

# Why Socialists Oppose Anarchism. Its Fallacies and Dangers Exposed

Adolph Kohn

## Foreword

*This is compiled from a series of three articles in the Socialist Standard by Adolph Kohn in August, October and November of 1911.*

## Part 1

### The Difference is Fundamental

The evils of modern society stand out for all men to see, but the remedy is far less obvious. To arrive at the conclusion that Socialism is the real remedy involves patient study and investigation of the affairs of modern life.

Unfortunately, there are some workers who shun the duty of thinking out these “problems,” and they, therefore, fall a prey to the plausible plea of the Anarchist, who misrepresents, besides misunderstanding, the views of the Socialist.

The idea widely prevails that the difference between Socialism and Anarchism is simply one of methods—the end in view being the same. Far is this from being the case, however. The whole philosophy of the Socialist is at variance with the Anarchist position. A brief survey of the history of the Anarchist theory will make that clear.

The pioneer of Anarchism was Max Stirner, who, in “*The Individual and his Property*” (published in 1845), expounded the “philosophy” that lies at the root of all Anarchist teaching. The only “reality” that he recognised was that of the individual. In his own words:

“Away with everything that is not wholly and solely thy own affair. You think that my own concerns must at least be good ones? A fig for good and evil! I am I, and I am neither good nor evil. Neither has any meaning for me. The godly is the affair of God, the human that of humanity. My concern is neither the Good, the Right, the Free, etc., but simply my own self, and it is not general, it is individual as I myself am individual.”

Stirner’s views may well be summed up as Idealism run mad. For him there was no such process as evolution in society and the majority of the institutions of social life were but phantoms. He starts with a pure abstraction, the individual, but this afterwards stands unmasked as an individual of the bourgeoisie!

### Very Much Like Capitalism.

It is in opposing Communism that Stirner — as is inevitable with the logical Anarchist — shows the

bourgeois nature of his ideal.

“Communists think that the Commune should be property owner. On the contrary I am a property owner and can only agree with others as to my property. I am the owner of property but property is not sacred. Should I only be the holder of property? No, hitherto one was only the holder of property, assured of possession of a piece of land, but now everything belongs to me. I am the owner of everything I need and can get hold of. If the Socialist says society gives me what I need the Egoist says I take what I want. If the Communists behave like beggars the Egoist behaves like an owner of property.”

Stirner only objected to the State of his day because it interfered with his freedom as owner of commodities. Individual “rights” and desires were alone to be regarded, and to maintain them he advocated the formation of “Leagues of Egoists.” Shades of Individualism !

Stirner was followed by Proudhon, who took the same Utopian point of view. The whole mechanism of our social life is not the growth of more and more complex relations between man and man—developed through the connection established by industrial operations — but is born of men’s ideas! “The political constitution was conceived and gradually completed in the interest of order for want of a social constitution, the rules and principles of which could only be discovered as a result of long experience, and are even to-day the subject of Socialist controversy.” (*Confessions of a Revolutionist.* ) ,

Hence we see that epochs in human history are not viewed as necessary stages in the upward march of men from the time when, faced with only the elemental forces of nature, they slowly but steadily became masters of implements and powers, and by their influence arose the differing and progressing forms of social life. No, the Anarchist says that right down the ages men have been seeking the perfect society ; but it is only discovered in all its charm and beauty, now — by the Anarchists!

### **The Utopian Spirit of Anarchism.**

Stirner and Proudhon have been dealt with to show the Utopian nature of Anarchism in all its majesty. Go right through the Anarchist writings, from Stirner to Bakunine and Kropotkin and notice the same spirit through it all. Like all Utopians, they start out with an abstract principle, and endeavour to apply it so as to form a perfect society.

Proudhon plainly showed in his *“Philosophy of Misery,”* the petty bourgeois nature of his “system.” Individual ownership and control of the instruments of industry, with State regulation of prices so as to avoid industrial crises !

This great Anarchist even denounced Trades Unionism as an outrage against “the liberty of the individual.” This is the man whom Kropotkin acclaims as “the founder of Anarchism.”

Proudhon’s theories underwent but slight change at the hands of his successor. Michael Bakunine, “the Apostle of Universal Destruction.” Although claiming to believe in the common ownership of the means of life, his views demonstrated that Individual Anarchism is the only logical alternative to the opponent of Socialism.

At a Congress in Berne in 1869 Bakunine pleaded for “the economical and social equalisation of classes and individuals.” This is the same as Proudhon’s theory of the unity of Capital and Labour.

Continuing, Bakunine said “I detest Communism because it is the negation of Liberty.” The mental kinship of Bakunine with his Utopian predecessors is well established by his idealistic views. “I desire the radical extirpation of the principle of the authority and tutelage of the State, which has until now enslaved, exploited, oppressed and depraved men. I desire the abolition of property, individually hereditary, which is nothing hut a result of the principle of the State.”

