

# **Laurance Labadie: Keeper Of The Flame**

**A Tetralogy**

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# I. Tucker's Torch

Laurance Cleophis Labadie was born on June 4, 1898, the youngest child and only son of Sophie and Joseph Labadie, the famed "gentle anarchist" of Detroit. The elder Labadie contributed frequently to Benjamin R. Tucker's journal, *Liberty*, and became the spokesperson for Tucker's "individualistic anarchism" within the labor movement, with which he was associated all of his adult life.<sup>1</sup> He is best known for his extensive collection of anarchist and labor-movement literature which he donated to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. And many of his writings after the demise of **Liberty** are now collector's items in the form of little self-published booklets and leaflets. **Songs of the Spoiled**, **Doggerel for the Underdog**, and **Anarchism - Genuine and Asinine** were three of many such booklets attacking the evils of privilege and extolling the beauties of freedom in the language of working folk.<sup>2</sup> Both the humorous style and fine craftsmanship of the father were passed down to the son, along with an entire heritage. It was during the dark age that began with the Great Depression that Laurance Labadie was to take up the torch of *Liberty* which had earlier been held aloft by Jo Labadie, Benj. R. Tucker and his circle of champions.

Early in life, Laurance had developed anarchistic positions regarding the social institutions he confronted. Following in his father's footsteps, he became involved in the labor movement. In 1915, just 16 years of age, he had his first taste of picket duty. He was working as a machinist in Detroit and joined a strike against the ten-hour workday. "Am going to be a union man soon. A regular agitator," he wrote to his family. "I learnt more in a week than in a month at school." This attitude to formal schooling stayed with him for life, as we shall see. At the time he was attending Cass Technical School for Boys on Friday nights; his report card shows he was not a very good student. It appears to have been the last school he went to. The path he would choose for himself was that of an autodidact, similar to that of Proudhon and other anarchists before him.<sup>3</sup>

Also like his father, Proudhon, Tucker, and other anarchist predecessors, young Labadie learned to set type and was soon operating the small job press used by the elder Labadie. It

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<sup>1</sup> Sophie's full name before marriage was Sophia Elizabeth Archambault; Jo's full name was Charles Joseph Antoine Labadie. Laurance's sisters were Laura Euphrosine and Charlotte Antoinette. The term "individualistic anarchism" was coined by Tucker's counterpart in Germany, who made occasional contributions to **Liberty**, and whose major contribution to anarchist "literature," **The Anarchists**, was published in English by Tucker: the "poet-anarchist" John Henry Mackay. Laurance Labadie expressed great interest in and admiration for Mackay, whose works were conspicuous in his library.

<sup>2</sup> "The Labadie Booklets" were all hand sewn, 3½ x 5/2 signatures. The major titles in the series included: *Doggerel for the Underdog* (1910), *Essays* (1911), *Songs of the Spoiled* (1922), *Anarchism: Genuine and Asinine* (1925), and "Russian Verses" (1932) all by Jo Labadie. Also in the same series were: *Jesus Was an Anarchist* by Elbert Hubbard (1910, second ed), "The Poor

Devil," *A Memory of Robert Reitzel* by John Hubert Greusel (ca. 1909), and *Prairie Songs* by Myra Pepper Weller (1925).

<sup>3</sup> Thanks to Carlotta Anderson, Labadie's niece, who supplied the information and quotation in this paragraph, as well as other details of Labadie's family background.

was upon his father's death in 1933 that Laurance began to devote most of his spare time to preserving and propagating the heritage of ideas that was left to him. He republished some of the classics of individualist anarchism, including **Slaves to Duty** by John Badcock Jr., and Tucker's **Why I Am An Anarchist** and **Attitude of Anarchism Toward Industrial Combinations**. To this list he added some of his own essays such as **Anarchism Applied to Economics** and **Superstition and Ignorance versus Courage and Self-Reliance**, remarkable for their clarity of thought and directness of style.<sup>4</sup>

