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*"Knowledge is the key to be free!"*





# Anarchy & Communism

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English translation probably by Nicolas Walter, who writes: *Anarchie et communisme* was delivered on 9 October 1880, reported in *Le Révolté* on 17 October 1880, and later published in in two instalments (*Le Révolté*, 13 and 27 November 1880). It was first published as a pamphlet with the same title by Emile Darnaud in *Foix* (in southern France) in 1890. It has frequently been reprinted in French and translated into other languages – especially Italian, but seldom English. When Henry Seymour's British Paper *The Anarchist* adopted anarchist communism for a few months in summer 1886, an English Translation was serialised from May to July but never completed.

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One cannot be anarchist without being communist. In fact, the least idea of limitation already contains within itself the seeds of authoritarianism. It couldn't appear without immediately leading to law, judge, police.

We must be communists, for it is in communism that we shall achieve true equality.

We must be communists, because the people, who cannot understand collectivist sophisms, understand communism perfectly, as our friends Reclus and Kropotkin have already pointed out.

We must be communists because we are anarchists, because Anarchy and Communism are the two necessary terms of the Revolution.

So this theory – as may be seen – couldn't give new strength to the partisans of individual distribution of the products of labour. This theory has achieved only result: that of unmasking the game of those socialists who wish to narrow the goal of the revolutionary idea; it has opened our eyes and shown us the necessity of quite clearly declaring ourselves to be *communists*.



**B**ut finally let us grapple with the one and only serious objection which our opponents have advanced against communism.

All are agreed that we are necessarily moving towards communism, but it is pointed out to us that at the start, since the products will not be abundant enough, we shall have to establish rationing, sharing, and that the best method of sharing the products of labour would be that based on the amount of labour which each will have done.

To this we reply that, in the future society, even when we may be obliged to have rationing, we should remain communist; that is to say, the rationing should be carried out not according to *merit* but according to *need*.

Let us take the family, that small-scale model of communism; – a communism which is authoritarian rather than anarchist, to be sure, but this doesn't alter anything in our example.

In the family the father brings, let us suppose, a hundred sous a day, the eldest son three francs, a younger boy forty sous, and the child only twenty sous a day. All bring their pay to the mother who keeps the cash and gives them food to eat. They all bring unequally; but, at mealtime, each is served in his own way and according to his own appetite. There is no rationing. But let hard times come, and let poverty prevent the mother from continuing to allow for the appetite or taste of each in the distribution of the meal. There must be rationing; and, whether by the initiative of the mother or by the unspoken custom of all, the helpings are reduced. But look, this sharing is not done according to merit, for the younger boy and the child above all receive the largest share; and, as for the choice portion, it is kept from the old woman who brings in nothing at all. So even during famine, within the family this principle is applied of rationing according to need. Would it be otherwise in the great humanitarian family of the future?

It is obvious that I would have to say more on this subject if I were not discussing in front of anarchists.



**A**t the Congress held in Paris by the General Region, a speaker who was distinguished by his bitterness against anarchists said: 'Communism and anarchy *howl* to find themselves together!'

Another speaker who also spoke against anarchists, but with less violence, cried when speaking of economic liberty: 'How can liberty be violated when there is equality?'

Well, I think that these two speakers were wrong.

It is perfectly possible to have economic equality without having the least liberty. Certain religious communities are living proof of this, since the most complete equality exists there at the same time as despotism. Complete equality, for the rulers wear the same cloth and eat at the same table as the others; he is distinguished from them only by the right which he possesses of giving orders. And the partisans of the 'Popular State'? If they encounter no obstacles of any kind, I am sure that they will end by achieving perfect equality, but at the same time the most perfect despotism, too; for, let us not forget, the despotism of their State would be equal to the despotism of the present state, increased by the economic despotism of all the capital which would pass into the hands of the State, and the whole would be multiplied by all the centralisation necessary for this new State. And it is for this reason that we, the Anarchists, friends of liberty, we intend to fight them to the end.

Thus, contrary to what has been said, it is perfectly right to fear for liberty even when there is equality; whereas there can be no fear for equality when there is real liberty – that is to say, anarchy.

So *anarchy* and *communism*, far from howling at finding themselves together, would howl at not finding themselves together, for these two terms (synonymous with *liberty* and *equality*) are the two necessary and indivisible terms of the Revolution.



Our revolutionary ideal is very simple, as may be seen: it consists, like that of all our forerunners, of these two terms, LIBERTY and EQUALITY. Only there is one little difference. Learning from the tricks which the reactionaries of all times have played with liberty and equality, we have decided to put next to these two terms the expression of their precise value. These two precious coins have been forged so often that we now want to know all about them and to measure their precise value.

We therefore place next to these two terms, *liberty* and *equality*, two equivalents whose clear meaning cannot allow of any ambiguity, and we say: 'We want LIBERTY, that is to say ANARCHY, and EQUALITY, that is to say COMMUNISM.'

