

EDITORIAL

SOCIALIST TYRANNY— ANARCHIST FREEDOM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN old acquaintance, Benj. R. Tucker, is being resurrected—either of his own motion, or on motion of others. The thing is being attempted by the resurrection of Tucker's *State Socialism and Anarchy*—a nearly a quarter of a century-old farrago of economics and sociology, than which none, and that is saying a good deal, is more truly reflective of the anarchic condition of the Anarchist mind.

Tucker is not of the bomb-throwing variety of Anarchists. He is of the variety, the name of which, "Philosophic Anarchy," must have been fastened upon the variety by some sarcastic wag; and the scatter-brained variety had no more sense than to consider the name as intended for a compliment, and giddy-headedly to accept it.

Benj. R. Tucker is a "Philosophic Anarchist."

Seeing that both the "Philosophic" and the "Un-philosophic" Anarchist—or, as others irreverently style the two varieties of the mental disease, the "Dirty Water" and the "Rose Water"—are absolutely at one that Socialism means tyranny, Anarchy freedom, the resurrected Tuckerian production should be turned to good purposes—the purpose of giving occasion for some sober thinking.

No more than Socialism, is Anarchy a social condition in existence. Not being in existence, and both being projections into the future, it would seem, at first blush, that the degree of tyranny, or freedom, of either can only be surmised. The principle does not hold good with regard to Anarchy. Anarchy has been considerate enough, or frank enough, or, shall we say it?, stupid enough to furnish advance exhibitions of what Anarchist society will look like. This was done by the elaboration of a code of parliamentary practice that is to prevail in Anarch Society; and, what is more to

the point, by putting the code in practice now.

Socialism, being the legitimate daughter of Capitalism, connects with and adopts whatever Capitalism has contributed towards real order. Among these achievements of the Capitalist link in social evolution is its parliamentary system.

True to the experience that the ampler of production, needed for civilized life, is impossible without co-operation; that co-operation is impossible without organization; finally, that organization is impossible without central authority, the Greek “Arch” that an-Archy mutinies against;—true to that experience, the parliamentary practice of modern society begins with the election of a chairman, an “Arch,” to speak Anarchistically learnedly.

True, furthermore, to the experience that the legitimate source of “power” is below and not above, and that, in order to keep “power” true to its source it must be kept subject to the judgment of whence it sprang,—true to that experience, capitalist parliamentary practice keeps the rulings of its meetings’ chairmen, or “Archs,” subject to the will of “the house.” The rulings can be appealed from; they are open to discussion; they are finally passed upon—either approved, or rejected, as “the house” may choose.

Such is the parliamentary practice of the present social order, approved, cherished and held high by the apostles of the coming, the Socialist order of society.

It is otherwise with the parliamentary practice of Anarchy, as formulated by the Anarchist patron saint Josiah Warren, whom Tucker extols in the resurrected production that is the occasion for this article, and has burned incense to and devoutly bowed down before as the ideal parliamentary practice by the Warren’s acolyte, Benj. R. Tucker himself.

According to the Anarchist parliamentary practice, there is no appeal from the chairman’s rulings. Accordingly, Anarchy in session begins, like slavery-loving Socialists, by violating the principle “No Arch!” from which the dementia proudly derives its name. Having, so far, placed itself in line with civilization, Anarchy in session hastens to make amends by flying off the handle to the extreme of vesting its Arch with autocratic powers. What he says, “goes”—there is no discussing his rulings; there is no appeal from them; they are to be submitted to in dumb abjectness. Hence Anarchist sessions present the alternate spectacle either of the proverbial

“peace in Warsaw,” or, whenever the spark of Freedom rises to a flame in the breast of the tyrannized, the spectacle of riot, with the Arch being physically pulled off of his throne.

It has been said a people can be known by its songs, and that it can be known by its criminal code. A social theory can be known by its parliamentary practice. The parliamentary practice of Anarchy denotes the barbarian—sundry ethnic stages below Capitalism.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded July 2014

slpns@slp.org