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An Epoch of Anarchist Controversy. Holding that Equality of Opportunity alone constitutes Liberty that is the Absence of Monopoly Price and Competition Cannot Exist, and that Communism is an Inevitable Consequence.

Communist Controversy.

I am sorry I failed to make my position sufficiently clear in the several articles which I have written for The Firebrand, but it is perhaps impossible for one to convey the exact impression desired to the minds of others without going into greater detail than would be possible in contributing to the columns of a journal whose space is so limited as is that of The Firebrand. All that can be attempted is a fairly accurate presentation of general principles, leaving their application to the reader.

So far as I am present able to judge, your position and mine on the several aspects of scientific Anarchism are the same. If we differ at all, it is in our definitions of terms and in our application of principles to social facts, not in our conceptions of the integrity of the principles themselves. For your information I will lay down a few fundamental statements of my position, which will probably aid you to place me properly in the future discussion. I may change my views in part, and which will also enable you to test the logic of any thesis which I may chance to maintain.

1.—I am an Anarchist, with all that the term implies. I utterly repudiate the state, government, authority of all description which emanates from the human will; and I hold myself subject to the dictates only of my own reason and of demonstrated natural facts.

2.—Because I am an Anarchist, I am a Communist with all that the term implies in the anarcho-communist sense. I hold that, only in the communistic society is true Anarchism possible of attainment; until we have reached Communism we have not yet reached Anarchy; the terms are identical and interchangeable. Like yourself, I admit of no compromise between the idea of a so-called Individualism-Anarchism and that of Anarchist-Communism; that is, of course, considering the Individualist idea in the form in which it is at present being presented—as an ultimate theory. The Individualists (so-called) are not true Anarchists. They are merely the pioneers of Anarchy. They are simply blazing the way to Anarchy. They retain the view of property and authority with reluctance to their administration of the most vitally important category of social endeavor. The unalienableness of their position will finally become patent to the veriest tyro in anarchistic philosophy.

3.—In the words of Proudhon, "Property is robbery." There can be no such thing as property in a state of Anarchism, because whoever exercises the right of property is an invader of the rights and liberties of others; it is a robbery. Mr. Byington asks me to state what property is. I shall probably take the first opportunity to furnish Mr. Byington with the information desired, and I shall do so without as formal a form as possible. The right of property is the right which constitutes the essence of legal recognition of ownership, of reaping the fruits of the productive exploitation of natural opportunities, or material realization of any description, without the exercising the functions of use and possession; the right, in short, which enables one to enjoy the fruits of the labor of others without in any manner contribute to the benefit of such labor. The proprietor, as such, must, without even the exercise of labor, either with hand or brain, for not exercising towards himself his legally recognized right of exclusion. His title—title, interest, property—expresses the right of limitation on the production and consumption of wealth which the law has endowed him with, and is pure robbery. It enables one, for instance, to reap the benefit of the labor of a multitude in the wheat fields of California or Argentina, in the gold and diamond fields of Africa, while perchance dwelling in London or New York, without having ever seen the property from which such tribute is drawn. It constitutes a measure of the activities and aspirations of humanity on every hand, and in its last analysis, as Proudhon has clearly shown, is an impossible right. Now, this right to enjoy without labor the fruits of others' labor, either by the exercise of personal labor, or by use or possession constitutes the essential nature of property, it is really all there is to the right of property, and it requires the whole power of the state for its maintenance.

4.—From property and the limitations established in the attempt to realize its impossible right springs, first, value; and, next, competition, as a "means of realizing such value in the several categories—rent, interest, profit," in which it appears. Whenever the right of property is not exercised, as between the several members of a single family, for instance, there is never a thought of value, and competition in the economic sense never makes its appearance. These two manifestations, which are the separate manifestations of the same force, property in the abstract, are, I suppose, the cause of all wars. They are inconceivable and absurd, they are, in short, unthinkable in such a connection.