### **Anarchism Ignores Evolution.**

The private ownership of the means of life has its roots, then, in the principle of the State!

Bakunine’s influence is very marked on his follower, the leading living Anarchist, Prince Kropotkin. Like the whole school of Anarchists, he ignores the trend of social evolution and invents a “perfect society” of the future. In the “*Conquest of Bread*” he says “It is of an Anarchist Communist society that we are about to speak, a society that will recognise the absolute liberty of the individual.” (Chap. XII.) In his address to the Jura Federation he said : “This ideal is not the product of the dreams of the study, but flows directly from the popular aspirations, that is in accord with the historical progress of culture and ideas.” This metaphysical vein permeates all Anarchist teaching. [Jean Grave](#), the prominent French Anarchist, in his “*Moribund Society and Anarchy*,” tells us that the conceptions of Anarchists “are in harmony with the physiological and psychological nature of man and in harmony with the observance of natural laws, while our actual organisation has been established in contradiction of all good logic and all good sense.”

The Socialist is a materialist, the Anarchist an idealist. The Socialist recognises social development as a consequence of the evolution of economic forces. The Anarchist view is well stated by Kropotkin in ‘Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal,’ as follows: “ The fact is that each phase of development of a society is a resultant of all the activities of the intellects which compose that society; it bears the imprint of all those millions of wills.”

### **The Socialist Position**

With the materialist conception of history as his guide, the Socialist correctly grasps the relation which prevailing institutions bear to the slavery of the working class. But turn to the bewilderingly vague writings of the Anarchists and you will find them filled with the most vain tirades against the State and every form of authority. “The State,” “Authority,” and “Law” are held to be the real cause of the workers’ sufferings, and the immediate abolition of the State is said to be “the only way.”

Against this the Socialist places the scientific position. The State is not born of a despot’s ideas — conceived and built up to do his bidding. Frederick Engels, in his brilliant work “*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*,” shows that the State as we know it, is but the final form of an institution which fulfilled a useful service in the social economy of the past. It arose as a part of the division of labour in early societies, and carried on the administration of public affairs. The advent of private property in the means of producing wealth gradually influenced the form of the State till it became the instrument of the ruling class.

The State has been the State of the chattel-slave owner, the State of the feudal nobility, and now it is the State of the industrial capitalist. It exists to day because there is a class to be kept in subjection. When the present subject class become organised and seize political power, their supremacy will have sounded the death-knell of the State. The working class being the last class to achieve its

freedom, its emancipation will end class distinctions: neither a dominant nor a subject class can exist when the ownership of the means of life is vested in the community.

Anarchists are fond of accusing Socialists of wanting to increase the power of the State. Marx and Engels are denounced by Kropotkin (*“Conquest of Bread”* and elsewhere) for this reason. Yet every student of these Socialist pioneers knows that they pointed out that when the toilers triumph the day of the State will be gone for ever. The Anarchist lament about tyranny under Socialism will be seen to be without foundation. Tyranny presupposes power, but when the instruments of production are commonly owned, power to oppress can no longer exist. Further, when wealth is no longer privately owned there is no incentive to tyrannise. There are no clashing interests—the mainspring of tyranny.

All Anarchist conceptions are vitiated by their misunderstanding of the nature of society. [W.C. Owen](#), in the pamphlet *“Anarchy versus Socialism,”* says: “Anarchy concentrates its attention on the individual, considering that only when absolute justice is done to him or her will it be possible to have a healthy and happy society. *For society is merely the ordinary individual multiplied indefinitely.*” The Socialist, on the contrary, holds to the view accepted universally in scientific circles to-day, viz., that society is something more than a number of individuals—society is an organism. Even the great anti-Socialist, Herbert Spencer, proved conclusively the organic nature of society.

As the result of their erroneous view, the Anarchists are wholly concerned with the individual. “Absolute liberty of the individual” is their cry. Ever busy discussing the “rights” of the individual and the tyranny of other than individual control of affairs, they lose sight of the importance of the economic necessities of society itself.

Consider the possibilities and needs of modern life. A great population covers the globe. These people need “food, clothing, and shelter” and a hundred and one other things that centuries of economic advance have accustomed them to and made part of their standard needs. How are these things to be supplied? What are the means at our disposal? To provide the things required the great machinery, etc., has to be used in accordance with the best and most productive methods. Association of the wealth producers is an imperative necessity of the future. This involves the organisation of industry, the division of labour, and the arrangement of processes in proper sequence. The distribution of wealth has to be organised, too, otherwise chaos and starvation ensue.

This is where Anarchism plainly fails, for it repudiates the very mainspring of organisation. It proclaims each individual a law unto himself. It stands for the universal play of “free agreement.” Apply that to industrial life and see how it would work out.

If the production and distribution of social necessities were to wait on the “free agreement” of all the industrial population to certain methods being pursued; if industry were to depend upon the whim and caprice of the members of society, then Nemesis would await us. The running of a railroad, the sailing of a ship, the building of a bridge, all these involve centralised control and speedy action.

