

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Pierre-Joseph Proudhon
Propositions

To leave behind abstractions, utopias, systems, doctrines, theories
and empiricisms of the parties schools and sects
1850–55

Retrieved on 25th April 2021 from www.libertarian-labyrinth.org
Partial translation; items 1–22 were crossed out by Proudhon.
Some sections repeat material found elsewhere in the manuscript.
Several similar lists of propositions appear in the manuscript of
Economie.

theanarchistlibrary.org

Propositions

To leave behind abstractions, utopias, systems,
doctrines, theories and empiricisms of the parties
schools and sects

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

1850–55

1. There exists between men a tendency or attraction that pushes them to group and act for their greatest interests and the most complete scope of their liberty, collectively and en masse.
2. From that tendency in the group results, for the human mass, a new and incalculable power, which can be considered as the proper and unique force of Society, commonly known as the Sovereignty of the People.
3. That force is manifested in all the labors that demand an energy out of proportion with the means of the individual; in the large workshops and factories, in the armies, but especially in the political organization of Government.
4. The importance of that force is such that we can affirm boldly, without fear of being refuted, as the most distinguished fact of the history of the nations, that there is

no civilization for the people, no progress, not morality for individuals, no liberty or well being, apart from the legitimate exercise and the rational application of that force.

5. Royalty is the symbolization of the social force: the socialist utopias are its mythology.
6. The social force is the property of all: it tends to divide it equally in all.
7. The guarantees of liberty and well-being, the stability of States, the order of nations are on account of the number of Rulers, of the of those sharing the social force.
8. The social order will be perfect, equilibrium unassailable and stability absolute if all those who contribute to the formation of the collective force are, at the same time and in proportion to their faculties, sharers in the social force, constituent parts of the sovereigns.
9. Now, governmental practice is far from having reached that degree of perfection: we have never even seen an example where the number of the governors was only half plus one of the individuals contributing to the collective force: that proposition has even appeared absurd to all the publicists.
10. The social force has been constantly usurped from the profit of a small number against the majority, delivered to the whims of one party and more often still of one individual.
11. That alienation of the collective power constitutes, ipso facto, the political organism called monarchic; it gives rise to dynasties, aristocracies, nobilities, patriciates, bourgeoisies and, on the other hand, serfs, slaves, helots, pariahs and proletarians.

2. Something that surpasses the scope of individual activity: that something is the portion of sovereignty. Participation in all deliberations, elections, jurisdictions; certainty of being heard in all their demands; all things that engender glory, security, wealth, consideration and virtue in the individual.
36. The functionary, in this system, truly becomes a civil servant; he is no longer a master. Illusion of the ambitions in this regard soon set straight.
37. End of controversies: pointless, interminable, innumerable disputes brought to naught.
38. Immediate application in the overthrowing of tyranny:
 - Form sections
 - Insure propaganda
 - Establish the authority of the Commission and the Committee
 - See the right of Justice bestowed
 - Organize the vindicte of the people
 - Gather in the face of the power
 - Strike the tyranny [in a preemptive manner]
 - Finally, proceed against the []. their henchmen, dictators and satellites by all means of extermination.

12. Democracy is the protest of the oppressed people against the alienation of the social force. Powerlessness of that protest, caused by the ignorance of the facts, by political ideology and verbiage.
The powerlessness of the democracy comes from the fact that it has always wanted to make the *governmental organism*, as tyranny had created it, serve the emancipation of the people, but it has not has been able to create itself a property in it. The true cause of the alienation of the social force is the poverty, original or [] organic or fortuitous, of the majority of the people.
14. In fact, if we study history,we see that in general, when all differences are deducted, the enjoyment of the benefits created by the social force is, for each individual, in direct proportion to their fortune.
15. As a result, the poverty, first cause of that alienation, is aggravated and by it, and that here the two terms Alienation of the social force and Poverty are reciprocally Cause and effect of one another.
16. Analogy and correlation between Property and Government. For the exercise and enjoyment of the collective force to be without reproach, the public power to which all contribute must be possessed by all, like the soul, industry, commerce and knowledge.
17. Thus the problem of the Emancipation of the people is double:
 - a. To create in the disinherited masses a real patrimony, effective, useful, susceptible to appropriation and yet inalienable.

- b. To give to the people, to each citizen, their effective, complete, inalienable sovereignty, susceptible to distribution and yet sheltered from all usurpation.
17. Again—In order to do that, to study asceticism, absolutist organism, and instead of wanting to employ it in the service of the people, to disorganize it and create one that will be the counterweight of the first.
 18. The Sovereignty that is exercised only by mandate is fictive and vain.
 19. Sovereignty is reciprocal.
 20. The Sovereignty in each locality and each individuals is proportional to the interests that the individual or locality represent.
 21. Sovereignty increases by its exercise, as Wealth increases by Labor.
 22. Government is identical in all times and places
 23. Paris, seat of the French government. Its predominance deduced from the order of things.
 24. Assembly of the sections.
 - Government Commission.
 - Government Committee.
 - Functions.
 25. Renewal of the representatives. Sovereignty is mobile: it cannot be exercised by all, to the same degree, at the same moment.

26. Relation of the Commune of Paris with the Communes of France. The Commune, original, natural, traditional, imperishable seat of Government.
27. National assembly. Its functions.
28. The national assembly oversees and verifies the acts of the Government Commission and Committee.
29. Case of conflict. Solution.
30. The tyranny of a million men is impossible, when the sovereignty is not long the patrimony of one party or one caste. The [] of Paris gives meaning to that of Charles X, Louise-Philippe or Napoleon III.
31. Revolutionary operations.
 1. Formation of the patrimony of the people.
31. Bis. Distribution of the social force by groups and sub-groups: autonomous. It is not enough to raise the wages of the worker, to reduce the hours; he must be made master of the thing.
32. Demolition of tyranny: elimination of parasitism.
33. Commonplace, organic affaires, etc... All of that remains the same.
34. Revolutionary justice.
35. How the social force, or sovereignty of the people, is found divided. Each enjoys two things that they did not have previously:
 1. A complete individual liberty.