Laurance's personal library duplicated many of the items in the Labadie Collection in Ann Arbor. In addition were voluminous files of correspondence with libertarian money reformers E.C. Reigel and Henry Cohen, and others. One of his prized possessions was a photographic portrait of Benjamin Tucker in his 70s, autographed to young Laurance with words of encouragement: ". . . more power to his elbow." He was also the proud possessor of Tucker's mammoth roll-top desk, which was loaned to him until his death by Tucker's daughter, Oriole Tucker Riché. Another treasure was his complete set of **Liberty**, which became the dominant influence in his life. Like its editor, Labadie developed a style of critical commentary which is revealed in both his private correspondence and in his public correspondence of the late '30s: **Discussion - A Journal for Free Spirits**, which he published and circulated among friends and other interested persons. Therein, he engaged his readers in active dialogue and debate in which, as Tucker had often said, the victor was the one who gained the most light.

**Discussion** was a modest mimeographed-production, yet it included letters and articles by some of Tucker's original associates such as Stephen T. Byington, Henry Cohen, James Mill, and Hugo Bilgram, the monetary theorist most highly regarded by Labadie. And it was the economic theories of Bilgram, Tucker, and the other "Mutualists" that occupied many a discussion in **Discussion**. One of Labadie's most frequently reprinted essays, "The Money Problem in the Light of Liberty," first appeared in **Discussion**. It condensed into four pages the basic monetary reforms advocated by Tucker and the Mutualists.<sup>5</sup>

Labadie emphasized that while money needed a sound basis, any and all exchangeable wealth (i.e., with measurable value) could serve as a basis of issue. Confusion results, he said, from the claim that the basis of issue must also be the standard of value. While such a standard is necessary, it could be any generally accepted commodity of value. Only freedom to experiment would avoid the evils of both a legalized "gold-standard" (i.e., gold-basis) monopoly and a government fiat-money system. Monopolies gone, freedom would reverse Gresham's Law and drive bad money out of circulation. Freedom would also compel banks to compete with each other by lowering their interest rates down to the true cost of providing their services (including insurance against risks and losses). Thus would be eliminated a major mechanism for the transfer of wealth from the producers to the monopolists.

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<sup>4</sup> Works printed and published by Laurance Labadie at this time included: *Slaves to Duty* (1938), by Badcock, *Why I Am an Anarchist* (1934), *Attitude of Anarchism Toward Industrial Combinations* (1933), both by Tucker; and single sheets by L. Labadie, among them: *Anarchism Applied to Economics* (1933), *Superstition and Ignorance versus Courage and Self-reliance* (1934). *Economics of Liberty*; *Reflections on Socio-economic Evolution*; *Sniping*; *What hath God wrought?* (all no date). In addition were single sheets of quotations from Tucker, Nietzsche, Jo Labadie, John Beverley Robinson, and others.

<sup>5</sup> **Discussion**, 2306 Buchanan St., Detroit, No. 7, Nov. 1937. Reprints include: *Way Out*. School of Living, Vol. 19. No. 4, 5, April, May 1963, Appendix to **Property and Trusterty**, by Borsodi and Loomis, School of Living, 1964; and **The Storm! A Journal for Free Spirits**, No. 4, 5, 1977, Mackay Society, Box 131 Ansonia Station, New York, NY 10023. The current address for the School of Living is Box 388, RD 7, York, PA 17042.

In the pages of **Discussion** we see Labadie as both faithful to Tucker's "plumb line" anarchism, and at the same time, expressing these ideas in "the most fiercely logical and precise style . . . with an exceptional economy of words and absence of extraneous padding."<sup>6</sup> His summation of the egoistic basis of anarchism is a fine example of his ability to condense an entire philosophy into a single paragraph.

Modern anarchism cuts loose from *a priori* and transcendental moral codes, resting its "morality" firmly on expediency - men do the best thing they can under the circumstances, according to their knowledge. Liberty is to be advanced, not because it is "moral" or "just," which are, after all, in themselves, but man conceived and tentative, but because experience has shown it to be the only genuinely expedient means, given human happiness as a social goal. In point of fact, morality is as much a result of economic predicament as a cause for certain courses of action.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the two flames of Tucker's torch, Proudhonian mutualism and Stirnerian egoism, burnt clear and bright in the writings of Laurance Labadie. These two positions were later to become main points of debate between Labadie and a younger generation of libertarian theorists.