5.—The right of life and possession is a natural right. I am not concerned with any metaphysical, religious, or socialistic objections; I am interested in the nature of natural rights and whether or not such rights really do exist—to be freely exercised by each and every human being, to the full extent of their capacities and capacity for enjoyment, and communisantes with each one's needs, as determined by himself. With the right of property abolished, the sterility of...
right of use and possession means absolute, unbounded, unrestricted liberty for each individual. The attempt of the human intellect to set limits to liberty, the attempt to qualify it in some way, to establish degrees, or set bounds to it by limitation or qualification, to say that men shall have equal but not absolute liberty, to say that each man's liberty shall be limited by the equal liberty of every other man, is merely a nonsensical play upon words; it is more ephemeral, rather than the possession of these qualifying phrases have not yet arrived at a true conception of liberty—they are not yet Anarchists. There can be no such thing as a limited or qualified liberty in the sense that the word is used in the code of laws. But in the sense that it is capable of being measured by the human intellect, or of having its boundaries defined by a consensus of human opinion. The limits to liberty have been established by nature. Such limits are not restrictions; they do not press upon one, and are felt no more than are other natural facts with which men are surrounded and to which their lives must conform, because they are set at the extreme boundary of each one's aptitude, capacity, at a point where it is simply impossible for him to go further along the line of his wants and aspirations. The limit to liberty lies in the constitution of each individual by himself. Whenever a man has used his possession and to the extreme limit of his needs, and capacities for satisfying them, he has reached the limit of his liberty, and he cannot go beyond that point without transgressing the law and the liberty of other men. To enable him to get beyond his limitations, and so permit him to trench upon the liberty of others, he must exercise a right of property. The right of property is the only thing that makes him bigger than nature intended he should be, and so gives him the power of invasion which the individualists talk about. When a man has no liberty, but only a right of use and possession, each man must keep within the limits of his nature, and there can be no such thing as a conflict or liberty.

5. At this point I may assert that, I am a thorough, uncompromising individualist, in the sense in which we are all individualists, that is, in the only sense in which the term has any real meaning; namely, I hold the extreme boundary of each one's aptitude, capacity, at a point where it is simply impossible for him to go further along the line of his wants and aspirations. The limit to liberty lies in the constitution of each individual by himself. Whenever a man has used his possession and to the extreme limit of his needs, and capacities for satisfying them, he has reached the limit of his liberty, and he cannot go beyond that point without transgressing the law and the liberty of other men. To enable him to get beyond his limitations, and so permit him to trench upon the liberty of others, he must exercise a right of property. The right of property is the only thing that makes him bigger than nature intended he should be, and so gives him the power of invasion which the individualists talk about. When a man has no liberty, but only a right of use and possession, each man must keep within the limits of his nature, and there can be no such thing as a conflict or liberty.

6. On this basis we may take account of social needs and the needs of men, and deduce the form of association which the satisfaction of their individual needs is likely to lead them to assume. Remembering that property no longer exists, that, with the disappearance of its forms of manifestation there is absolutely no further motive to support industrial competition—competition is always an effort to realize some form of property right, and without question it could not be—and remembering that it is natural for men to take the easiest method for the satisfaction of their desires, then it is perfectly rational to assume that men will enter into such social association as will most readily and effectually conduct to the satisfaction of their individual wants. The vast economies and satisfactions that are available to be enjoyed by the individual through associated effort and division of labor will be universally desired. And as, because of the absence of property, these cannot be enjoyed by the individual in his own form, but by the group, the scheme of association will infallibly be the one best calculated to realize the use form. This scheme is undoubtedly and indisputably Communist. It is the only possible form of economic association, freely entered into by free individuals as the best and most rational economic scheme imaginable for the satisfaction of all of a society's needs and the liberty of individuals it is rather an extension of liberty, or rather, a widening of its boundaries, by introducing a balance of capacities and aptitudes for labor, and allowing even the highest capacities to realize greater satisfaction and more facile composition of wants and the like, with the term implies, and so the qualification of full, unrestricted and complete individual liberty. Free competition is impossible, because competition always implies a prior effort to realize a property right, and property is the negation of freedom. You will then wonder at my use of the term in No. 24 of The Firebrand.

