

Basic Principles of Anarchism



Common Myths About Anarchism

Anarchists advocate complete chaos. This is a complete myth with no basis in reality. Anarchists do not advocate chaos and anarchy does not mean chaos. Similar slander used to be said about the ideas of democracy and republics. In places where a Monarchy was thought necessary the idea of elected governments was often equated with complete chaos. This association is the result of slander by the powerful (the state, corporations, etc.) that control the media and is, unfortunately, not a surprise. Since anarchists seek to overthrow them it is not surprising that they would slander anarchism with all sorts of absurd nonsense.

Anarchists believe in mindless violence. Another common stereotype is that of the mad bomb-throwing anarchist who advocates carnage and destruction for the sake of it. This too is a myth. Anarchists do not normally go around throwing bombs at everyone nor do we consider beating up old ladies a virtue. It is true that there have been anarchists who have used violence to advance their cause but this is true of every political philosophy. Republicans and democrats have used much more violence throughout history than anarchists, yet they are never demonised as crazed bomb throwers. Indeed, the state is not only inherently violent but the most violent organisation in human history. It uses violence on a systemic level (in the form of police & militaries) and is responsible for numerous genocides. The state is vastly more violent than the most violent of anarchists.

Anarchists, by definition, are opposed to organisation. The vast majority of anarchists are not opposed to organisation. What anarchists are opposed to is hierarchical organisation - organisations in which one group of people tells the other members what to do. Instead anarchists advocate organisation without authority, where all members have an equal say in group decisions.



What Anarchism Really Stands For

Anarchy comes from the Greek and literally means "no rulers." Anarchists are anti-authoritarians who seek to abolish domination. It is important to differentiate between different two types of authority: legitimate (or rational) authority and illegitimate (or irrational) authority. In other words, there's a difference between being an authority and having authority. Being an authority means that a person is recognized as competent for any particular task based on her or his knowledge and individual skills. It is socially acknowledged expertise. Legitimate authorities are experts who are particularly knowledgeable, skilful or wise in any particular area. It may be in our best interests to follow their recommendations, but they have no power to force us to do so, nor should they. Legitimate authority is this kind of authority: the authority of an expert.

Having authority is a social relationship based on status and power derived from a hierarchical position within a group. It means dividing society/the group into the order givers and the order takers. The order givers, the authorities, tell the order takers what to do and they must obey. This is illegitimate authority. A boss, for example, is an illegitimate authority because employees must obey his orders. When something is described as "authoritarian" it usually means that it uses illegitimate authority.

Hierarchy is essentially institutionalised authority. It is a pyramidal structured organisation consisting of a series of grades, ranks or offices of increasing power, prestige, and/or remuneration. Those with lower ranks must obey those with higher ranks. Hierarchies maintain control by coercion - the threat of negative sanctions (physical, economic, social, etc.) against those who don't obey. Hierarchical organisations are, by definition, organisations that are run by elites. Those on the top, the elite, have more power than those on the bottom. Hierarchical authority is the authority that is inherent in any hierarchy. This is the same thing as illegitimate (or irrational) authority - that is, relations of command and obedience. Another name for this is domination.

Anarchism is extreme scepticism of authority. The basic idea is to abolish domination in favour of a society based on voluntary co-operation. As the anarchist Noam Chomsky said:

I think it only makes sense to seek out and identify structures of authority, hierarchy, and domination in every aspect of life, and to challenge them; unless a justification for them can be given, they are illegitimate, and should be dismantled, to increase the scope of human freedom. That includes political power, ownership and management, relations among men and women,

parents and children, our control over the fate of future generations (the basic moral imperative behind the environmental movement, in my view), and much else. Naturally this means a challenge to the huge institutions of coercion and control: the state, the unaccountable private tyrannies that control most of the domestic and international economy, and so on. But not only these. That is what I have always understood to be the essence of anarchism: the conviction that the burden of proof has to be placed on authority, and that it should be dismantled if that burden cannot be met. Sometimes the burden can be met. If I'm taking a walk with my grandchildren and they dart out into a busy street, I will use not only authority but also physical coercion to stop them. The act should be challenged, but I think it can readily meet the challenge. And there are other cases; life is a complex affair, we understand very little about humans and society, and grand pronouncements are generally more a source of harm than of benefit. But the perspective is a valid one, I think, and can lead us quite a long way. I

Following Chomsky's logic, anarchists argue that hierarchy, bodies of people having authority over others, is unjustified and should be abolished. Some anarchists take this a step further and oppose other forms of authority; a few argue that "legitimate authority" (expertise) is also unjustified, but must do not. Unless a good justification can be given for any form of authority it should be abolished. In the case of hierarchical authority anarchists believe there is no valid justification for it: all major hierarchical institutions should be abolished. Instead of dividing society into a hierarchy of order givers and order takers everyone should have control over their own life and an equal say in group decisions.