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<sup>6</sup> James J. Martin, Introduction **Selected Essays** by Laurance Labadie, 1978, Ralph Myles Publisher, Box 1533, Colorado Springs, CO 80901, pg. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Anarchy - today," **Discussion** No. 8, Jan. 1938 (re-printed: **A way Out**, Oct. 1967, Vol. 23, No. 3&4.

## II. The Sojourner and the Freedomseekers

Young Laurance Labadie was a first-rank tool maker in the days when eyes alone allowed for tolerances of up to a ten-thousandth of an inch. He had spent several years in the automotive industry during the first world war, working for Ford, Studebaker, and Chevrolet. (Yet, he never learned to drive an automobile, and in this too he resembled Tucker who disliked autos and very rarely rode in them.) During the second world war, Labadie saved his money and soon after "retired" from the work force to enjoy his reclusive bachelor life style, his anarchist library, his thinking and writing, and his small circle of friends. One of these, the curator of the Labadie Collection, Agnes Inglis, was to alert Laurance to James J. Martin, then a student at the University of Michigan. Martin was doing research for what was to become the best history of Tucker and American individualist anarchism, **Men Against the State**. "Laurance and Agnes were the first and virtually the only enthusiastic supporters I found for the writing project . . ." recalls Martin in his recent introduction to Labadie's **Selected Essays**.<sup>1</sup>

During the time that Labadie made contact with Martin, the late '40s, he also introduced himself to the decentralist School of Living, run by Ralph Borsodi and Mildred Jensen Loomis, whose recollections follow.

The School of Living, located at the Loomis's Lane's End Homestead near Brockton, Ohio (1943-70), and continuing at Deep Run Farm in York, Pennsylvania, grew out of the efforts of Ralph Borsodi, pioneer advocate of organic living. Our journal, **Green Revolution** continues Borsodi's **Decentralist** (1934-45) and has appeared under different titles over the years, including **The Interpreter**, **Balanced Living**, and **A Way Out**. Centralized America, being what it was (and is), led us to highlight decentralist alternatives to the prevailing systems of education, industry, population, and government. Responses to our ideas brought to our pages and to our homesteads a flood of self-reliant persons seeking and achieving various "ways out" of standardized, stereotyped, and centralized civilization.

Comments and questions from Laurance Labadie came often from Detroit (circa 1940), which we honestly answered with what intelligence we could muster. Labadie said many of our writers did not hit bottom, but he was interested in "that fellow Werkheiser, whose articles show an open mind." Don Werkheiser was living at Lane's End at the time, and we invited Laurance to visit us. We greeted a short, stocky fellow of middle age wearing out-dated clothes, whose serious face, with its poutline from Native American forbears, would light up with a broad grin at his frequently comments on everything and everybody he came in contact with. Larry, as we quickly felt comfortable to call him, was the most frugal person I have ever met. He smoked his cigarettes to the last bit - sometimes picking up a half-used one from an

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<sup>1</sup> Martin, pg. 8.

ashtray. He'd wash his socks in any left-over suds, so as not to waste them. And he chose to live in our outdoor "bunk-house" instead of using our guest room.

His neatness led to his arranging and filing the stacks of paper in my office. "Your editing and your journals may not be the best," he'd say. "But they're worth saving. I'm going to sort and bind them for you." And Labadie had grudgingly admitted to Werkheiser that "these old **Interpreters** will some-day be collector's items. They're unearthing ideas whose time is coming. We eventually had a reputable file, which is still being referred to today.

Labadie and Werkheiser were constantly discussing economic and social problems, with a general emphasis on *voluntary* association. And Larry, little by little, revealed his background, who his father was and, of course, who Benjamin Tucker was. I listened along with Werkheiser and John Loomis - here was news for me. Larry's story of Tucker centered mostly around the journal **Liberty** and its galaxy of writers and controversialists. Out of them all, Tucker was Larry's primary model (I was about to say "hero," but Larry was too staunch an individualist to permit hero-worship.)

For those of us at Lane's End - John and Mildred Loomis, Don Werkheiser, and intermittently, Ralph Borsodi, friendship with Laurance Labadie was welcome and fruitful. His discussions with us about America's individualist anarchists were grist for our decentralist mill. Over the years, our editorials and our goals have reflected this anarchistic orientation - as have the numerous articles we have published by Labadie, Tucker, and others.<sup>2</sup> And most significant were the effects Labadie had on the minds of School of Living editors Ralph Borsodi, Robert Anton Wilson, and myself.