The Socialist does not advocate Socialism as “the perfect system.” He seeks but to adapt institutions and customs to the changes in the mode of producing wealth. He claims that, subject to evolution, therefore, imperfect though it be, it is the best system possible in the circumstances that face us.

The common ownership of wealth is decreed as the only alternative to private ownership, and the method of production conditions the method of control. Democratic control is the complement of communal ownership. The Anarchist hates democracy, while the Socialist takes it for his constant guide. The Anarchist rejects the view that the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the masses, and believes that the action of an “intelligent minority” suffices. The rest will be carried along. Autocracy is the logical outcome of his method, and reaction the inevitable aftermath. Majority decisions are anathema to the Anarchist. He asserts that “the majority have ever erred.” Let us again quote Owen’s pamphlet.

“If the workers were to come into possession of the means of production tomorrow, the administration, under the most perfect system of universal suffrage—which we attained in this country years ago, and have been vainly trying to doctor into decent shape for generations past—would simply result in the creation of a special class of political managers, professing to act for the welfare of the majority. Were they as honest as the day, which it is folly to expect, they could only carry out the dictates of the majority, and those who did not agree to those dictates would find themselves outcasts.”

How do the Anarchists propose to administer affairs? How are means of production to be controlled? Kropotkin, in “*Anarchist Communism, its Basis and Principles*,” says they “must be managed in common by the producers of wealth.” Though freely denouncing democratic methods the Anarchists never face facts and state how the socially owned means of production are to be “commonly controlled” except through democratic channels (*i.e.*, “under the most perfect system of universal suffrage”). Individualist-Anarchism offers the only retreat for the “Anarchist-Communist,” and this involves the *individual ownership* and control of wealth producing instruments. In other words, the evolution of industry and the immense amount of wealth now required for our use must be ignored, and we are to return to handicraft and petty enterprise!

Democracy, to the Socialist, does not only mean the counting of heads. It implies opening all the means of knowledge to the entire population; giving access to every source of information and advancement to all—thus ensuring, as far as is humanly possible, that the vote is the deliberate expression of the will of equals. And if all do not agree, then ample justification exists for acting on the decision of the majority in matters of *social* importance. There is no other way. The minority are ever free to try to change the opinions of the majority, but they must loyally abide by the supreme views in the meantime. Without this all organisation is impossible, whether its ramifications extend to society or are extremely limited.

Though the Anarchists condemn democratic procedure, by stating that nobody can represent us but ourselves, they have to destroy their own theory when they begin to act. Of course, such times are very infrequent, but one such occurred at the last Anarchist congress (Amsterdam, Aug. 1907). There *representatives* of various bodies in different countries attended, and besides voting, they constituted an International Bureau “composed of five delegates.” (“Freedom” report.)

That is the Anarchist tribute to the soundness of Socialist criticism. It must be obvious that great populations cannot come together and discuss and arrange all matters in detail, but must *delegate* their authority to representatives. “Though the “Referendum” and “Initiative” are serviceable methods, they must be supplemented by delegation when occasion demands. Even the first two methods turn on majority rule in the last analysis.

In economics the Anarchist rivals the Anti-Socialist in misrepresentation of the Socialist position. Kropotkin attacks Marx (in “*The Wage System*”) for advocating the use of labour notes as a method of paying wages under Socialism, in spite of Marx’s repudiation of them in his “*Critique of Political Economy*” and the “*Poverty of Philosophy*.”

Marx and Engels analysed capitalist society and laid bare the process of exploiting the working class. In his three great volumes on the Production and Circulation of Capital, Marx demonstrates the true nature of Value, Price, and Profit, and buttresses his own theories by quotations from the classic writers of the nineteenth century. Yet the Anarchist “economists” continually accuse him of accepting the views of Smith, Ricardo, and others, without independent inquiry!

“It was from Malthus’ supposed law of population that Ricardo deduced his famous theory of rent which Henry George has made familiar to everybody, and on which Marx founded his ‘Scientific Socialism’ ” !

Thus the Anarchist pamphlet “[Anarchy and Malthus](#),” by C. L. James, published recently. In it we are also told that “the difference between *Anarchism and Socialism as we usually understand the later term is the difference between Malthus and Ricardo.*”

The whole pamphlet is typical of Anarchist confusion. Malthus’ moonshine is supported, and no praise seems sufficient for the priestly defender of the most inhuman methods capitalism used in its prime. Malthus is commended “with those who abolished slavery, repealed the Corn Laws, put an end to imprisonment for debt,” and “established the policy of peace.” Apart from this highly imaginative “history,” the Anarchist forgets to remark that Malthus was mainly occupied with such things as opposing Poor law relief “because it fostered the perpetuation of the unfit.”

