

Anarchist library
Anti-Copyright



The Breakdown of the State

Ross Winn

1911

Governmentalists, authoritarians, believers in force and violence — worshippers at the shrine of brute force, never tire of repeating the assertion that government is an absolute concomitant of civilization, and the only force whereby social order is to be upheld. However, even a very casual examination of the various forms of public thought reveals the surprising fact that there is an universal mistrust of government, and from nowhere do we hear a note of satisfaction with the workings of our political machinery. In other words, the governmentalists themselves are dissatisfied with the results so far obtained from this paragon, and from nowhere do we hear ought but denunciations of official corruption and protests against the established authorities.

An institution that never did give satisfaction, that works badly at all times, and which is constantly being changed and reformed cannot be regarded as a success. The governmental dupes themselves offer the strongest evidence that the political state is not only not a success, but is in truth the most gigantic failure of all human experiment. For it is the worshippers of the State who are continually trying to reform it, and to get rid of this or that evil, although the elimination of one evil in the

Ross Winn
The Breakdown of the State
1911

Retrieved on February 29, 2012 from en.wikisource.org
Originally appearing in *Mother Earth*, May 1911.

en.anarchistlibraries.net

State generally produces two additional evils to take the place of the one that has been eliminated. At the present time there is, everywhere in this country, a general dissatisfaction and discontent among the people, all of which is directed against the various governments, State and national. Nowhere is there a government that is giving satisfaction. But the people do not know what to do, and in their blindness they vainly seek to rid themselves of the evils of authority by substituting one political party for another, as though one tyrant can be any better than another.

The government of man by man has been tried for thousands of years. Whatever its form, its achievements have always been the same. Every government that has existed up to the present has been an instrument for the aggrandisement of the few and the exploitation of the masses. Today the masses have reached an intellectual development that makes the foundations of government extremely insecure. It is this general diffusion of knowledge among the people that results in the present universal agitation for governmental reforms. But, as an evil cannot be reformed, save by being destroyed, so all attempts to reform and improve the political state by substituting one set of rulers for another, or by changing its form, must always fail.

Anarchist ideals have not yet reached the masses. But those ideals so dominate the best minds and the highest thought of the world that their influence is reaching far and wide, unconsciously and unperceived. In the dawn of a new conscience and a new philosophy of life, now breaking upon the world's heart and brain, the political State is in the throes of its final dissolution. Ignorance, spurred on by power and privilege, shrieks in vain against the new order, Anarchy, whose herald star is rising in the east. Government is in the grasp of awakened thought.