At this point I used the term Franklinist, I should have been more correct, and less liable to misapprehension, if I had said, from the Individualist-Anarchist standpoint, that I meant what I said to say. My effort was to indicate a line of thought along the evolutionary hypothesis which would tend to show the unenlightenment of the Individualist position. Concealing, thus, the theoretical soundness of their main contentment it is possible to show, by a logical application of a thesis which they accept themselves as sound, that the development of their schemes must be limited by the social, political, and military limits of the community, or of any of these other side of their initial force, because neither competition nor monopoly can exist without the existence of both together: and monopoly of course, is entirely a product of economic conditions, or of political force. With their competition they may destroy the present capitalist monopoly, but only to establish what might be termed Anarchist Monopoly, and that, of course, is impossible.

The soundness of my position was virtually conceded by Fulton, in a personal letter which I had from him some time ago, the following extract from which I quote:

"Competition will be out of place in Anarchy, as the competitors would only ruin themselves. But there would be the possibility of competition in order to destroy monopoly in any line: or if a monopoly or one system should grow out of any function, to let the possibility of competition guard it from becoming exorbitant in its charges."

As monopoly is not possible without property, the above quotation is equivalent to admission that the so-called Individualist-Anarchists are not Anarchists at all. Of course it is possible to kill monopoly by competition, just as it is possible to kill competition by monopoly; but both terms imply a right of property which is inconsistent with the fundamental principles of an Anarchist and Commune and Anarchy there could arise neither possibility, and the admission of such possibility is a virtual surrender of the whole anarchist contention. The Individualists, then, so far as they remain Anarchists, are not Anarchists.

The trouble with the Individualists is, their notion of Communism is antiquated. They have not improved a hand's breadth on Proudhon's thesis, and his thesis is essentially sound. The Communism which he condemned, and which he placed at the opposite pole from property, saying that property is the robbery of the weak for the benefit of the strong while the Communism is the robbery of the strong for the benefit of the weak, was naught but Fourierism and St. Simonism. This is the sort of Communism he criticizes, and he nowhere gives evidence of having any comprehension of the essence of Communism.

In attempting to establish a correct principle on the assumed equilibrium of the principles which he placed in opposition to each other, he made a immutable handshake of ethical and social science, which he denominated Anarchy, and his followers to this day have copied his errors as well as his truths. They have not yet, in fact, advanced an inch.

Assuming that the true social principle is to be found between the two principles which he condemns, then the one that stands midway between Free Communism, which admits none of the evils either of property or authoritarian communism.

So far as the efforts of the Individualists to destroy the chief所 referred to, the limit of the state's rights, such as property, interest, etc., is concerned, by means of mutual banking, labor exchange, and such like schemes, I have no objection to them, and freely concede that they are theoretically sound, and as far as they go are forces for progress, and I have no objection whatever to them, but as an Anarchist I do not feel bound to do so, and when they are presented in the guise of ultimate adjustments I must object to their validity.

—from W. P. Boreland

John Turner in Chicago.

John Turner in Chicago.

Never in the history of the labor movement in this city has an Anarchist made such a favorable impression upon so large and varied a body of people. His recent statements on the subject of anarchism have been referred to in the newspapers from his name at all, realizing probably that the "Schoolmaster is abroad," and the campaign of education is on, knowing that they could not afford to antagonize the opinions of the common people. This was a wise move and I am sure we can all agree with it.

In the midst of the "dog days" with the thermometer higher than ever known in the memory of the "oldest inhabitant" John Turner accomplished an artistic social, moral, and financial success, which is indeed astonishing. He has had charge of Turner in Chicago. This church is an anomaly amongst Churches. So heterogeneous is it, that it is called the "Way of the World." With its motto: The Brotherhood of man and the solidarity of labor, believing in rescuing the body of man from hell while on earth, bearing the dead future to the care of orthodox Churches. In fact it is a Meeting Place for the proletariat to study political, social, economic and industrial problems, from the standpoint of working men, with Mr. Turner before this body, his subjects being, "Church and State third twin enemies of the people," and the "Evolution and Theology." The hall was packed almost to suffocation on this occasion.

Turner spoke twenty-four times during the eight days he was in the city, besides taking up to Racine, and giving a lecture there.

