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Anarchism in a Nutshell

Henry Glasse

February, 1918

The State is a mutual assurance company comprising the ruling classes—landowners, capitalists, high officials, and clergy; government is the directorate or executive committee of this association, whose object is to secure to its members their domination over the mass of the people, and the exploitation of its necessities for their aggrandisement. Even supposing that the State could be reorganised according to the theories of Social Democracy (Parliamentary Socialism), the most that could result would be the substitution of majority rule for minority rule; the one is just as much tyranny as the other. For my part, with Byron,

“I’d have mankind be free
As much from mobs as kings, from you as me.”

The ideal of Anarchist Communism (Free Socialism) embraces complete individual liberty, the regulation by each of his own life, free association with his fellows in accordance with his own tastes and aptitudes, and recognition of the right of all to the world’s wealth, to be used by each according to his needs and capacities. The Anarchist does not believe in

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Government nor Legality, therefore he cannot consistently advocate the capture of governmental power by the vote; neither is he so foolish as to hope to do so through the means of "constitutional" methods adopted and adapted by his enemies in order to perpetuate their baneful influence under hypocritical forms. Numbers, on which alone an election depends, constitute only one, and that by no means the most important, factor of success in any other kind of contest; ten brave men can overcome twenty cowards, a man of conviction is worth a dozen waverers, and a few intelligent men can outwit the stupidity of a crowd. Anarchists need not wait to convert a voting majority, but will assert their claims as soon as they feel strong enough; temporary or partial failures will not affect their determination, and the numerical force necessary will be in inverse proportion to its energy and enthusiasm.