Ralph Borsodi, inveterate seeker, had somehow missed America's individualist anarchists until he met Laurance Labadie at Lane's End in the early 1950s. When Borsodi would label himself an anarchist, Labadie would retort, "Not so, Ralph. You discuss the Civic Problem, and you list alternative solutions. but you yourself support a governmental rather than an anarchist answer." "In *practice*, yes," Borsodi would reply. "At our stage in history with all the entrenched evils, all the tendencies toward monopoly and crime, I do think we have to have an agency with power to protect citizens from force and fraud. But in *theory* I'm just as much an anarchist as you are, Larry, and that's the goal I'm working and educating for."

Borsodi and Labadie remained good friends. And, after the death of Myrtle Mae Borsodi, he used his savings to purchase Borsodi's Dogwood's Homestead in Suffern, New York. He developed his living quarters there in an outbuilding alongside his

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<sup>2</sup> A partial listing includes: L. Labadie: Origin and Nature of Government (**Balanced Living**, Feb. 1958), Freedom in Education (**Balanced Living**, Dec. 1958), Liberty and Segregation (**Balanced Living**, March 1959), Should Government Issue Money (**Balanced Living**, May 1959), Is Use of Force Justifiable in Human Affairs (by Morgan Harris with response in Laurance Labadie, in **Balanced Living**, July 1959), and A Critique of Pure Treason (review of Spooner's No Treason, in **Way Out**, July/Aug., 1962). Benjamin R. Tucker: Liberty, the Remedy (**Balanced Living**, March 1958), State Socialism and Libertarianism (sic) (**Balanced Living**, Sept. 1960). Attitude of Libertarianism (sic) Toward Industrial Combinations (**Balanced Living**, Feb. 1961), and Usury: The Serpent Devouring Labor (**Way Out**, July/Aug., 1962). Other anarchists included (among others) Stephen Pearl Andrews, E. Armand, William Balie, Josiah Warren, Proudhon, Spooner, Sacco and Vanzetti. More contemporary authors included Murray Bookchin, Kerry Thornley, Timothy Leary, Paul Goodman, as well as others, some of whom are mentioned in the text above.

immaculate tool shed, living on the rental income from the main house. Borsodi and I visited Laurance there in 1975. We found him somewhat bitter and in some physical decline, but still an articulate anarchist, taking up conversation at any of his familiar points.

Robert Anton Wilson edited our journal **Way Out** in the early '60s from an anarchist viewpoint well established before meeting Laurance Labadie. Under his editorship, the journal published many pieces on anarchism, introducing readers to the ideas of Labadie, Tucker, and the other individualist or mutualist anarchists. For example, one issue of **Way Out** (Nov. 1962) included among its contents: "A Note on Josiah Warren" by Wilson, "There Is No Definition of Liberty" by Warren, "Aphorisms and Arguments" from Tucker, and a review of Lysander Spooner's **Trial by Jury** by Wilson. Following Tucker and Labadie, Wilson voiced his criticisms of usury, or interest, on money and credit. In one editorial, he illustrated the difference between Tucker's idea of a free market, and that defended by the protagonists of capitalism.

*Capitalism:* You have a cow. You borrow at interest to buy a bull. By the time the calf is born, you have to give it as well as the bull to your usurer, and you're back where you started.

*Anarchism:* You have a cow. Proudhon's Bank of the People monetizes the value of the cow, without adding interest, and you buy a bull. When the calf is born, you return the monetary value of the bull (selling him if necessary) and you're ahead one calf.<sup>3</sup>

Robert Wilson left the School of Living, but his writings since then, such as the **Illuminatus!** trilogy he co-authored with Robert Shea, have continued to put forward the anti-monopoly critique so strongly stressed by Laurance Labadie and Benjamin Tucker.<sup>4</sup> To this day letters arrive in appreciation of the discussions on voluntary association from those, such as Wilson and Werkheiser, who were influenced by Labadie during his association with the School of Living.