The thanks of all sympathizers, especially the Chicago comrades, is due to the following organizations for their moral support. Bureau of information and education; Bicycle Workers Union No. 2, German Typo Union No. 9, German Printers Union No. 275, Beer Barrel Cooper Union, Tablers Executive Board, Metal Workers Union No. 1, German Declarating Club. Turner spoke before the following bodies, for one hour or more on some phase of the labor problem, being received with resounding enthusiasm.

The Central Labor Union, The Labor Congress, Building Trades Council, Americanized Sheet Metal Workers, Bricklayers and Stone Masons Union, Wood Workers Union No. 67, Journeymen Tailors No. 6, Hardware Union No. 18, Carpenters Union No. 1 and 10, Metal Polishers Union No. 6. He also lectured before the radical wing of the Populist Party, The Hall House Social Settlement, The City Club, and The Self Culture Society. He also lectured at Desplaines, a "dead to the world" village a few miles out of Chicago. A Lecture before the Single Tax club on Anarchist-Communism was one of the most edifying, enjoyable meetings of the series.

It was soul-soothing to hear a singleaxon confess publicly that he had learned something, and that from an Anarchist. Previously, when their shining lights should be abscn in the latter

—umb with the right of the season, as the Chicago Chronicle said it was as evident in every crowd that the tax club had seen inside his rooms in many months.

We tried our utmost to induce the political socialists to come out of their shells and debate with Turner, offering to pay all expenses and guarantee fair treatment. Challenges couched in parliamentary and courteous language were sent to all the leaders of this school of politicians and erstwhile economic revolutionists, and the result was the same. The only fault is that he stops thinking when he hears the word Anarchist, refused to enter the idea, and so was unable to make a debate between such well known representatives of the purpose of arousing interest among these ladies. Mrs. Florence Kelly, the most erudite Karl Marx socialist in the country, is also destined to debate with Turner. The intolent and vicious Dan DeLeonites a grand les

in courtesy and good breeding by inviting Turner to
dinner, which he accepted in the spirit in which it was given. Paul Elmhurst, the right-bower of Morgan and state(?) of the local S. P. L., whose word is law also declined. William Brown, national organizer of the S. P. L., was in town, but he, too, declined to debate.

The business of the Building Trades Council was we granted the privilege of using their hall for a debate between John Turner and John Z. White, the highest of the two, in which the expressions of public opinion did not丝毫不然 so as far as to get the State aside altogether at once, though we might come nearer to that than some of us think. It is not the business of a state to indicate what her views are, nor is it our business to indicate what her views are. It is certainly worth while to see if we agree as to what the State is.

I have no plan of campaign; I am trying to get a clear idea of the conditions under which we have to fight, and to see whether others agree with me. We are not only fighting because it is practically important to know whether the national or State government is our most dangerous oppressor; if we should agree that the matter is most important, it would be well to know that the condition of the economic oppression came mostly from the United States, other oppression from the individual States; but in making out my list of economic oppressions I concluded that State and Nation were pretty evenly balanced in that regard.

Another important question is what particular parts of government do most to maintain the public feeling that government is necessary. It seems to me that the money question has a dispropor- tionate influence in this connection, because of the widespread conviction of many that more of that is of supreme importance and that the government stamp is what makes money. For this reason I think we can hardly set too high a value on the exchange movement, which makes men furnish their own money, without looking to the government, and thereby getting a better idea of what government is than the government furnishes. In my judgment in Anarchism is practical and up to date unless he is posted on the Labor Exchange, and the best way I know for getting posted is to get to the Labor Exchange." 109 W. Santa Rosano St., Santa Jose, Cal., which is 90 into a year or three months on trial for 10c.

Let me say in conclusion that I think that the last book of Addisons article already referred to, containing "The success of my staggered opinion of success of self-sufficiency of government" and suggestions as to the things that might be done, in that line, is half done and need not be done in any space of time. I hope any one who can give me of the same sort will do so. S. T. BINGTONG.

Another Victim.