What Anarchists Oppose

Hierarchy: As explained above, anarchists are opposed to domination. Relations of command and obedience are not only unnecessary but also inherently detrimental to humanity. Everyone should have control of their own life instead of being bossed around by others.

Capitalism: Capitalism is an economic system based upon wage labour. Under capitalism a small group of people, the capitalist class, owns the means of production (land, factories, mines, etc.) and the working class (the majority of the population) must sell their labour to the capitalist class in order to survive. If the workers do not sell their labour they will starve because they do not have access to the means of production - the capitalist class monopolizes them. The ownership of the means of production by the capitalists does not have to be direct but can be through an organisation they control, such as corporations. Anarchists are also opposed to all other class systems but focus on capitalism because it is the dominant economic system today. Class is economic hierarchy. Other class systems include feudalism, soviet-style "socialism" (which many anarchists consider to be a form of state-capitalism) and slavery.

The State: Sociologists define the state (also called government) as an organisation with a monopoly (or near monopoly) on the legitimate use of violence. It is a centralised rule making body with a pyramidal, hierarchical structure that uses its monopoly of force to boss around all those within its territory. It maintains various armed bodies of people (police, military) and coercive institutions (courts, prisons) with which it coerces the population into obeying its dictates. Because of its hierarchical structure and monopoly of force the state always acts to enforce the rule of a small elite. It exists not to "enforce order" or anything like that but to enforce the will of the ruling class. Anarchists are opposed to all states, including:

Representative "Democracy": Elected governments are run by and for a small elite, just like all other states. Elected representatives are not tied in any substantial way to particular policies, regardless of the preferences of the electorate. Ordinary people have no real control over the decisions of the politicians - once elected they can make what ever decisions they want regardless of what most people want. Representatives are separated from the population but exposed to powerful pressure groups including state bureaucracies, corporations, lobbyists and political party power brokers.

"Socialist" States: Attempts to overthrow the capitalist class and implement a socialist "workers' state" inevitably leads to the replacement of the old ruling class with a new, bureaucratic ruling class that exploits the working class just as the old ruling class did. There is no effective way for the working class as a whole to control the state. It has a monopoly of force and will simply use that monopoly to establish itself as a new ruling class. Decision-making power lies with the leaders, not with the masses of ordinary workers. When the politburo or parliament or council of people's commissars or other leaders are making the decisions the workers are not.

Patriarchy: Patriarchy is male domination - a social relation in which men have power over women; gender hierarchy. In every society men and women are expected to behave in certain ways and if they do not they are subjected to various forms of coercion ranging from being made fun of, to violence, to exile. How a man or woman is expected to behave in a given society is called their gender. This is different from sex, which refers to the biological characteristics that distinguish male from female. Gender varies greatly from society to society. Under patriarchy gender is constructed so that, on average, men have more power than women. The results of this are quite negative - in addition to diminishing women's freedom it also results in sexual harassment, reduced opportunities for women, rape and various other forms of sexual violence. Anarchists advocate equality of the sexes.

Heterosexism: Heterosexism is a natural outcome of the form of patriarchy that exists in the west and many other parts of the world. Gender in most modern patriarchal societies is constructed so that heterosexual behaviour is the norm. Homosexuals deviate from how men and women are expected to behave and so are subjected to various forms of coercion as a result. There is thus a hierarchy between hetero and homosexuals. Anarchists are opposed to any sort of oppression on the basis of one's sexuality.

White Supremacy: Race is a social construction. It divides a population into a hierarchical set of "races" with those on top - the white race - having privileges and power over those in other "lower" races. Race is hereditary. Usually people are assigned to their race based on some meaningless characteristic, such as skin colour. Race is not at all biological but is a pure social construction. Looking at different societies that have different constructions of race easily proves this. What Americans call blacks are actually broken into several different races in most Latin American countries (blacks, mulattos, etc). In the US; Irish, Italians and East Europeans were considered non-white a hundred years ago but today are considered whites. In Rwanda two groups most "white" people would consider black, Hutus

and Tutsis, are regarded as two different races. White supremacy first arose with the Atlantic Slave Trade as a way of justifying it and of splitting the working class to insure that poor whites did not ally with rebellious blacks.