For myself, Laurance Labadie's ideas sparked the beginning of a conscious turnaround in my own outlook. I blush now to think that in my high school graduation I declared my cherished goal to have been "to become a secretary to a Congressman in Washington, D.C." Need I say who helped me to grow completely outside of that framework?

Labadie's sojourn with the freedomseekers at the School of Living kept alive the flame of individualist anarchism when it might otherwise have died. Moreover, as the above reveals, the flame was passed to other torches that have been carried out into the world since then. But the story does not end here.

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<sup>3</sup> **Way Out**, Sept. 1962, pg. 38, Vol. 18, No. 8.

<sup>4</sup> **Illuminatus!**, Dell, 1975; especially Vol. III of the trilogy (**Leviathan**), pg. 70-72, 212-216, 238-244 (cites L. Labadie, pg. 213; quotes Tucker, pg. 240-241).



### III. The Paladin of Liberty

Laurance Labadie's contributions to the School of Living's various journals spans twenty years, from a modest trio of book reviews in the May 1, 1948 issue of **The Interpreter**, throughout the span of **Balanced Living**, and climaxing with a double issue of **A Way Out**, dated October 1967 and edited by Herbert C. Roseman (who was later to publish library reprints of such anarchist classics as Tucker's **Instead of a Book** and John Henry MacKay's **The Anarchists**). In this particular issue of **A Way Out**, twelve out of the twenty-nine articles are by or about Labadie, some of them reprints going back to **Discussion**, and others taking on a new generation of critics of Tucker - in particular anarcho-capitalist Murray Rothbard and anarchist-egoist S.E. Parker.

In his response to Rothbard's criticisms of "The Spooner-Tucker Doctrine," Labadie defended the anarchists' advocacy of juries for "the administration of justice." He in turn criticized Rothbard's misrepresentation of the idea with the claim that there would be "no rational or objective body of law" to guide the jury. "This is hardly the fact," wrote Labadie, and he went on:

Mere common sense would suggest that any court would be influenced by experience; and any free-market court or judge would in the very nature of things have some precedents guiding them in their instructions to a jury. But since no case is exactly the same, a jury would have considerable say about the heinousness of the offense in each case, realizing that circumstances alter cases, and prescribing penalty accordingly. This appeared to Spooner and Tucker to be a more flexible and equitable administration of justice possible or feasible, human beings being what they are.. . .

But when Mr. Rothbard quibbles about the jurisprudential ideas of Spooner and Tucker, and at the same time upholds *presumably in his courts* the very economic evils which are at bottom the very reason for human contention and conflict, he would seem to be a man who chokes at a gnat while swallowing a camel. (Labadie's emphasis)<sup>1</sup>

In another article, and responding to criticism of a somewhat opposite nature, Labadie took "pure Stirnerian" S.E. Parker to task for:

attributing the words "panacea" and "system" to the insistence of individualist anarchists that equitable access to natural resources and the freedom to exchange products and services in any way individuals may consider satisfactory - are anything other than *prerequisites* of anarchism, and are therefore essential . . . . Mutual Banking or any particular "scheme" of circulating credit which I or anyone else proposes may not be an essential of anarchism, *but freedom in banking is* . . . . Accord-

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<sup>1</sup> "Anarchy and Law." **A Way Out**, Oct. 1967, Vol. XXIII, No: 3/4, pg. 18.

ing to Mr. Parker, liberty would be considered a "scheme" or "system." (Labadie's emphasis)<sup>2</sup>

Bouncing back in the very same article, Lurance also criticized Ayn Rand, then very popular among certain libertarians, for not acknowledging her partial debt to Max Stirner's egoism while at the same time rejecting his thorough-going anti-statism. Yet, rebounding a few paragraphs later, he was defending Proudhon *against* Stirner who did not:

quite realize that Society was in the *nature of* an organic entity . . . . amenable to observation and study with certain conclusions to be derived therefrom. (Labadie's emphasis)<sup>3</sup>