Kropotkin’s “criticism” of the Marxian Surplus-Value theory is remarkable. He says (“*Conquest of Bread*“): “The evil of the present organisation is not that the ‘surplus-value’ of production passes over to the capitalist—as Robertus and Marx had contended. Surplus value itself is only a consequence of more profound causes. *The evil is that there can be any kind of ‘surplus value,’* instead of a surplus not consumed by each generation.”

Kropotkin and his followers also attack Marx for his scientific theory that control over capital concentrates into proportionately fewer hands along with its expansion. This is so plainly seen today that it is superfluous to deal with the Anarchists denial.

In the foregoing the unscientific and visionary character of Anarchist “philosophy” is established beyond cavil. Anarchism attracts to its ranks a motley gathering. Its lack of cohesion, its individualism and its Utopianism, have enabled it to embrace the most ill assorted set of votaries that ever nestled under one banner. From the proud Prince Kropotkin to the official [John Turner](#), it includes suppliers of every movement but ours. From Malthusians to anti morganatic marriage apostles, advocates of eight-hour and other piece-meal reforms, supporters of the Liberal Government like Morrison Davidson, and of the Labour Party like [Edward Carpenter](#)—these are the revolutionary Anarchists!

The Anarchist ranks have steadily dwindled in Britain, and their members apathetically drop away. Its Press makes a sporadic appearance. Accusations of being police spies lead to continual recrimination and permanent distrust among the “comrades.” Hence Anarchism’s decline, and its

inability to organise the working class.

But still the danger exists that those workers who have been sickened by the compromise, confusion, and betrayal of the Labour and pseudo-Socialist parties may succumb to the plea that because the fake political parties have failed to help them and advance their cause, Socialism is useless and Anarchism the only hope. Those who follow in the Anarchists' footsteps and ramble in the Utopian wilderness, but delay the time when they must inevitably come to see that the Socialist Party of Great Britain alone is sound, for its aims are revolutionary, its methods scientific, and its working democratic.

Loyalty to its principles and devotion to its aims will do far more to hasten the workers' emancipation than the will-'o-the-wisp notions of Anarchists and the dangerous policy they pursue. But the latter must be dealt with in the next issue.

## **Part 2.**

### **Its Fallacies and Dangers Exposed**

The false conception of social laws leads the Anarchists to the unsound and dangerous methods in which they indulge. The wild denunciations of the "State" and "government" and everybody vested with authority turns the heads of their ignorant followers. These uneducated worshippers of Anarchist fallacies, believing that this and that official is the real enemy, plan to make away with them, and they are inspired by the "propaganda by deed" teaching. Of course, they receive direct incitement to do so from the fountain-heads of Anarchist "philosophy." Jean Grave, in his "Moribund Society and Anarchy," teaches individual violence thus : "Let us suppose a struggle between employers and workmen — any sort of strike, In a strike there are surely some employers more cruel than others, who by their exactions have necessitated this strike, or by their intrigues have kept it up longer than was necessary ; without doubt these employers draw upon themselves the hatred of the workers. Let us suppose one of the like executed in some corner with a placard posted explaining that he had been killed as an exploiter, or that his factory had been burned from the same motive. In such a case there is no being mistaken as to the reasons prompting the authors of the deeds, and we may be sure they will be applauded by the whole labour world. Such are intelligent deeds which show that action should always follow guiding principle."

In the flourishing days of Anarchism in England, when they had captured the "Socialist League," after William Morris, Eleanor Marx and others had left it in disgust., the Anarchists used its organ, the "Commonweal," to push its reactionary propaganda. Thus D. J. Nichol, the editor, wrote of a Trafalgar Square meeting : "Some people condemned the throwing of the bomb at Chicago ; for my part I think it would have been well in London if a man had been found courageous enough to hurl death and destruction among the ruffians who attacked a peaceful meeting." (Nov. 11, 1891)

In the next issue they eulogised the Tennessee escaped prisoners who carried on open pillage in these terms : "You have shown the workers of America—aye, and of the world—how to free themselves, not at the ballot-box but with the rifle, the torch, and the dynamite bomb." It commended the Anarchist, Ravachol, who murdered and robbed an old man and was guillotined, in

the following words : “Thus finished another stage in the career of a man who has shaken capitalism to its foundations and shown the workers an example worthy of emulation. We are anxiously awaiting the advent of some English Ravachols.” (July 2, 1892.)

Many other examples could be quoted but one more must suffice. “We say that individual acts have always been a success. The man who strangled Watrin [a French mine-owner whose men were on strike], Pini, who robbed the banks, have opened more eyes than all the pamphlet writers in a century. Our aims can only be attained by accumulated individual actions against property and the men who hold it.” (Dec. 19, 1891).

When the Anarchist “movement” was less feeble its votaries carried out its teachings. In 1893 August Vaillant, the French Anarchist, threw a bomb into the French Parliament from the public gallery. Over 60 people were wounded and he was guillotined. In 1894 Martial Bourdin blew himself to atoms while fixing a bomb near the Royal Observatory, in Greenwich Park. In the same year a Deptford “comrade,” Rolla Richards, got 7 years for blowing up several South London Post offices, Emile Henry, too, threw a bomb from the balcony of the Paris Cafe Terminus, and 2 persons were killed and 21 injured.