Imperialism: Imperialism is a social relationship in which the rulers of one country dominate the population of another country or territory. At present the United States is the main imperialist nation, dominating most other countries in the world. Past imperialist powers have included the Soviet Union, Rome, Germany, England and the Aztecs.

Basic Principles of Anarchism

Anti-Authoritarianism: Anarchists are extremely sceptical about the need for any kind of authority. At minimum all anarchists believe that hierarchy should be abolished and some take this further and oppose other forms of authority. Instead of hierarchy, everyone should have control over their own life and an equal say in group decisions.

Free Association: Everyone should be allowed to associate freely with those they choose and to disassociate themselves when they choose. Individuals should not be forced into social relations against their will. Society should be based upon free agreement, rather than coercion.

Mutual Aid: Instead of attempting to dominate each other, social relations should be based on solidarity and voluntary co-operation. When individuals come together to help each other they can accomplish more than when they work against each other.

Freedom: Freedom means the ability to control one's own life instead of being controlled by others, as is the case with hierarchy. This is sometimes called liberty or autonomy. Controlling other people's lives is not freedom but a restriction of freedom.

Self-Management: In groups decisions should be made in a manner so that everyone has an equal say. People should govern themselves, rather than dividing people into some who give orders and some who obey as in hierarchical organisations.

Radical Egalitarianism: Anarchists believe in an egalitarian society. This does not mean some totalitarian society where everyone is identical or lives identical lives. It does not mean denying individual diversity or uniqueness. Rather anarchists believe in equality of both wealth and power - a natural consequence of the abolition of hierarchy.

Feminism: Anarchists favour social, economic and political equality for men and women. The domination of men over women should be abolished and all people given control of their own lives



What An Anarchist Society Would Look Like

There have been many different visions of what an anarchist society would look like. Any vision that abolishes the things anarchists are opposed to and is consistent with the earlier stated principles of anarchism is compatible with anarchy. There are, however, many institutions that have been proposed by anarchists to run a non-hierarchical society. Most of these are not based on idle speculation but by looking at how actually existing anarchist societies have worked. Some of them are:

Popular Assemblies: Also called general assemblies or mass assemblies. In any organisation people can come together to meet and discuss whatever common problems or activities they face. At these assemblies everyone should have an equal opportunity to participate in both the discussion/debate and the final decisions. These can be formed in workplaces where they would take over the running of all

workplaces. Worker assemblies would then meet regularly to plan production, divide up the tasks that need to be accomplished, etc. They can be formed in each neighbourhood in order to deal with whatever particular issues confront that neighbourhood and organise to deal with them. These are based on free association so whenever a group of people wants to get together to accomplish some goal they can simply form a general assembly to organise it. Free association also means that no one would have to participate in an assembly if they did not want to. Such assemblies can be formed to organise around anything - not only around workplace and neighbourhood issues but potentially also universities, clubs, space exploration, etc. Worker assemblies, neighbourhood assemblies, university assemblies, community assemblies and the like can all be formed to run society without hierarchy, based on self-management.

Councils: The different assemblies can co-ordinate their activities through the use of a council system. This is done by each assembly assigning a contact person(s) (sometimes called a spoke or delegate) to meet with other contact people from other assemblies which they want to co-ordinate things with. The meeting of contact people is called a council or spokescouncil. Position of contact person should rotate frequently. Each contact person is mandated, meaning that they are instructed by the assembly that they come from on how to deal with any issue. The contact people would be given binding instructions, committing them to a framework of policies, developed by their assembly, within which they would have to act. If at any time they violate their mandate their assembly would instantly recall them and their decisions revoked. Decision-making power stays in the assemblies; contact people simply convey and implement those positions. Contact people do not have any authority or special privileges. Councils are organised from the bottom up, with control staying in the assemblies. They are not hierarchical organisations but simply co-ordinate the activities of the assemblies without authority. Instead of hierarchy there are decentralised confederations and networks. This differs from representative institutions in that decision-making power stays in the assemblies whereas representatives can make whatever decisions they want and have authority over others. These councils can be formed to co-ordinate the activities of assemblies on whatever level needed. Worker councils can co-ordinate the activities of the worker assemblies; neighbourhood councils can co-ordinate the activities of different neighbourhood assemblies, etc. They can also do this on a regional scale - forming regional worker councils, etc - and those regional confederations can use the same method to co-ordinate with each other. In all cases decision making power stays with the assemblies upon which the councils are based - the assemblies would be the core of any organisation.

