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I advocate and I look forward to wholesale expropriation because I do not believe there is any such thing as a right to property, and because I hold that it is disastrous, nay, fatal, to the welfare of all individuals composing the community, to have to regulate their lives and affairs in accordance with a fictitious abstraction which has no warrant and no basis in the natural laws of life. I desire universal expropriation, not merely because the power that property-holding gives to man over man is in wrong hands, and consequently abused, but because it seems clear to me that property-holding is all abuse in itself, and that to hold property is to make wrong use of anyone's hands at all. I desire to see the bottom knocked out of the noxious property idea itself, for good and all.

"The love of money is the root of all evil." Why ? Because the love of money is the love of domination. Property is government. Property—that is, the prohibitive custody by particular persons of any part of the general resources—cannot be shown to have any value at all for any one, merely as "owner," *except the power it gives him over the faculties and liberties of his fellow-creatures.* And this is a false value, an illusion. It is a craze to believe that you are neces-

sarily better off—the richer or the freer—through dominating your fellows by dint of keeping prohibitive custody of what may be of greater service (intrinsic value) to them than to yourself.

No true, nature-based title to property as merely such can be shown to exist. Perhaps even some Anarchists will demur to this. The belief still lingers that there is such a thing as a man's natural right to "own," to have the prohibitive custody and disposal of, whatever his industry or skill may have produced or constructed out of the raw material provided by Nature. "There is one true title to property—to custody of superfluity—and that is the Labor title;" so say many. It is a delusion. There can be no such thing as a natural title to what is after all an artificial and merely nominal relation between a man and his product; a relation having no basis in reality. That which at the outset is not anybody's cannot be made anybody's by manipulation. This is not a mere metaphysical quibble. He who produces anything useful has, other things equal, a *first comer's economic right* to use, consume, or enjoy it, up to the limit of his own ability to do so. Yet this use of his product is not what the world specially means by ownership. This is not the cursed thing that keeps the world poor and squalid and sordid. Ownership begins to be talked of (here disputed, there enforced) just where the natural relation of a man to men's wealth leaves off—just where the limit of ability to use or enjoy has been fully reached. This natural limit once overstepped there is no other natural limit to be found ever again, till revolution sets one. The moment that ownership, merely as ownership, begins to be stickled for, then, no matter what its "title" may be, property will be able and eager to defend itself by means of law; it will "govern," and ensure to the owner the opportunities of becoming indefinitely richer and richer, with the necessary result that the non-owner must become ever poorer and poorer. Nothing more stable than conventional concession originally placed or left in the hands of individuals, whether producers or not, any power over that part of wealth which remains after satisfaction of requirement—which the individual cannot use, and

of us, if we did not force them a little by means of witholding something that they require or desire until they have first paid for it in service to ourselves. And so we stickle for "ownership" (under one title or another) so that at a push we may have the wherewithal to compel or to bribe someone or other to do our bidding. It is a lot of trouble wasted. It is very poor economy. None of this is surely new, but it needs constant re-statement, even among Anarchists, by those of us who see the most vital of all social questions to be involved in it.

"Property is Robbery," said Proudhon. That is not the bottom truth about property. François Guy in his work on *Prejudices* justly points out that the word "robbery" subtly connotes recognition of property. Expropriation should, for the true and radical Anarchist, mean something quite different from, something much more than, any mere retributive robbery, any seizure of possessions as such, any usurpation of title to possession as such. It should mean the total subversion of every vestige of this most solid and yet most insidious form of government, and the final explosion of the idea that there is or can be anything real or useful in property holding. Every pretext by which such an idea is still bolstered can be, and should be, by ruthless logic torn to pieces. Every action, political or social, purposing to reinstate cruel old pretensions under new sanctions should be unflinchingly opposed to the death.

I have in this article done no more than just step on the threshold of the subject. Space does not now allow me to justify the position. But I am an Expropriationist in the fullest sense that can be given to this clumsy word, because I reguard the property idea as a craze—the very most pestilent delusion that the human mind, tricked by language has ever had the misfortune to entertain.

his fellows are in want of. Conventions remain unquestioned until some lurking hurtfulness in them comes out as a glaring social evil, and then, whether backed by government or not, the struggle or their displacement begins, and their doom is fixed.

