

The Expropriation

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From the earliest times there were men — comparable to today's sharks — who, using brutal force and cunning, appropriated the common patrimony.

If they had limited themselves to this, it would have been little bad, since the damaged ones, adopting the systems of their marauders, could perhaps have regained the lost goods, perhaps reviving others.

The real evil arose instead when said marauders, to consolidate and increase the products of theft, constituted the authority and pretended to dictate laws to the world and precisely to those who had been usurped by them.

Thus there were tyrants on one side and slaves on the other.

The first solemnly proclaimed: "Property is the fruit of labor and savings and is sacred and inviolable." And the defense of the hypocritical principle of sacred and inviolable property was entrusted to three shady figures who still reign: the gendarme — synonymous with brutality and ferocity —, the priest and the moralist, who personify the lie.

Against this principle philosophers rose up, who ruled: "Property is theft"; they were joined by thousands and thousands of slaves hoping for freedom and equality, and who divided themselves into schools and parties headed by shepherds, who are repeating — to the point of putting the public to sleep for the boredom they cause — their speeches about rights and duties of workers, on humanitarianism, altruism, justice, solidarity, brotherhood, equality, freedom, etc., etc., and, as if they were to build a building, trace the design of society future, between the dazed looks of the poor and the ironic smile of the rich.

These sentimental speeches are jeremiads, which seem to want to convince the owners to give up their possessions for the benefit of derelict humanity. But the rich are deaf, they are not moved and, above all, they are strong, because they have gendarmes, priests, moralists and social reformists more or less varnished with revolutionism; on the contrary, the rich, seeing that the people are content with whining and that they allow themselves to be duped by bad shepherds, become more and more bold and aggressive, and, as if the violence of the royal or republican authorities were not enough, they hire armed gangs to the defense of their capital.

I like speeches very little, much less sentimental and rhetorical ones; it doesn't matter to me whether property is the product of labor or theft; I do not make considerations on law and justice, nor do I care to arouse feelings of humanity. I know that I must live my life as comfortably and as freely as I can, and I try to find the means necessary for this purpose.

“The right to life is not begged, but is taken”, so I say to my comrades: we live as anarchically as we can, without waiting for the laggard of the future, which for us anarchists will always have unhealthy rays.

Society rightly considers us enemies, therefore we do not seek any way of reconciliation, we reject the means of struggle that it offers us — means for political and trade union struggles — and we choose our means ourselves, and whether these are adequate for the difficult task that we face. We propose, superior to those adopted by our enemy. We accept the challenge and fight without respite or quarter, to achieve victory immediately and not in the year two thousand.

Force comes down with force, violence with violence, property with expropriation.

I attach the greatest revolutionary importance, the highest subversive significance to individual expropriation. It means: practical and effective rebellion against the system of exploitation perpetrated by the idle and the pleasure-seekers to the detriment of the workers; conquest of the right to life, joy and freedom, since society only tramples on the poor; revenge against property owners and social institutions. On the contrary, the multiplication of individual expropriations constitutes a true and profound social disintegration; and revolutionism and anarchism — today more than ever, in the face of the arrogance of the socialist party which claims to impose its dictatorship — have no reason to exist and to manifest themselves except as essentially anti-social tendencies.

The revolution, to demolish the present and future organisms of oppression and exploitation, does not take place on fixed dates on the barricades, but takes place every hour, every moment in the multiple assaults against society, by the unscrupulous and rebellious individuals.

It is necessary to overthrow and destroy all the principles that support the so-called civil society; and the expropriation of individuals, while on the one hand it poisons the existence of the rich, who feel they are suffocating under the weight of wealth in danger, on the other it undermines the social and moral edifice from its very foundations.

The systematic individual expropriation of the rebels and the strong, the irreverent violation of the dominant principles — religious, authoritarian and moral —, the iconoclastic profanation of all that is considered sacred and inviolable, constitute the foundation of revolutionary and anarchist criticism, the reason for being anti-socialist anarchism.

So we, being anarchists, rise up against the crusade of cheap humanitarians, of altruistic shopkeepers, who with plasters claim to heal social rot.

Those who approve of revolution and collective expropriation — beyond to come — and repudiate individual expropriation, are sacristans of the monarchy rather than revolutionaries. Let them speak of reformism — perhaps anti-parliamentary — but not of revolution and much less of anarchism.

Giulio Bonnot’s example of action — to quote just one name — is worth much more to me than all the revolutionary preaching of the socialist anarchists.

Convinced of this, I address myself, not to the flock that does not want to understand me, but to men endowed with a strong will, and I tell them: awaiting the *Apocalypse*, let us carry out *our* expropriating revolution, to achieve *our* well-being and *our* freedom.

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