

Comments on S.E. Parker

Laurance Labadie

1967

Re article by Sid Parker

Mr. Parker totally misapprehends the meaning of the economics of liberty or anarchy. He can hardly evade the charge of being remiss, nor gloss over what may be his own ignorance, by attributing the words “panacea” and “system” to the insistence of individualist anarchists that equitable access to natural resources and the freedom to exchange products and services in any way individuals may consider satisfactory—are anything other than *prerequisites* of anarchism, and are therefore essential. To call these essentials a “panacea” or “system” is a complete misapprehension.

As for the *specifics* of the matter, that is something else. Mutual banking or any particular “scheme” of circulating credit which I or anyone else proposes may not be an essential of anarchism, *but freedom in banking is*. Will he please inform us which, if any, mutualists considered their proposals to be anything but that—mere proposals? Not one of them intended to impose them upon anybody. According to Mr. Parker, liberty itself would be considered a “scheme” or “system.”

Sid Parker considers himself a proponent of “pure” Stirnerism. But Stirner himself translated, or is reputed to have translated, Adam Smith’s “Wealth of Nations” into German. His purpose was obvious. He certainly was not so stupid as to neglect to consider the economic question. And even the communist-anarchists whom Parker ridicules, who may be wrong in hoping to attain a society based on altruism, are not so stupid as to ignore the economic question.

“Pure” Stirnerism is hardly adequate for a societal proposal, as we may observe in the case of Ayn Rand’s “Objectivism.” While she has made a complete filching of the ideas of Stirner re self-interest (without giving him any credit); if one subtracts this “pure” Stirnerism from her philosophy, little remains except the reactionary economics of the erstwhile status quo.

In lieu of familiarity with the economics of the Warren, Proudhon, Spooner, Tucker, et al school, many people are flocking to Ayn Randism, merely because they have the wit to realize that self-interest is the basic impulse of organic beings. For that matter, even what is called altruism at bottom has an egoistic basis, whether the altruists and welfareists realize it or not. But whereas Stirner was perhaps one of the greatest enemies of the State, Miss Rand has injected the State into her philosophy as one of its principle planks. It reminds one of persons who are going to do everybody good, even if they have to shoot them in the process. No wonder she omits to mention Stirner as the foremost originator of her reliance on egoism!!

There are numerous phony “libertarians” who may more or less be categorized with Miss Rand.¹ They will swipe and use as might seem useful to them, while abusing the source of their ideas by perverting and lying about them.²

With German *grundlichkeit* Stirner exhausts his subject, It was not his purpose to make any *specific* economic proposal. His purpose was to sweep away the altruistic utopian nonsense that he heard every night from socialists in a beer hall.

There is no inconsistency between Stirner and Proudhon, except that the latter was given to use abstract terms, which to Stirner bordered on the use of fictions. I do not feel that Stirner, with his extreme individualism, quite realized that Society was in the *nature of* an organic entity. But Proudhon did understand that the actions and interactions between humans constituted an organic entity so to speak, a living, growing, changing thing that was amenable to observation and study with certain conclusions to be derived therefrom. But such an organism was quite different from that as conceived by Socialists.

Stirnerism is not mere whim. It is just that some of his self-alleged disciples have not made much else of it.

Tucker’s “plumb-line-ism” is nothing more than consistent thought. Many times during his career it may have appeared that he was going off the deep end; yet when looked at in retrospect it becomes amazing how consistently right he had been. Even Murray Rothbard recognizes his superiority as a thinker.

Tucker said that the infant was the labor product of the mother, and when asked whether she could throw it into the fire, he said “yes.” A number of his collaborators were horrified, as if he condoned this action—when he specifically said that he would interfere, just as if he would interfere if an owner of a painting by Raphael started to burn it. Tucker, like Stirner[,] realized that in the final analysis human action was based on *expediency*—which *does not* mean the absence of principle, but does mean doing the best one can *under a given set of circumstances*. Tucker knew very well that throwing a baby in the fire was just about the last thing a mother would do. He held his position as against the theory of socialists and communists that the jurisdiction of the child was a matter for “society.”

¹ “Categorized” misspelled as “catagorized.”

² “Lying” misspelled as “lieing.”

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