As to the modern cry, "the product to the producer," it is surely all right economically and ethically, so far as it goes. But directly it is insisted on that "the whole of the product belongs to the producer as his property" (to use, waste, sell, or hoard at his pleasure) and directly it is insinuated that human faculties and the wealth the faculties (help to) win are of equal inviolability, then we are face to face with the worst of social superstitions once more. The property holder will remain dominator, the property-holding class will remain the dominating class and its weapon, the Government, will remain in existence until the idea that things or privileges can "belong" to persons or groups of persons, is seen for the figment it actually is. Government is only another name for property. You can make Government hop from one leg to another, and on the standing leg hop from one point to another. But it will wink at you and evade you, so long as Property exists. You can alter Property's title; what was Strength of Arms one day became Inheritance next; then Purchase. To-morrow perhaps it will be Labor. The poison is in it still. It casts a shadow still, on one or another side of itself,—the dark shadow of Mammon's "laws." It *absolutely needs* Government, to be alternately its protector and its tool, so long as under any form it remains a recognized institution.

At the present hour the notion that it is only the existing title to possession and not the institution of property itself which cries for abolition is fraught with social danger. I am very sure indeed that in a community regulated in recognition of individual ownership, or even *state* ownership (virtual ownership by a central company of officials), every citizen will be less free, less happy, less a man, than might be as a member of a community where free access to products of industry should have become the universal rule. Reciprocally free access of individuals to personally superfluous prod-

ucts of individual industry, reciprocally free access of districts to the locally superfluous products of local industry—this is what we want for the weal and solidarity peace of our lives as a world full of friends.

I see as much danger in taking property from one class only to give it another, as in taking Government out of the hands of one class only to give it to another. Nay, it is the identical danger under another name. The prohibitive custody of superfluous wealth, as now maintained in the case of landlords and capitalists, all Socialists see to be evil. To land this prohibitive custody in the hands of an official class, as would be *virtually* done under "Social Democracy," all Anarchists see to be evil. But to say to the producer: Whatever personal superfluity you by the use of your personal faculties unearth or construct is therefore "yours," to withold at pleasure from the immediate use of those to whom it would be immediately serviceable—this is not generally seen to be an evil. Yet it is only to conventionally make the producer a dictator of terms to his fellow men, and to leave the broad gate that leads to destruction wider open than ever. Let us cease to trade, and learn to trust. Let me have free access to opportunity and material for the constructive or productive, exercise of any faculties I may possess, and then J. K. and L. only do me a service in coming and making free use of so much of my product as remains useless to myself. Of course this is an extreme position, but it is one on which Nature smiles in the case of communities of intelligent dumb creatures, and I am utopian enough to believe that we word-befogged humans have not yet so far spoilt our own impulses and ruined our own chances as to make it impossible or even very difficult to organise freely on these lines. That is, after once the existing cruel system shall have been paralyzed or broken up. It needs that we make up our minds to inquire less anxiously what is "wise and prudent," and be quicker in response to the simple dictates of common-sense and good-will as they present themselves from day to day and from hour to hour.

A man who has made such use of material that a hat is the result, has made a hat. That is all he has made. He has not made a "right to property" in the hat, either for himself or anybody else. Before this exercise of his faculty there existed the materials, tools, and himself. There exist now, the tools, and himself, and the hat. He is related to the hat as its *producer*, not as its owner. If he has no hat and wants one, the obviously fit place for the hat is on his head. He then becomes further related to the hat as its *wearer*; and still the word "owner" remains a term without special meaning. But say that be already has a hat and the first passer-by has none, and wants one, then the fit place for one of the hats is on the passer-by's head. It sounds childish, but it's true. The hatter has not produced, over and above a hat, any such identical thing as a "right" to forbid the hatless man to wear the hat, apart from some arbitrary terms of his (the hatter's) making, and which the hatless man, as likely as not, is unable to comply with except to his own damage. (Ah, "damage,"—he must pay *damage*, must he? See how instinct lurks in language! Realize the unhealth of a community run on lines, in which damage results to some one at every turn of its minutest wheels).

The hatter's product is his product, not his *property*. His hands belong to him, but not his tools. His tools are, whoever made them, fitly and justly in his hands, his product is the product of his hands plus the tools which other hands have made; and the same justice and common-sense which is satisfied by the placing in his hands as needing them the tools which he did not make, but which he needs and were not in request elsewhere, demands the placing of the needed hat on the head of the hatless stranger. None of us would object to this sort of method of distribution if we were sure that our pleasure in life did not consist in the abundance of things which we possess, but in the fitness of such things as we had to our real needs and enjoyments, and in the degree of freedom and enjoyment of our powers accorded its by our fellows. But we are not sure that our fellows *would* leave us free, would not take advantage