Decision Making Processes

Any decision making process in which everyone has control over their own life and all members have an equal say, rather than dividing people into order givers and order takers, is theoretically compatible with anarchism. Although there are many different ways in which this can be done, there are two main methods of non-hierarchical decision making which are advocated by most anarchists:

Consensus: In consensus everyone in the group must agree to a decision before it can be put into action. All contributions are valued and participation is encouraged. Any member can block consensus, stopping a decision they strongly object to. Members may also "stand aside," allowing a decision they do not like to be made without blocking or supporting it.

Direct Democracy: Decisions would be made by directly voting on the options - the option with a majority of votes is implemented. Anarchists who advocate direct democracy do not believe in a mechanical process whereby the majority just votes away the minority and ignores them. It is intended to be a dynamic discussion process where different people listen to each other and exchange ideas. Direct Democracy is combined with free association as well - meaning that anyone who is out-voted does not absolutely have to abide by the decision. They can simply leave the group.

These decision making processes would be used in the popular assemblies, councils, etc. There are many variations on them and it is also possible to synthesize consensus and direct democracy. Some groups could use direct democracy but require the majority be of a certain size (such as 2/3rds or 3/4ths) instead of a simple majority. Another variation is to attempt to achieve the largest majority possible.

Economics

There have been many different economic systems envisioned by anarchists. These different visions are not necessarily incompatible with each other and could probably co-exist within the same society. The main ones are:

Mutualism: In mutualism people would be either self-employed or part of a worker-controlled co-operative (individual co-operatives would be run by worker assemblies as described above). They would produce goods and trade them on a market. Although mutualism uses markets to co-ordinate production it is not capitalist because wage labour would be abolished. No one would sell their labour to

others but would instead work in co-operatives or for themselves.

Collectivism: In Collectivism markets would be abolished. Instead of using markets to co-ordinate production they would set up workers councils, as described above, to co-ordinate production. Each workplace would be run by it's own worker assembly and each assembly would federate with other workplace assemblies in the area, forming a local workers council. The workers councils would federate with each other (forming more councils) as needed on many levels. Money would be kept and people paid on the basis of how much they work. Most collectivists believe that collectivism would eventually evolve into a gift economy.

Participatory Economics (also called Parecon): This is similar to collectivism; the biggest difference is that there are consumer assemblies in addition to worker assemblies. The underlying values Parecon seeks to implement are equity, solidarity, diversity, and participatory self-management. The main institutions to attain these ends are council self-management, balanced job complexes, remuneration according to effort and sacrifice, and participatory planning. Consumers and workers directly democratically and co-operatively negotiate their production and consumption on an individual basis and via worker and consumer councils and federations of councils. Balanced job complexes share quality of work and empowering work equitably throughout the workplace and the entire economy. Workers are remunerated for effort and sacrifice, so in tandem with balanced job complexes consumption bundles are roughly equal, with minor discrepancies due to people's chosen working hours and intensity.

Gift Economy: Also called anarcho-communism or libertarian communism. A gift economy would abolish money and trading all together. Production and distribution would be done purely on the basis of need through a confederation of free communes. The economy would be organised along the lines of "from each according to ability, to each according to need." The "communism" in anarcho-communism has nothing to do with the countries that some wrongly call "Communist" (USSR, China, etc.). None of those countries actually claimed to be communist; they claimed to be in a transition to communism. Anarcho-communists opposed these dictatorships from the very beginning and have participated in many rebellions against them. Anarcho-communists would do away with money, central planning and the state - all of which were present in the USSR, China, etc.

Primitivism: Primitivists would abolish industry, civilization and most forms of technology. Instead anarcho-primitivists advocate a low-tech green society. This would be either an agrarian or hunter-gatherer society. Primitivists are split on the

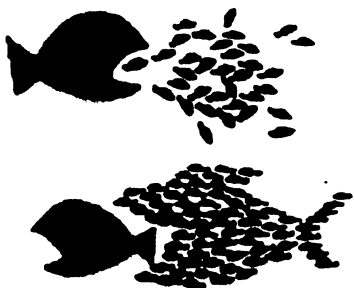
question of agriculture: some want to do away with it all together and others would keep some forms of primitive agriculture.