Labadie's capacity for criticism, however, proved him to be a worthy successor to Stirner. Nothing and no one was sacred to Lurance Labadie - or beyond the reach of his lance. In "A Self-Compensating Society," also printed in the October '67 issue of **A Way Out**, Labadie boldly criticized School of Living founder Ralph Borsodi. Labeling him "an effect treater," Labadie went on to attack his notions of "norms" and " 'right' education" as merely Borsodi's opinions on the matter, confusing education with indoctrination. In attempting to aid "misguided souls," Labadie argued, Borsodi remains

blissfully unaware that their sorry state has been caused by forceful denial of liberty, and that if they were free to learn from the natural law of consequences they might be able to live satisfactory lives.<sup>4</sup>

Lurance Labadie even questioned the wisdom of his mentor, Tucker himself, in conversation though, not in print. He agreed that Tucker's formula to abolish land monopoly, "occupancy and use" tenure, left something to be desired. Of course, he added, so did all other proposals to solve the land question.<sup>5</sup> This judgment coincided with his growing general pessimism regarding the successful implementation of anarchist ideas. But this dim view was *not*, as we shall see, a disagreement with Tucker's own final opinion.

The two-fold contribution of Lurance Labadie to contemporary libertarian thought was the preservation and elaboration of "plumb line" anarchism for a new generation of individualists and decentralists. And the torch he had accepted from Jo Labadie and Benjamin Tucker was passed on to some who came to know him through his association with the School of Living, and to a few who met and spoke with him in his last years.

Among those who have been inspired by Labadie to delve into the history and ideas of Tucker's individualist anarchist movement, perhaps the one who has made the most impact is James J. Martin, Labadie's friend from days long gone by. In addition to writing **Men Against the State**, Martin edited a new edition of Stirner's **The Ego and His Own** which, like the former, was first published by the Libertarian Book Club, in 1963. (Tucker thought that his 1907 first English edition of Stirner was his single most important contribution to anarchist literature.) Martin also re-issued Badcock's **Slaves to Duty** with a dedication to Lurance Labadie, as well as three

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<sup>2</sup> "Lurance Labadie Comments on S.E. Parker," **A Way Out**, Oct. 1967, pg. 15-16.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pg. 16.

<sup>4</sup> "A Self-Compensating Society," **A Way Out**, Oct. 1967, pg. 46.

<sup>5</sup> During one of several telephone and in-person conversations with Mark Sullivan, 1973-75.

of Tucker's most important essays, as had Labadie 40 years previously. And before leaving anarchism to pursue other interests, Martin edited and published **Selected Essays** by Luranne Labadie in 1978, the best selection of his works now in print.<sup>6</sup>

In 1974 an attempt was made by some of Labadie's associates in Suffern to revive Tucker's **Liberty**. Included in the first issue was a reprinting of one of Luranne's early essays, "Anarchism Applied to Economics" under the title "Economics and Anarchy." Alas, the attempted revival did not go beyond one issue. Taking up the torch, **The Storm! A Journal for Free Spirits** was launched in 1976, acknowledging Labadie as one of its inspirations, and reprinting another early essay of his, "Economics of Liberty." Though not as "plumb line" as Labadie himself, **The Storm!** continues to this day to explore and advocate the individualist anarchist spirit and, in its own unique way, to keep the flame alive.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> A re-issue of **The Ego and His Own** is available from the Libertarian Book Club, 339 Lafayette Street, Rm. 202, New York, NY 10012. It includes Martin's excellent introduction. **Men Against the State**, and the complete "Libertarian Broadside" series which also includes Stirner's **False Principle of Our Education**, is available from Ralph Myles, see footnote 5.

<sup>7</sup> Edited by Mark A. Sullivan and Jim Kernochan, **The Storm!** is published by the Mackay Society; see footnote 5. **Liberty** was published out of Port Montgomery, NY 10922, and was edited by Earl Foley and Walter Carroll.