The foregoing demonstrate that Anarchism is hostile to working class organisation. While it advocates individual violence, it paves the way for the armed forces of the State to intervene and crush it.

The need of the age is a virile organisation of the toilers, but the murder, violence, pillage, and riot that the Anarchists teach has led to their ranks being honeycombed with police spies. It reminds one of the story told by Alexander Herzen, who upon reaching a little Italian town, found, he said, only priests and bandits, but he was greatly puzzled to decide which were the priests and which the bandits.

Just so with the members of the Anarchist groups. It is often difficult to find out which are the genuine “comrades” and which the spies.

Its secrecy and underground working make treachery possible : that is why they have never really started to organise the working class.

During the Walsall trial in 1892 it leaked out that the man who informed the police of the proposed bomb outrage was a trusted “comrade” named Coulon, who actually managed Louise Michel’s Anarchist school in Fitzroy Square !

Their clubs all perish owing to the one cause. The “Autotomie,” the “Grafton,” the “Scandinavian,” are cases in point. The “comrades” spend a lot of time accusing each other of being police spies. David Nicoll (of the “Commonweal”) bitterly denounced two of the leading members, “Dr.” Netllau and “Dr.” Macdonald, yet many others testified to the genuineness of these men. A late editor of the “Commonweal” came under suspicion, and is still under a cloud, though he left the “cause” long since.

As the Anarchists’ numbers have declined their methods have been somewhat modified. They do not appeal with the same frequency to individual violence, yet they cannot stop their ignorant supporters from forever harping on its necessity. Indeed, the extent to which the Anarchist followers gloat over deeds of violence, high-sounding threats and the fury they delight in, prove a distinct



menace to the true revolutionary movement.

Emma Goldman's (the American Anarchist) manager, Ben Reitman, visited this country a short while since, and the wild, idiotic advice he gave his audiences — urging them to break policemen's heads, etc. — could not have been surpassed by an agent-provocateur, for it openly invited the suppression of public meetings, and the condemnation of any anti capitalist movement to lasting persecution.

The Anarchists are frequently the best friends the capitalists have. Whenever they consummate one of their melodramatic outrages the police and Press use it to brow beat the Socialists. The working class are shown how the “foes of capitalism” avoid any civilised weapon at their hand, and appeal to the fruitless and insane personal attack, street battle, etc.

How thoroughly dishonest the Anarchists are when attacking Socialists may be judged from their plea that Parliament has been tried and has failed ! Listen to the voice of “Freedom” (Aug. 1911):

“The complete failure of the Labour Party to bring to the toilers any relief from the burdens of capitalist exploitation and the barefaced lust of personal aggrandisement shown by the majority of Labour M.P.s have compelled the workers not, only to again resort to the strike to resist the capitalists, but to realise with more or less certainty that other means than Parliamentary action are needed to help his cause.”

Who expected the labour leeches to advance the cause of the workers? Only those who, like the Anarchists, ignored the facts around them. “Parliament has failed !” the Anarchist bleats. Seeing that it has been filled by supporters of the present system — Liberals and Tories and their allies for centuries, what else but continued working-class enslavement could result ?

“The political machine has been used for the exploitation of the worker,” says the Anarchist, and it is therefore useless to our class.” One might as well say that because a cotton weaving machine has been used for the exploitation of the workers, it cannot be used in their interest when they control it.

As with the loom, so with the political machine. Controlled to-day by the capitalists, it is worked in their interests as far as possible, but upon the working class controlling it, they will use it for their purposes.

The whole of the writings of Anarchists teem with the condemnation of political action. Marx and Engels are denounced by every leading Anarchist, from Kropotkin to Malatesta, for their far-seeing and scientific conception of the value of political action to the proletariat. Malatesta — perhaps the best known Anarchist in Europe speaking at their International Congress in 1907 said (“Freedom” report) : “He often heard Political Action referred to as if it involved Parliament. This was a great mistake. What, for example, was Bresci's act (killing a king) ? Was it economic? No! it was political. *Marx was responsible for this confusion.*” In order to see whether it is confusion let us review the facts.

In the “Communist Manifesto” Marx points out that “the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy.” What does “political supremacy” and “political action” mean? Are they necessary ?

The growth of private property in society led to the parting off of those who possessed it from those

who did not. A section of the possessors gradually became installed into offices of State, and their reign lasted until changes in the material conditions favoured the rise of a new class to power. The struggle between those who own and those who do not manifests itself as a class struggle, and its final purpose is the seizure of the political machine by the submerged class. The class struggle is waged also on the field of modern industry, and is typified by the suppression of discontented workers, the attempt to reduce the worker's share and the workers' resistance to those attempts.

