day of the revolution the worker shall know that a new era is opening before him; that henceforward none need crouch under the bridges, with palaces half-ruined by, none need fast in the midst of food, none need perish with cold near shops full of furs; that all for all, in practice as well as in theory, and that at last, for the first time in history, a revolution has been accomplished which considers the NEEDS of the people before schooling them in their DUTIES.

This cannot be brought about by Acts of Parliament, but only by taking immediate and effective possession of all that is necessary to ensure the well-being of all; this is the only really scientific way of going to work, the only way to be understood and desired by the mass of the people. We must take possession, in the name of the people, of the granaries, the shops full of clothing, and the dwelling-houses. Nothing must be wasted. We must organize without delay to feed the hungry, to satisfy all wants, to meet all needs, to produce, not for the special benefit of this one or that one, but to ensure that society as a whole will live and grow.

Enough of ambiguous words like “the right to work,” with which the people were misled in 1848 and which are still used to mislead them. Let us have the courage to recognize that *Well-being for all* henceforward possible, must be realized.

When the workers claimed the right to work in 1848, national and municipal workshops were organized, and workmen were sent to drudge there at the rate of is. 8d. a day! When they asked that labour should be organized, the reply was: “Patience, friends, the Government will see to it; meantime here is your is. 8d. Rest now, brave toiler, after your lifelong struggle for food!” Meantime the cannons were trained, the reserves called out, and the workers themselves disorganized by the methods well known to the middle classes, till one fine day they were told to go and colonize Africa and be shot down.

Very different will be the result if the workers claim the right to well-being! In claiming that right they claim the right to possess the wealth of the community — to take the houses to dwell in according to the needs of each family; to seize the stores of food and learn the meaning of plenty, after having known famine too well. They proclaim their right to all wealth — fruit of the labour of past and present generations — and learn by its means to enjoy those higher pleasures of art and science too long monopolized by the middle classes.

And while asserting their right to live in comfort, they assert, what is still more important, the right to decide for themselves what this comfort shall be, what must be produced to ensure it, and what discarded as no longer of value.

The “right to well-being” means the possibility of living like human beings, and of bringing up children to be members of a society better than ours, whilst the “right to work” only means the right to be always a wage-slave, a drudge, ruled over and exploited by the middle class of the future. The right to well-being is the Social Revolution, the right to work means nothing but the Treadmill of Commercialism. It is high time for the worker to assert his right to the common inheritance and enter into possession.

CHAPTER III

ANARCHIST COMMUNISM

I

EVERY society which has abolished private property will be forced, we maintain, to organize itself on the lines of Communistic Anarchy. Anarchy leads to Communism, and Communism to Anarchy, both alike being expressions of the predominant tendency in modern societies, the pursuit of equality.

Time was when a peasant family could consider the corn which it grew, or the woollen garments woven in the cottage, as the products of its own toil. But even then this way of looking at things was not quite correct. There were the roads and the bridges made in common, the swamps drained by common toil, and the communal pastures enclosed by hedges which were kept in repair by each and all. If the looms for weaving or the dyes for colouring fabrics were improved, all profited; so even those days a peasant family could not live alone, but was dependent in a thousand ways on the village or the commune.

But nowadays, in the present state of industry, when everything is interdependent, when each branch of production is knit up with all the rest, the attempt to claim an Individualist origin for the products of industry is absolutely untenable. The astonishing perfection attained by the textile and mining industries in civilized countries is due to the simultaneous development of a thousand other industries, great and small, to the extension of the railroad system, to inter-oceanic navigation, to the manual skill of thousands of workers, to a certain standard of culture reached by the working class as a whole, to the labours, in short, of men in every corner of the globe.

The Italians who died of cholera while making the Suez Canal, or of ankylosis in the St. Gothard Tunnel, and the Americans mowed down by shot and shell while fighting for the abolition of slavery, have helped to develop the cotton industry in France and England, as well as the work-girls who languish in the factories of Manchester and Rouen, and the inventor who (following the suggestion of some worker) succeeds in improving the looms.

How, then, shall we estimate the share of each in the riches which ALL contribute to amass?

Looking at production from this general, synthetic point of view, we cannot hold with the Collectivists that payment proportionate to the hours of labour rendered by each would be an ideal arrangement, or even a step in the right direction.

Without discussing whether exchange value of goods is really measured in existing societies by the amount of work necessary to produce it — according to the doctrine of Smith and Ricardo, in whose footsteps Marx has followed — suffice it to say here, leaving ourselves free to return to the subject later, that the Collectivist ideal appears to us untenable in a society which considers the instruments of labour as a common inheritance. Starting from this principle, such a society would find itself forced from the very outset to abandon all forms of wages.

The mitigated individualism of the collectivist system certainly could not maintain itself alongside a partial communism — the socialization of land and the instruments of production. A new form of property requires a new form of remuneration. A new method of production cannot exist side by side with the old forms of consumption, any more than it can adapt itself to the old forms of political organization.

The wage system arises out of the individual ownership of the land and the instruments of labour. It was the necessary condition for the development of capitalist production, and will perish with it, in spite of the attempt to disguise it as “profit-sharing.” The common possession of the instruments

labour must necessarily bring with it the enjoyment in common of the fruits of common labour.

~~We hold further that Communism is not only desirable, but that existing societies, founded on Individualism, are inevitably impelled in the direction of Communism.~~ The development of Individualism during the last three centuries is explained by the efforts of the individual to protect himself from the tyranny of Capital and of the State. For a time he imagined, and those who expressed his thought for him declared, that he could free himself entirely from the State and from society. "Enough means of money," he said, "I can buy all that I need." But the individual was on a wrong tack, and modern history has taught him to recognize that, without the help of all, he can do nothing, although his strong-boxes are full of gold.