## IV. Against the Darkness

It is not surprising that Laurance Labadie, whose intellectual relationship with his mentor Benjamin R. Tucker seemed at times to be one of identity, would adopt the pessimism of the elder Tucker in his own latter days. He agreed with the sentiments of Tucker's letter of July 22, 1930 to Clarence Lee Schwartz:

The insurmountable obstacle to the realization of Anarchy is no longer the power of the trusts, but the indisputable fact that our civilization is in its death throes. We may last a couple of centuries yet; on the other hand, a decade may precipitate our finish. As Clemenceau said, "Perhaps there may still remain a few negroes wandering in the Congo." The *dark* ages, sure enough. The monster, Mechanism is devouring mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Noting that governments have become more totalitarian since Tucker's cryptic letter, and that modern technology has increased their destructive power tremendously with nuclear weapons, Labadie commented on Tucker's "prognostication" with an analysis of his own:

The cause of the historical trend toward degeneration and annihilation is governmentalism and the existence of national States. Most of the accumulations of rubbish labeled sociological "knowledge" is still being spoon-fed to new victims instead of being relegated to the garbage heap. Only one social theory has withstood during the only slightly more than a century of its existence, and has been vindicated, and that is Anarchism. Is it a question of too little and too late?<sup>2</sup>

Like Tucker, Labadie did not lose faith in anarchism, but in humanity's ability, given historical developments, to put anarchism into practice. Unlike Tucker, however, Labadie wrote extensively, sometimes brilliantly, on the unhappy ending he saw the human race traveling toward. In his last published work, a fascinating and ominous essay, Labadie summed up his accumulated insights into the human condition.

"What Is Mans Destiny?" was published in the fourth quarter, 1970 issue of **The Journal of Human Relations**.<sup>3</sup> The quarterly was issued out of Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio, and was edited at the time by Labadie's School of Living associate, Don Werkheiser. Starting

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<sup>1</sup> "The History of a Prognostication," **A Way Out**, Oct. 1967, pg. 50-51. We leave as an open question for future investigation, Tucker's views on race and racism.

<sup>2</sup> op. Cit.

<sup>3</sup> **Journal of Human Relations**, Fourth Quarter, 1970, Vol. 18, No. 4, Central State University, Wilberforce, Ohio, pg. 1152-9; with appended "One Key to the Exploitation of Man by Man" by Hugo Bilgram, and "Comment on One Key to Exploitation" by Don Werkheiser. "What Is Man's Destiny?" was reissued with a biographical introduction by Mark A. Sullivan in 1975 (and again in 1980), Mackay Society, NY; it was republished as well in **Selected Essays**, see footnote 6.

from the thesis that the State was born under conditions of scarcity as a means of survival (at the expense of others), Labadie applies Tucker's critique of monopoly to a world Tucker had foreseen as doomed. Going beyond the "plumb line" of his mentor, Labadie sketches a picture of "civilization" before close of the twentieth century to rival the Orwellian nightmare. And in what reads like a radical's Apocalypse or Gotterdammerung, our Paladin of Liberty challenges The Beast and attacks

. . . the hired activities of scientists and technicians who are reputed to have contributed to a boondoggle that might stimulate sluggish economies and make certain people rich, meanwhile amassing a world overkill capacity of ten or more times in the attempt to achieve a balance of terror which, according to our protectors, is a sound basis for peace . . .

Governments and the military purport to protect the public from enemies, and if there were no enemies they would have to invent some, for the simple purpose of rationalizing their existence . . .

The "health, education, and welfare" section of government is another boondoggle, First we manufacture indigent and superfluous people by legal monopolies in land, money and idea patents, erecting tariff barriers to protect monopolies from foreign competition, and taxing laborers to subsidize rich farmers and privileged manufacturers. Then we create "social workers," etc., to care for them and thereby establish a self-aggravating and permanent institutionalized phenomenon . . .

Everyone is taking in someone else's washing in a gigantic make-work project. There are at least a half dozen major forces now operative, all tending in the same direction, with very few countervailing influences - and that direction is oblivion. Death comes to everyone. What real difference does it make if it comes simultaneously instead of consecutively, as far as the individual is concerned?

On August 12, 1975, death came to Laurance Cleophis Labadie. His struggles were over - but not in vain: the torch of Liberty he had tended for so many years was passed to others. And the flame prevails, still, against the darkness - awaiting dawn.

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Anti-Copyright



Mildred J. Loomis & Mark A. Sullivan  
Laurance Labadie: Keeper Of The Flame  
A Tetralogy  
1975

Retrieved 11/09/2021 from <https://uncletaz.com/liberty/labadie.html>  
Published in *Benjamin R. Tucker and the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology* (1975).

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