This action relating to the field of industry is rightly termed *Economic Action*. Action pursued through the channels of local and national control and government is *Political Action*. For politics is but the science dealing with the laws of the control of society.

That the workers are scientific in using their political power (i.e. possession of the suffrage —the weapon) to obtain political supremacy is clearly seen by surveying the class struggles of the past and their lessons for us.

Constitutional history — the only appeal —tells us that the bourgeoisie in every land, though holding some economic power (i.e., means of production), were compelled to prosecute a long and often bitter struggle against the feudal nobility and the Church in order to secure political supremacy (executive power) and so rid themselves of the hindrances and embargos put in their path by the nobility.

The Hansa towns, the staple cities, etc., had to petition the King and his feudal co rulers for charters granting them the privilege of trading, in certain merchandise and in certain districts thus showing the value of *political control*.

The political machine is represented by different institutions according to the state of the country ruled the material condition. As every land advances out of Feudalism into Capitalism, it sooner or later throws off the "absolute," and finally all, rule of King and Court, and is forced to delegate power to representatives of the now enfranchised ruling class. These latter possess money which makes kings bow — therefore they finally prevail over the effete aristocracy.

Germany, Japan, Persia, Turkey — as each of these countries has emerged from Feudalism proper, it has had to introduce a Constitution with a Parliament as its central feature. The Executive later is chosen from this assembly and becomes a Cabinet.

The powerful nature of political control is shown by the light in England between merchant and noble and the victory of Parliament over the Crown. The Crown was re-introduced later, but shorn of its power, privileges, and noted prerogatives. All specialists in Constitutional history — from Gardner to Professor Dicey and Lord Courtney — are agreed that Parliament is the real arbiter, and that survivals such as the House of Lords are trimmings that matter not.

Political machinery, then, in modern society, includes, as its central feature, Parliament, and the Socialists, in urging the workers to displace their enemies from that citadel, are but pointing the right road. Parliament controls "supplies" — the force against Court and Bureaucracy alike. Through its control over "supplies" it rules the Army, though it employs a War Minister, and he in turn an Army Council, to arrange details. Political control relies eventually upon power over the armed forces, and these are under the control of Parliament.

Therefore Politics DO include Parliament.

## Why Socialists Oppose Anarchism: Part 3

### ITS FALLACIES AND DANGERS EXPOSED.

One thing is plain : if you reject political action you are left only with individual action — “propaganda by deed.” The Anarchists have tried to find substitutes, and Syndicalism and the General Strike have held the stage — until they have been examined.

They point to France as an example of successful Syndicalism, but France is surely Syndicalism’s grave ! It is represented there by the Confederation Generale du Travail — composed of 300,000 members, a small number of whom are Anarchists, though, through lack of democracy, they set the official positions. The small unions have the same, voting power at Congresses as the large ones, and it is well said that

#### THREE UNITED CHIMNEY SWEEPS

have the same voting power as a union of 10,000 members.

Owing to the tempestuous, excitable nature of the people of southern climes, they are more prone to display and impetuous action than other races. Hence the sudden strikes and the equally sudden and sad collapse of them. The majority of the organised French workers are outside the Confederation, and even the number of organised workers all told is far less than here. Yet with all the lack of organisation and the reactionary politics of the majority of unionists, the Syndicalists keep announcing a great general strike. But these strikes, ordered by the Anarchist minority at the helm, have turned out to be general fiascos.

Even a strike such as the first Paris Postal strike temporarily claimed a victory, but after Government preparations their succeeding strike collapsed amid dismissals and persecution. The Syndicalists preach direct action, but direct action for *reform*. The Union Label, the Eight Hour Day, the Reduction of High Food Prices—these are some of their ideals. And “sabotage” is their trump card. Known under the English name of “rattening,” it consists of breaking and making useless machinery, and other such revolutionary (!) deeds.

#### WRECKING TRAINS

follows, and it promotes wide-spread dissension and lack of sympathy with the strikers.

These methods indicate backward organisation and unscientific conceptions, and are reminiscent of early English trade unionism.

The Anarchists fiercely denounce authority, but they become officials of the trade unions and paid ones at that! They impeach representation and delegation, but have to resort to them ! They condemn political action but vote for the politicians who promise Government subsidies for union premises !

But the criticism from their own side is, perhaps, the most damaging. Said Malatesta (at International Congress) : “He expected some comrades would be surprised to hear him speak against Syndicalism and the General Strike.” He would have nothing to say against it (Syndicalism) if he could believe that Syndicalism could alone, as was claimed for it, destroy Capitalism. But who could expect to overthrow Capitalism while remaining a servant of capitalist production? . . . The fact of the matter was that as the Syndicalist organisations grew nearer and nearer to perfection, the number of unemployed grew greater and greater . . . It is only too obvious that the Syndicalists make a

#### SERIOUS DIVISION OF THE WORKERS

without harassing the capitalists.” Sighing for a “moral struggle” he said : “We may as well confess that the purely economic struggle is not sufficient.”

