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A Matter of Life & Death

Jason Lee Byas

July 22nd, 2014

At this moment, governments have stockpiled at least 17,300 nuclear weapons, for leverage in disputes with other governments. Powerful men in suits calmly talk things over while memories of mushroom clouds and mass-murder stand in the back of the room like a silent muscleman. In the words of ethicist Germain Grisez, those who own these weapons have “already have committed nuclear extermination in their hearts, even if the buttons are never pressed.”

At this moment, children across the world are blown apart by flying killer robots because they’re too close to the wrong cell phone at the wrong time. This practice is funded by the taxes we are told “are the price we pay for a civilized society.” It is carried out by government, which we are told is “just the name we give to the things we do together.”

At this moment, the United States prides itself on being the most advanced nation in the world, while still performing ritual sacrifices. Men and women wait on death row to satisfy what remains of our primal instinct toward revenge. Many of them are even innocent.

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At this moment, countless minor drug offenders are having their lives snuffed out early from guards and fellow prisoners. Those who don't die often start to wish for death.

At this moment, police are being trained to always remember that "when you walk out of the car for any kind of stop, you must be mentally prepared to kill the citizen."

Because anarchism is the battle of the individual against the State, it is the battle of life against death.

At this moment, queer youth face homelessness and suicide at dramatically higher rates. This is not a product of their sexuality, but of the heteronormative culture around them.

At this moment, assault and battery against those who are transgender goes on in broad daylight. For these individuals, existence itself is an act of bravery.

At this moment, police in the United States are murdering countless people of color, and those murders are going ignored. Those deaths are just one of many brutal reminders that white supremacy did not end with Jim Crow.

At this moment, violence against women remains pervasive. It is propped up by a patriarchal culture that blames survivors, leads perpetrators to believe they're just doing what everyone does, and refuses to call rape by its name.

At this moment, the systematic privileging of capital over labor has so depleted the dignity of workers around the world that they are leaping off factories.

Because anarchism is the battle of the individual against domination, it is the battle of life against death.

All this may be obvious, but there is still another reason why anarchism is the battle of life against death.

Since aggression and domination are methods for using other people and their resources, they can never be the true source of creation. Roads, schools, and everything else built by the State are built by flesh and blood people who could just as easily build things worth having on their own. The

resources used to build them came from taxation – in other words, stolen wealth, previously created by others.

All that the State does is re-direct these people and resources, away from whatever they would have been doing otherwise. This is not a benefit. Given the incentives and knowledge problems faced by States, the projects they build are more geared towards making themselves look necessary than actually serving the interests of the general public.

The interstate highway system, public schools, and whatever other large projects that government defenders point to, are not signs of life. They stand in place of whatever solutions free people working together through free action could have built on their own.

By preventing alternatives, these large State projects represent stagnation. They are giant, stillborn corpses of what could have been. Corpses of fresh flesh for the Carrion class, who always stand to profit from the fifty-eighth rate solutions we end up being given.

Even more fundamentally, both aggression and domination beat back the thing that makes us distinct from the dead. In so far as we are living, breathing human beings, we act according to our own will. Our choices are our own, and what we create are products of our own minds.

By falling under the control of someone else, that breath of life leaves us. We become instruments no more alive than the tools we ourselves work with.

Of course, because only life can create life, and only to the extent that people are free can any growth occur, we are never fully under the control of others. Nor could we be. Our Schrödinger society is a patchwork of periods where we live, die, and live again.

We spend our truly waking days in gardens among graveyards. Gardens that have either grown for the future harvests of our masters, or (more often) in everyday resistance to their demands.

It may not come soon, but unless we're wiped out by enough of those 17,300 nuclear warheads, anarchy is inevitable. Because life self-replicates, while death stays silent and unmoving, a system that relies on death is a system that is unsustainable.

Our lives are our own to live. They do not require the permission of cops, bosses, or even our surrounding communities.

We are individualist anarchists because we are alive. We are individualist anarchists because we love our lives. We are individualist anarchists because we wish to live in the truly fullest sense.