*Anarchy*, today, is attack; it is war against every authority, every power, every State. – In the future society, Anarchy will be defence, the prevention of the re-establishment of any authority, any power, any State: Full and complete liberty of the individual who, freely and driven only by his needs, by his tastes and his sympathies, unites with other individuals in a group or association, which is federated with others in the commune or the district; free development of the communes which are federated in the region; – and so on: the regions in the nation; the nations in humanity.

Communism, the question which particularly concerns us today, is the second term of our revolutionary ideal.

*Communism*, at present, is still attack; it is not the destruction of authority, but is the taking of possession, in the name of all humanity, of all the wealth existing in the world. – In the future society, Communism will be the enjoyment of all existing wealth by all men and according to the principle: FROM EACH ACCORDING TO HIS FACULTIES, TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS NEEDS, that is to say: **FROM EACH AND TO EACH ACCORDING TO HIS WILL.**

It is, however, necessary to point out, – and this above all in reply to our opponents, the authoritarian communists or Statists – that the taking of possession and the enjoyment of all the existing wealth must be, according to us, the deed of the people itself. Because the people, humanity, is not the same as the individuals who managed to seize the wealth and hold it in their hands, some have tried to conclude from this, it is true, that we should for this reason establish a whole class of rulers – of representatives and trustees of the common wealth. But we do not share this opinion. No intermediaries; no representatives who always end by representing only themselves; no mediators of equality, any more than mediators of liberty; no new government, no new State, whether it is called Popular or Democratic, evolutionary or Provisional!

Once we used to call ourselves *collectivists* to distinguish ourselves from the individualists and the authoritarian communists; but in reality we were quite plainly *anti-authoritarian communists* and, when we called ourselves collectivists, we were trying to express by this term our idea that EVERYTHING should be put in common, without making any distinction between instruments and materials of labour and the products of collective labour.

But one fine day we saw the rise again of a new shade of socialist who, reviving the errors of the past, began to philosophise, to distinguish, to differentiate on this question, and who will end by making themselves the apostles of the following thesis:

*'There exist', they say, 'values of use and values of production. Use values are those which we use to satisfy our own personal needs: that is, the house we live in, the food we consume, clothes, books, etc.; whereas production values are those we use for production: that is, the factory, the stores, the stable, shops, machines and instruments of labour of every kind, the soil, materials of labour, etc. The former values, which are used to satisfy the needs of the individual, should be distributed individually; whereas the latter, those which are used by everyone for production, should be distributed collectively.'*

Such was the new economic theory, discovered – or rather, revived – for the sake of argument.

But I ask you, you who give the charming title of production values to the coal which is used to fuel the machine, the oil used to lubricate it, the oil which lights its operation, – why deny it to the bread and meat which feed me, the oil which I dress my salad with, the gas which lights my labour, to everything which keeps alive and operating the most perfect of all machines, man, the father of all machines?

You class among production values the meadow and the stable which are used to keep cattle and horses, and you want to exclude from them houses and gardens which are used for the most noble of animal: man.

So where is your logic?

Besides, even you who make yourselves the apostles of this theory, you know perfectly well that this demarcation doesn't exist in reality and that, if it is difficult to trace today, it will completely disappear on the day when we shall all be producers at the same time as consumers.

manages to acquire more wealth will already be raised by that very thing above the level of others. It will be only one step further for the counter-revolutionaries to re-establish the right of inheritance. In fact I have heard a well-known socialist, a so-called revolutionary, who supported individual distribution of products, end by declaring that he couldn't see any objection to society allowing the transfer of these products by inheritance; the matter, for him, was of little consequence. For us, who know at close hands the position which society has reached from this accumulation of wealth and its transfer by inheritance, there can be no doubt about the subject.

The individual distribution of products would re-establish not only inequality between men, but also inequality between different kinds of work. We would see the immediate reappearance of *clean* and *dirty* work, of *high* and *low* work; the former would be for the rich, the second would be the lot of the poorer. Then it would be not vocation and personal taste which would decide a man to devote himself to one form of activity rather than another; it would be interest, the hope of winning more in some profession. Thus would be reborn idleness and industry, merit and demerit, good and evil, vice and virtue; and, in consequence, *reward* on one side and *punishment* on the other: law, judge, policeman, and jail.



There are socialists who persist in supporting this idea of individual distribution of the products of labour while making much of the sense of justice.

What a strange illusion! With collective labour imposed on us by the necessity of mass production and the application of machinery on a large scale, with this ever-increasing tendency of modern labour to make use of the labour of previous generations, how could we determine what is the share of the product of one and the share of the product of another? It is absolutely impossible, and our opponents recognise this so well themselves that they end by saying: 'Well, we shall take as a basis for distribution the hours of labour.' But at the same time they themselves admit that this would be unjust, since three hours of labour by Peter may be worth five hours of labour by Paul.