Ridiculing the success of French Syndicalism the same speaker said “he did not see why France should consider herself in a novel condition. English trade unionism began in just the same revolutionary way and look at it now . . . What he objected to was the idea freely propagated by some Syndicalists that the General Strike can replace insurrection. Some people fondly cherish the idea that we are going to starve the bourgeoisie. We should starve first. . . . He considered that some of the pamphlets published on the General Strike did nothing but harm. . . . He had read somewhere that we ought to go and smash the railway bridges ! He wondered whether the advocates of such foolishness ever realised that corn has to come the same way as the cannons come . . . We must face the cannons if we want the corn. . . . If the Government have perfected the arms of repression we must perfect those of revolution. We need more knowledge ” !

From their own ranks, then, the exposure has come. But we do not adopt the view of another of their delegates who asked : “What was the use of agitating for higher wages when the cost of living automatically rises in price ?” That is capitalist economics.

We recognise that the workers, having only their energy to sell, have to get the best

price possible, and therefore must oppose any attempt to beat them down or make them work longer. The present trade unions are not Socialist, but mere alteration in the form is not the remedy.

The workers in and out of the unions must be taught the Socialist position, and when the members become Socialists, they will see that the unions take the class form.

#### CHANGE THE FORM

how you like while the workers are not revolutionary, they will be misled still and will fail to see the limits of their powers and the remedy.

While we strongly sympathise with all real struggles against the employers' attacks, we never cease to urge upon the workers the need for class-consciousness for ending this system of society altogether, by political control.

The General Strike as a means of emancipation must surely fail, for the working class are propertyless, and if they cease work even the "short commons" that "work" means cease too. Starvation stares them in the face. All acquainted with proletarian life know the terrible privation that strikes entail; the suffering writ large on the faces of the helpless babes, the toddling children and the struggling wives. Such agonising scenes as were to be witnessed on the hillsides and in the valleys of South Wales during the year-long Cambrian Strike. The stripped homes; the crammed pawnshops; the rising mortality: these remind us that

#### STRIKES STRIKE THE WORKERS

us well as the masters. This is but a sectional strike; a strike with those at work helping those who are out. But when all the workers strike even that help fails, for they are all in the same boat. Even in sectional strikes we have seen how the workers often appeal to the bourgeoisie for aid for their wives and little ones, and soup kitchens, etc., are opened. Their purchasing power also grows worse as strikes continue, for prices rise.

The masters, strongly entrenched in the economic field, also control the political machine, and when they think the aims of the strikers important enough they use the armed forces to butcher, baton, and cow the strikers. Though always at their command, they do not use the armed forces wantonly. They weigh the pros and cons. "Is massacre necessary?" they ask themselves. "Can't we arbitrate their demands out of existence? Won't a Royal Commission do? Shall we give their leaders jobs?" Just as they bought Briand, the pioneer of the General Strike. Only when these other means fail do they risk inflaming the populace by resorting to open and

#### WIDESPREAD MASSACRE.

But other means generally do not fail.

True, a general strike can paralyse industry. A prolonged General Strike can destroy society. For we depend upon continued production and cessation means death. But death snatches its first victims from the toilers : they are most vulnerable—they have no stores, no reserves. Our masters have.

The General Strike figured largely in speeches 30 years ago, and found its chief exponent in Michael Bakunine. The greater part of his life he was a prominent figure in the reactionary pan-Slavist crusade. He turned his attention to the International founded by Marx, Engels, and others, and in the Latin countries and Switzerland he carried on a bitter campaign against Marx and other members of the London General Council of the International.

Marx believed in effective organisation, strong and well knit, and political action as against street fights. The unscrupulous methods Bakunine used to smash the International from within, together with his past, often laid him under suspicion of being a spy, but against his intrigues the sturdy Socialist pioneer proved too strong.

From the days of the International onward Marx and Engels continued to press the need for the conquest of political supremacy by the workers. Engels incurred the especial hatred of the Anarchists for his condemnation of their General Strike tactics. The Anarchist rising in Spain in 1873 served as an occasion for his pamphlet against them entitled “The Bakunist on Labour,” and he afterwards carried the war into

#### THE ENEMY’S TERRITORY

with his “Social Conditions in Russia,” a polemic against the Bakunists circulated widely in Russia. W. Tcherkesoff, the Anarchist, bitterly denounces Engels for these pamphlets in his falsified “Pages from Socialist History” and elsewhere.

