

Max Baginski

Without government

The gist of the anarchistic idea is this, that there are qualities present in man, which permit the possibilities of social life, organization, and co-operative work without the application of force. Such qualities are solidarity, common action, and love of justice. To-day they are either crippled or made ineffective through the influence of compulsion; they can hardly be fully unfolded in a society in which groups, classes, and individuals are placed in hostile, irreconcilable opposition to one another. In human nature to-day such traits are fostered and developed which separate instead of combining, call forth hatred instead of a common feeling, destroy the humane instead of building it up. The cultivation of these traits could not be so successful if it did not find the best nourishment in the foundations and institutions of the present social order.

On close inspection of these institutions, which are based upon the power of the State that maintains them, mankind shows itself as a huge menagerie, in which the captive beasts seek to tear the morsels from each other's greedy jaws. The sharpest teeth, the strongest claws and paws vanquish the weaker competitors. Malice and underhand dealing are victorious over frankness and confidence. The struggle for the means of existence and for the maintenance of achieved power fill the entire space of the menagerie with an infernal noise. Among the methods which are used to secure this organized bestiality the most prominent ones are the hangman, the judge with his mechanical: "In the name of the king," or his more hypocritical: "In the name of the people I pass sentence"; the soldier with his training for murder, and the priest with his: "Authority comes from God."

The exteriors of prisons, armories, and churches show that they are institutions in which the body and soul are subdued. He whose thoughts reach beyond this philosophy of the menagerie sees in them the strongest expression of the view, that it is not possible to make life worth living the more with the help of reason, love, justice, solidarity. The family and school take care to prepare man for these institutions. They deliver him up to the state, so to speak, blindfolded and with fettered limbs. Force, force. It echoes through all history. The first law which subjected man to man was based upon force. The private right of the individual to land was built up by force; force took away the claims upon homesteads from the majority and made them unsettled and transitory. It was force that spoke to mankind thus: "Come to me, humble yourself before me, serve me, bring the treasures and riches of the earth under MY roof. You are destined by Providence to always be in want. You shall be allowed just enough to maintain strength with which to enrich me infinitely by your exertions and to load me down with superfluity and luxury."

What maintains the material and intellectual slavery of the masses and the insanity of the autocracy of the few? Force. Workingmen produce in the factories and workshops the most varied things for the use of man. What is it that drives

them to yield up these products for speculation's sake to those who produce nothing, and to content themselves with only a fractional part of the values which they produce? It is force.

What is it that makes the brain-worker just as dependent in the intellectual realm as the artisan in the material world? Force. The artist and the writer being compelled to gain a livelihood dare not dream of giving the best of their individuality. No, they must scan the market in order to find out what is demanded just then. Not any different than the dealer in clothes -who must study the style of the season before he places 'his merchandise before the public. Thus art and literature sink to the level of bad taste and speculation. The artistic individuality shrinks before the calculating reckoner. Not that which moves the artist or the writer most receives expression; the vacillating demands of mediocrity of everyday people must be satisfied. The artist becomes the helper of the dealer and the average men, who trot along in the tracks of dull habit.

The State Socialists love to assert that at present we live in the age of individualism; the truth, however, is that individuality was never valued at so low a rate as to-day. Individual thinking and feeling are incumbrances and not recommendations on the paths of life. Wherever they are found on the market they meet with the word "adaptation." Adapt yourself to the demands of the reigning social powers, act the odied servant before them, and if you produce something be sure that it does not run against the grain of your "superiors," or say adieu to success, reputation and recompense. Amuse the people, be their clown, give them platitudes about which they can laugh, prejudices which they hold as righteousness and falsehoods which they hold as truths. Paint the whole, crown it with regard for good manners, for society does not like to hear the truth about itself. Praise the men in power as fathers of the people, have the devourers of the commonwealth parade along as benefactors of mankind.

Of course, the force which humbles humanity in this manner is far from openly declaring itself as force. It is masked, and in the course of time it has learned to step forward with the least possible noise. That diminishes the danger of being recognized.

The modern republic is a good example. In it tyranny is veiled so correctly, that there are really great numbers of people who are deceived by this masquerade and who maintain that what they perceive is a true face with honest eyes.

No czar, no king. But right in line with these are the landowners, the merchants, manufacturers, landlords, monopolists. They all are in possession, which is as strong a guarantee for the continuance of their power, as a castle surrounded by thick walls. Whoever possesses can rob him who possesses nothing of his independence. If I am dependent for a living on work, for which I need contrivances and machines, which I myself cannot procure, because I am without means, I

must sacrifice my independence to him who possesses these contrivances and machines. You may work here, he will tell me, but only under the condition that you will deliver up the products of your labor to me, that I may trade with and make profit on them.

The one without possessions has no choice. He may appeal to the declaration of human rights; he may point to his political rights, the equality before the law, before God and the archangels — if he wants to eat, drink, dress and have a home he must choose such work as the conditions of the industrial mercantile or agricultural plants impose upon him.

Through organized opposition the workingmen can somewhat improve this condition; by the help of trade unions they can regulate the hours of work and hinder the reduction of wages to a level too low for mere living. The trade unions are a necessity for the workingmen, a bulwark against which the most unbearable demands of the class of possessors rebound; but a complete freeing of labor — be it of an intellectual or of a physical nature — can be brought about only through the abolition of wage work and the right of private ownership of land and the shit this essay had been cut short!!!!!!!

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright
May 21, 2012



Max Baginski
Without government

Retrieved on September 24, 2011 from recollectionbooks.com