

Liberty and the State

Laurance Labadie

1934

The anarchistic solution of the money problem is so simple as to cause amazement. It is to permit anyone and everyone to go into the banking system. Why not? No one objects to anyone going into the hat business or building business or any other non-invasive enterprise. Naturally those who furnish the soundest and cheapest money will crowd others out of existence.¹ To facilitate recognizability there would probably be cooperation or mergers between the banks. The public at large would be the “rulers” of this type of institution because they would patronize it or not, at will, and it must maintain its efficiency and reputability because of the pressure of competition.

The difference between this type of institution and the State or State protected institutions is that the latter, due mostly to the ignorance of people but also by the threat of violence, are endowed with arbitrary power. If the State would be on a voluntary taxation basis as any other business it would have to give something else than abuse and the misappropriation of funds else no one would support it. But this would mean that it would cease to be a state in the anarchistic sense. Of course this is only the economic objection to the State; there are many other ways that it restricts and hampers the non-invasive life of a nation. The State is the cancer in the social life of a people.

That is why those in political life are looked upon as criminals by anarchists, not because they so much actually intend to do wrong, even the political life does corrupt a man, but because the effects of their actions are to provoke what is more obviously criminal. The president of the United States is bringing ruin to its inhabitants, not because he is intending to do so but because he is ignorant. It is dangerous to entrust the destiny of people to ignorant men.² That is why only by the abolition of arbitrary power can there be any security or harmony among people. Only by the inauguration of voluntarily supported institutions can the possibility of invasiveness be minimized.³ This would be a real democracy. The State must be destroyed not by killing those in power, but by destroying the political myth in the minds of people.⁴ Then the State would be laughed away as an absurdity. Meanwhile we must not only discover the nature of liberty, its

¹ “Existence” misspelled as “existance.”

² “Entrust” misspelled as “intrust.”

³ “Inauguration” misspelled as “inaugeration.”

⁴ Word identified as “destroyed” is illegible.

possibilities and promise, but must also combat the thousand and one spurious nostrums which now tempt the human race.

It is true however that liberty alone will do the trick. Human society, must, in freedom, become one large experimental field wherein, according to the law of the survival of the fittest, only those institutions and customs which actually serve human needs can survive. Only by the free and unhampered operation of this great law will folly be eliminated because the absence of paternalism places fools in a position to reap the full rewards of their folly and in doing so become wise, i.e. capable, self-reliant, and responsible.

Of course, in the larger view, the law of the survival of the fittest, which, by the way and contrary to the beliefs of many humanitarians, is an amoral law and takes no cognizance of "good" or "bad" men, is always in operation. We the great mass of people suffer today because, in our ignorance we do not understand how to live. But in the long run, if there is to be any "survival" on this earth, it is within the realm of certainty that it is to come only by the extension of individual liberties through the ultimate abolition of the State, the elimination of all government of man by man.

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Published in an edition of John G. Scott and Jo Ann Wheeler's version of *Mother Earth*.

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