Since the common wealth is spread over the whole earth, and since all of it belongs by right to the whole of humanity, those who find this wealth within their reach and are in a position to use it will use it in common. The people of some country will use the land, the machines, the workshops, the houses, etc., of the country, and they will make use of it in common. Since they are part of humanity, they will exercise here, by deed and directly, their right to a share of the human wealth. But if an inhabitant of Peking came into this country, he would have the same rights as the others: he would enjoy, in common with the others, all the wealth of the country, in the same way that he had done in Peking.

So that speaker was quite wrong who denounced anarchists for wanting to establish corporate property. A fine business we would make if we destroyed the State and replaced it with a mass of little States! killing a monster with one hand and keeping a monster with a thousand heads!

No! We have said and we shall not stop repeating it: no intermediaries, no agents and obedient servants who always end by becoming the real masters! We want all the existing wealth to be *taken directly* by the people itself, to be kept in the people's powerful hands, and the people itself to decide the best way of enjoying it, whether for production or for consumption.



But we are asked: Is Communism practicable? Shall we have enough products to allow each person the right to take from them at will, without demanding from individuals more work than they would like to give?

We reply: Yes, it will certainly be possible to apply this principle, *from each and to each according to his will*, because in the future society production will be so abundant that there will be no need to limit consumption or to demand from men more work than they will be able or willing to give.

This immense increase in production, of which we cannot give a true impression even today, may be predicted by examining the causes which will stimulate it. These causes may be reduced to three main ones:

1. The harmony of co-operation in various branches of human activity, replacing the present struggle which arises from competition;
2. The introduction on an immense scale of machines of all kinds;

3. The considerable economy in the power of labour, the instruments of labour and raw materials, arising from the suppression of dangerous or useless production.

Competition, struggle, is one of the basic principles of capitalist production, having for its motto: MORS TUA VITA MEA, *your death is my life*. The ruin of one makes the fortune of another. And this bitter struggle spreads from nation to nation, from region to region, from individual to individual, between workers as well as between capitalists. It is war to the knife, a fight at all levels – hand to hand, in squads, in platoons, in regiments, in divisions. One worker finds work where another loses it; one industry or several industries may prosper when another industry or industries may fail.

Well, imagine when, in the future society, this individualist principle of capitalist production, *each for himself and against all, and all against each*, will be replaced by the true principle of human sociability: EACH FOR ALL AND ALL FOR EACH, – what an enormous change will be obtained in the results of production! Imagine what the increase of production will be when each man, far from having to struggle against all the others, will be helped by them; when he will have them not as enemies but as co-operators. If the collective labour of ten men achieves results absolutely impossible to an isolated man, how great will be the results obtained by the grand co-operation of all the men who today are working in opposition against one another!

And machines? The impact of these powerful auxiliaries of labour, however great it seems to us today, is only very minimal in comparison with what will be in the society to come.

The machine today is opposed often by the ignorance of the capitalist, but even more often by his interest. How many machines remain unused solely because they do not return an immediate profit to the capitalist! Is a coal-mining company, for example, going to put itself to the expense of safeguarding the interests of the workers and building costly apparatus to carry the miners into the pits? Is the municipality going to introduce a machine to break stones, when this terrible work provides it with the means of giving cheap relief to the hungry? How many discoveries, how many applications of science remain a dead letter solely because they don't bring the capitalist enough!

The worker himself is opposed to machines today, and with reason, since they are for him the monster which comes to drive him from the factory, to starve him, degrade him, torture him, crush him. Yet what a great

interest he will have, on the contrary, in increasing their number when he will no longer be at service of the machines and when, on the contrary, the machines will themselves be at his service, helping him and working for his benefit!

So we must take account of the immense economy which will be made by the three elements of labour – strength, instruments and materials – which are horribly wasted today, since they are used for the production of things which are absolutely useless, when they are not actually harmful to humanity.

How many workers, how many materials and how many instruments of labour are used today for the armies of land and sea, to build ships, fortresses, cannons and all the arsenals of offensive and defensive weapons! How much strength is used to produce articles of luxury which serve only to satisfy the needs of vanity and corruption!

And when all this strength, all these materials, all these instruments of labour are used in industry for the production of articles which will themselves be used for production, what a prodigious increase of production we shall see emerge!

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Yes, Communism is practicable: We shall indeed be able to let each take at will what he needs, since there will be enough for all; we shan't need to ask for more work than each wants to give, because there will be enough products for the morrow.

And it is thanks to this abundance that work will lose the ignoble character of enslavement and will have only the attraction of a moral and physical need, like that of study, of living with nature.

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This is not just to affirm that Communism is *possible*, we may affirm that it is *necessary*. Not only that one *can* be communist; but that one *must*, on pain of missing the goal of the revolution.

In fact, after putting the instruments of labour and the raw materials in common, we retain the individual distribution of the products of labour, we would be forced to retain money, sharing out a greater or less accumulation of wealth according to the greater or lesser merit – or rather, skill – of individuals. Equality will thus have disappeared, since he who