The last work from Engels’ pen was the introduction he wrote a few months before he died (1895) to Marx’s “The Class Struggles in France.” Of it the writer of the “Life of Engels” says: “With merciless criticism he destroyed the fanciful representation of the all-powerful barricade and destroyed the hope of the European reaction that the labourers could be provoked to a street-fight in which they could be repulsed with decimated ranks. He showed how the revolution in the art of warfare had made the old form of struggle impossible, while a new weapon had been provided for the labouring class in the new political right of suffrage against which the ruling class were helpless. ‘The irony of the world’s history,’ says Engels, ‘ places everything on its head. We, the “revolutionaries,” the “overturners,” we succeed better with the legal means than with illegality and force. The self-named “Party of Order” goes to

pieces on the legal conditions created by itself. They despairingly cry with Odillon Barrot

“LEGALITY IS OUR DEATH”

while we from the same legality gain strong muscles, ruddy cheeks, and the appearance of eternal life. If we are not so foolish as to please them by allowing ourselves to be led into street fights there remains nothing for them but to be broken to pieces upon this fatal legality.’ “

Just as Engels shows, we, the revolutionists, are prepared to use legal means in so far as they can be used in the workers’ interest, and ignore them when they cannot. When legal means fail illegal means are justifiable and commendable. Therefore we have no qualms about using the suffrage, enacted by the capitalists. We know that just as the bourgeoisie before us had to be enfranchised for the free and easy development of society an ever wider and more extended suffrage is imperative.

One section or another had sooner or later to pass the Franchise Bill, and it was the Tories who actually did it—to dish the Liberals was their immediate aim. It is with the enlightened use of this weapon they were forced to give us that their graves will be dug. Marx well says : “The capitalists are their own gravediggers.” Enactments they pass to conserve their own interests often have effects they little dream of at the time. They made “education” compulsory the better to compete with other nations, but with even that miserable education the worker’s child may afterwards read the message of Socialism and be converted into a fighter in

THE ONLY CAUSE.

Anarchists and their allies say “Look how the suffrage has been tampered with abroad,” but they forget that even in semi-feudal Prussia, despite stifling of the vote, the candidates it was intended to keep out have still increased, to the dismay of their enemies. In the same way, should a headstrong Government suspend the suffrage, they meet disaster in the resentment they inflame in the masses.

But the Anarchists’ point really shows the value of Parliamentary action, for if the House of Commons is useless against the capitalists, why do they attempt to manipulate the suffrage to prevent the Socialists getting in? Just as their plea that real revolutionists will never be allowed in Parliament brings its fitting answer, if it is the futile institution the Anarchists pretend, why should they raise barriers to prevent their election?

No ! the Anarchists ought to see, just as we do, that the millions spent on elections by our masters to get their nominees returned; the money spent on agents to teach the

workers the “virtues” of capitalism and the “vices” of Socialism, signify much. They spent millions to prevent the workers getting the vote, and for forty years brutally ill-treated, massacred and persecuted the Chartists fighting for mere manhood suffrage. They evidently know its portent and its value.

While Socialists are in the minority in Parliament they can but use its platform to oppose capitalist villainy; to point the lesson of its daily deeds; to examine the measures brought before them and show their failure and their fraud, and in the long run, by the continued work and criticism of the revolutionists, and the growing number of the Socialists they represent, they will doubtless witness the passing of measures intended to

#### CONTENT THE TOILERS,

but any grains of good they may contain will be used but as a further foothold in the fight for Socialism, the fight against all the enemies of the Red Flag.

I believe sufficient has been said in this article to show the firm, scientific attitude of the Socialists toward the fallacies and dangers of Anarchism. One by one their so-called arguments have been exposed in the light of history and of science. In the area of theory as well as of practice their “case” is seen to be Utopian and futile. Their “direct action” turns out to be direct reaction, for to ignore the political machinery is to play the game of the ruling class.

The final plea of the Anarchists usually is that politicians always have sold out and always will sell, but this cannot apply to our movement, for informed Socialist men and women are not material for the man on-the-make. But what is true is that on the economic field the betrayals of the toilers have been frequent and many. From the pioneer of the General Strike in France—Aristide Briand—to John Mitchell and Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labour, they illustrate the puerility of the Anarchist view.

Have we not in Britain a whole tribe of tricksters from the industrial field? What of Isaac Mitchell, David Cummings, Richard Bell, and David Shackleton? Trade union leaders all! And the Anarchist reliance upon an intelligent minority as against the Socialist policy of an enlightened whole will give these tricksters

#### MORE SCOPE THAN EVER.

We appeal to the men and women of our class to take their place in the only revolutionary party in this country—the Socialist Party of Great Britain. All around us are signs of the “fret and fever” of our fellows under the lash of capitalist oppression. Governments are marshalling their forces for attacks upon our class.



Surely here is the need for a strong, revolutionary, disciplined movement inspired by the Socialist ideal to battle against the influence of false friends and foul foes. Cease your fruitless wanderings in the desert of Anarchism ere your enthusiasm dies away. Guided by the beacon lit by Marx and Engels and the landmarks on the road travelled by our class, enlist in the only Socialist Party and lift your voice and use your pen to dispel the moonshine of the missionaries of capitalism and help to bring nearer the sunshine of Socialism—the fruitfulness of the co-operative Commonweal.

**A. KOHN**