

My Anarchism

Rafael Barrett

1909

The etymology is good enough for me "*Absence of government.*" The spirit of authority and the standing of the laws must be destroyed. That says it all.

Open-minded enquiry will see to that.

The ignorant reckon that anarchy is disorder and that in the absence of government, society will always revert to chaos. They cannot conceive of order other than as something imposed from without by force of arms.

Anarchism, as I understand it, boils down to political free enquiry.

We need to rid ourselves of respect for the law. The law is not accountable. It is an obstacle to all real progress. It is a notion that we have to abolish.

The laws and constitutions that govern peoples by force are phony. They are not the products of men's inquiry and common advancement. They are the creatures of a barbarous minority that resorts to brute force in order to indulge its avarice and cruelty.

Perhaps social phenomena operate in accordance with to underlying laws. Our sociology is still in its infancy and is unfamiliar with these. No doubt we should investigate them, and if we should identify- them, they will prove immensely useful to us. But, even if we should discover them, we should not enshrine them in a Code nor make them into a system of government. To what end? If indeed they are laws of nature, then they will operate unaided, whether we like it or not. It is not the astronomers who order the stars. Our only function is to bear witness.

Plainly, written laws bear no resemblance to the laws of nature, not even in form. Ah, for the brave majesty of those ancient parchments that every revolution puts to the torch in the town squares, scattering the ashes for ever! A law that has need of an enforcer usurps the name law. Such a law is no law at all: it is a hateful lie.

And what enforcers! To appreciate the extent to which our laws fly in the face of logic and the genius of humanity, we need only contemplate the colossal armaments — swelling with every day that passes — and the stockpiles of brute force that governments amass in order to survive, in order to fend off for a few more minutes the anticipated onslaught of souls.

Nine tenths of the world's population, thanks to written laws, know the degradation of poverty. It does not require much knowledge of sociology, when one thinks of the wonderful talent for assimilation and creativity displaced by the children of the "lower" orders, to appreciate the monstrous lunacy of that extravagant waste of human energy. The law rides roughshod over the mother's womb!

We fit the law the way a China-woman's foot fits its binding, or the way the baobab tree fits the Japanese vase. Voluntarily stunted!

Are we afraid of the "chaos" that might follow should we remove the restraints, if we should shatter the vase and plant ourselves on solid ground and face into the vastness? What does it matter what forms the future will take? Reality will unveil them. We are sure that they are going to be fine and noble like the tree sprouting freely.

Let our ideal be as lofty as may be. Let us not be "practical". Let's not try to "improve" the law and substitute one set of restraints for another. The more unattainable the ideal appears, the better. The sailor plots his course by the stars. So let our focus be on the longer term. In that way we can identify the shorter term. And speed our success.

What are we to do? Educate, ourselves and others. It all boils down to free enquiry. May our children take the measure of the law and hold it in contempt!

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