In fact, alongside this current of Individualism, we find in all modern history a tendency, on the one hand, to retain all that remains of the partial Communism of antiquity, and, on the other, to establish the Communist principle in the thousand developments of modern life.

As soon as the communes of the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries had succeeded in emancipating themselves from their lords, ecclesiastical or lay, their communal labour and communal consumption began to extend and develop rapidly. The township — and not private persons — freighted ships and equipped expeditions, and the benefit arising from the foreign trade did not accrue to individuals, but was shared by all. The townships also bought provisions for their citizens. Traces of these institutions have lingered on into the nineteenth century, and the folk piously cherish the memory of them in their legends.

All that has disappeared. But the rural township still struggles to preserve the last traces of the Communism, and it succeeds — except when the State throws its heavy sword into the balance.

Meanwhile new organizations, based on the same principle — *to every man according to his needs* — spring up under a thousand different forms; for without a certain leaven of Communism the present societies could not exist. In spite of the narrowly egoistic turn given to men's minds by the commercial system, the tendency towards Communism is constantly appearing, and influences our activities in a variety of ways.

The bridges, for the use of which a toll was levied in the old days, are now become public property and free to all; so are the high roads, except in the East, where a toll is still exacted from the traveller for every mile of his journey. Museums, free libraries, free schools, free meals for children; parks and gardens open to all; streets paved and lighted, free to all; water supplied to every house without measure or stint — all such arrangements are founded on the principle: "Take what you need."

The tramways and railways have already introduced monthly and annual season tickets, without limiting the number of journeys taken; and two nations, Hungary and Russia, have introduced on the railways the zone system, which permits the holder to travel five hundred or a thousand miles for the same price. It is but a short step from that to a uniform charge, such as already prevails in the postal service. In all these innovations, and a thousand others, the tendency is not to measure the individual consumption. One man wants to travel a thousand miles, another five hundred. These are personal requirements. There is no sufficient reason why one should pay twice as much as the other because his need is twice as great. Such are the signs which appear even now in our individualist societies.

Moreover, there is a tendency, though still a feeble one, to consider the needs of the individual irrespective of his past or possible services to the community. We are beginning to think of society as a whole, each part of which is so intimately bound up with the others that a service rendered to one is a service rendered to all.

When you go into a public library — not indeed the National Library of Paris, but, say, into the British Museum or the Berlin Library — the librarian does not ask what services you have rendered to society before giving you the book, or the fifty books which you require, and he comes to your assistance if you do not know how to manage the catalogue. By means of uniform credentials — an

very often a contribution of work is preferred — the scientific society opens its museums, its garden, its library, its laboratories, and its annual conversaciones to each of its members, whether he be Darwin, or a simple amateur.

At St. Petersburg, if you are pursuing an invention, you go into a special laboratory or a workshop where you are given a place, a carpenter's bench, a turning lathe, all the necessary tools and scientific instruments, provided only you know how to use them; and you are allowed to work there as long as you please. There are the tools; interest others in your idea, join with fellow workers skilled in various crafts, or work alone if you prefer it. Invent a flying machine, or invent nothing — that is your own affair. You are pursuing an idea — that is enough.

In the same way, those who man the lifeboat do not ask credentials from the crew of a sinking ship; they launch their boat, risk their lives in the raging waves, and sometimes perish, all to save men whom they do not even know. And what need to know them? "They are human beings, and they need our aid — that is enough, that establishes their right — To the rescue!"

Thus we find a tendency, eminently communistic, springing up on all sides, and in various guises in the very heart of theoretically individualist societies.

Suppose that one of our great cities, so egotistic in ordinary times, were visited to-morrow by some calamity — a siege, for instance — that same selfish city would decide that the first needs to satisfy were those of the children and the aged. Without asking what services they had rendered, or were likely to render to society, it would first of all feed them. Then the combatants would be cared for irrespective of the courage or the intelligence which each has displayed, and thousands of men and women would outvie each other in unselfish devotion to the wounded.

This tendency exists and is felt as soon as the most pressing needs of each are satisfied, and in proportion as the productive power of the race increases. It becomes an active force every time a great idea comes to oust the mean preoccupations of everyday life.

How can we doubt, then, that when the instruments of production are placed at the service of all when business is conducted on Communist principles, when labour, having recovered its place of honour in society, produces much more than is necessary to all — how can we doubt but that this force (already so powerful) will enlarge its sphere of action till it becomes the ruling principle of social life?

Following these indications, and considering further the practical side of expropriation, of which we shall speak in the following chapters, we are convinced that our first obligation, when the revolution shall have broken the power upholding the present system, will be to realize Communism without delay.

But ours is neither the Communism of Fourier and the Phalansteriens, nor of the German State Socialists. It is Anarchist Communism, — Communism without government — the Communism of the Free. It is the synthesis of the two ideals pursued by humanity throughout the ages — Economic and Political Liberty.

II

In taking "Anarchy" for our ideal of political organization we are only giving expression to another marked tendency of human progress. Whenever European societies have developed up to a certain point they have shaken off the yoke of authority and substituted a system founded roughly more or less on the principles of individual liberty. And history shows us that these periods of partial or general revolution, when the governments were overthrown, were also periods of sudden progress both in the economic and the intellectual field. Now it is the enfranchisement of the communes, whose monuments, produced by the free labour of the guilds, have never been surpassed; now it is the

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