HERMAN EICH, the rag-picker poet, is no more. He was a German Jew about 32 years old. In this city he followed the calling of junkman. He was not one to be suspected of a sympathetic or tender nature, or of ability to express his utmost sensations in the language of the poet. But his contributions to The Firebrand speak volumes for the aesthetic nature and active brain hidden under so rugged an outward form. He was something of a following verses, from "A Force," published some time ago in The Firebrand, called forth by (the fiercely-waging brother-sister), shows:

"With wild despair is in my heart;

The child of God is filled with joy but mourning;

Right colors of the waving spring;

And the sun weepeth and the brightness of hope." 234567890

If you were happy, and had not a care in the world, you might perhaps wonder why you had not another woman.

Would that fierce winter might beleve

The song of the birds and the soft colors of the

And if for him earth be harrowed and life, which was a struggle, has (undergone) to the wide chasm.

Only then, I know, will it be known who was in the

Before starting on his last journey, our comrades left in care of The Firebrand all his effects, which consist of a small collection of his verses, many of which have appeared in The Firebrand, a drama entitled "The

Curses of Poverty," a short story of two, letters, a photograph of a sister—nothing more. He was alone in the world—let his verses say why:

"The foolish beast—by art thee beastage

Kneel not to mine beyond the greater

Fire and I must end this wild speculation

Put beyond the rolling seas of project

I must stay, and, aye, righting

Sleep in the heart, not yours in the brain.

And I dream, and see her weeping,

And in her time, I will weeping her not.

In this issue is reprinted one of his best poems, which has been of late years much used since its original publication. Others may appear later.

J. H. M.

What is Absolute Liberty?

I am not ready to condemn the principles of Anarchy as long as I don't fully understand them. I am in favor of the clothes that are meant to be the greatest benefit to the greatest number, and for a better and higher standard of civilization. I think that we need to advocate "absolute liberty" and "liberty of opportunity," or free and unfettered opportunities, entirely too meaner from which to get the idea how to master life in some degree, or, in other words, how to manage one's own life. In my view, a man and woman cannot live in isolation without making him an antecedent over others. If every person could be taught to strictly observe the principles of Morality, to do right, i.e., to do to others as we would have them do to us, and not to do others that which we would not have them do to us, then every one would be inclined to do so voluntarily pleased to do so. Then we could all enjoy absolute liberty, i.e., we would enjoy all the liberty we desire, which is to return the absolute liberty the same as our own and have no desire for anything more. If a man may injure, harm, or interfere with the proper rights and liberty of others, we might as well have all that we call "absolute liberty" or "liberty of opportunity." But when will that day come? Are these the principles that the society of Anarchists advocate? If so, then it is grand, but not practical, per se, for all individuals.

Now for example, there is no individual property except what we wear and all are entitled to all they need; it may be that there would be no desire for robbing or stealing and thus wipe out the struggle for existence, but what is to prevent offenses of some kind through imprudence? An individual liberty may kill another person, what is to be done with him? Let him go at large, with absolute liberty, unharmed, and in a way to be copied? How will you deal with violent crimes?

J. D. B.
The above is a part of a comment on the attitude of Harper's Weekly on the present Anarchist campaign and some statements in the same paper concerning how nearly the governments of great cities are run by and in the interest of street railway and other corporations.

In this connection, Nature uses the words royal, monarchical, and despotic in the true sense, and where he used to misuse the word Anarchist. We are glad to note the change of the Appeal to Reason. Perhaps our criticism of him is based on the fact that some of his readers discontinued their subscription on that account had something to do with it. H.A.

We do not wish to govern men directly, but to administer affairs, so we can control men's actions more effectually indirectly by controlling production, said a prominent R. L. P. leader to me recently. Now you of which the basic difficulty is to control the power of the machine.

The Socialist leaders expect you to control more completely than your political bosses do now.

We, the above, declare that we have come to see the protect if we have a railroad could operate without organization. (The White Slave.)

The S. L. P. leader referred to in the above, I think he is, the most influential and prominent Socialist on the Pacific coast.

When you talk with me of the laborer in the S. L. P., I think, are members of the S. L. P., De Leon amongst them, and find the idea of domination a common affection to us all. And does it not stand to reason that when the means of production are controlled, the commonwealth, that we have in the power to compel any and every one to do work unprofitable under our organization and the White Slave.