How Might An Anarchist Society Be Created

Self-Liberation: Anarchists believe in self-liberation. The liberation of the oppressed can only come about through the actions of the oppressed themselves (either individually or collectively). Those on the bottom of society have to rebel against those on the top and refuse to obey them. People cannot be forced to be free. Anarchy cannot be created by some vanguard seizing power but only by the self-liberation of the oppressed.

Direct Action: Direct action means that instead of relying on someone else to act for you (such as a politician) act for yourself. It is any action which people themselves decide upon and organise themselves that is based on their own collective strength and does not rely on getting intermediates to act for them. Examples of direct action include strikes, boycotts, sabotage, insurrections and civil disobedience. Direct action can also be liberatory because it puts power in the hands of ordinary people; instead of relying on someone else to do something - we do it ourselves.

Building the New Society within the Shell of the Old: The means you use will greatly affect the ends you get. As such anarchists organise along the same principles in which we advocate organising society: non-hierarchically. For this reason anarchist organisations are often based around general assemblies and spokescouncils. Many anarchists see the initial framework of anarchy being created within the old society, before capitalism and the state are abolished. Popular organs of self-management would be formed before the overthrow of the old society. This



includes neighbourhood assemblies, workers' councils, syndicalist unions and the like. These non-hierarchical organisations would fight against the institutions of the old society (government, capitalism, patriarchy, etc.) and as the old society is destroyed they take over the running of society.

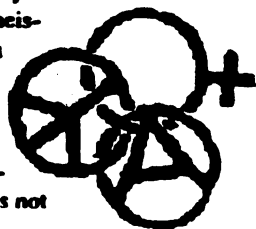
Different Kinds of Anarchists

Differences of Focus: In addition to differences over what an anarchist society should look like, different anarchists also focus more on different issues. Anarcha-Feminists focus on women's liberation and the struggle against patriarchy. Eco-Anarchists focus on ecology and the destruction of the environment. Anarcho-syndicalists focus on unions and the labour movement. The divisions between the various kinds of anarchists overlap and are not absolute. Most different kinds of anarchists are willing to co-exist and work together.

Evolution vs. Revolution: The majority of anarchists are revolutionaries who believe that an anarchist society will come about as the result of a social revolution. The government would be overthrown and abolished, the means of production expropriated and placed under self-management and a rapid transition to anarchy made. Others believe in an evolutionary approach - that anarchy will come about as a result of a lengthy, centuries-long evolution.

Violence: Some anarchists are also pacifists who believe all forms of violence are immoral. True pacifism logically implies anarchism. The state is inherently violent and the most violent organisation in human history; other forms of hierarchy are usually violent as well. The majority of anarchists are not pacifists, however. Although non-pacifist anarchists do not glorify violence most believe that the use of violence in self-defence and/or to overthrow hierarchy is justified.

Religion and Philosophy: Anarchists come from many different religions and philosophical backgrounds - from atheistic materialism to postmodernism to egoism to Taoism to Christianity and everything in between. Although most anarchists are atheists/agnostics there are religious anarchists including Pagans, Christians, Muslims and Jews. Any religion or philosophy is theoretically compatible with anarchism so long as it does not



advocate things (such as a god-king) that contradict the basic ideas above

Anarchy In Action

Everyday Life: There are many examples of anarchist principles in real life. Some of them come from the daily lives of ordinary people living in contemporary hierarchical societies. One example is "a group of friends going on a camping trip. They plan their trip, and each person brings useful skills and tools to share. They work together to set up tents, fish, cook, clean up, with no one in a position of authority over anyone else. The group organises itself, chores are done, and everyone passes the time as they please, alone or in groups with others. People discuss their concerns and possible solutions are proposed. No one is bound to go along with the group, but choosing to spend time together implies a willingness to at least try to work out constructive solutions to the problems and frictions that will inevitably arise. If no resolution is possible, the dissenting individuals can form another grouping or leave without fear of persecution by the rest of the group."² Similar non-hierarchical forms of organisation happen all the time even in the most authoritarian of societies. They're informal and small scale but it is an example of anarchy in action. In an anarchist society non-hierarchical forms of organisation would be the dominant form of organisation.

Primitivist Societies: There have been many examples of anarchist societies throughout history; most of them have been agrarian or hunter-gatherer societies. The immense majority of human history was lived in primitive anarchy. The human race has been around between 50,000 and 500,000 years (depending on how you define human and what estimates you use). The first states came around about 7,000 years ago in Mesopotamia. For a long time after states and classes were created they were limited to certain parts of the world while much of the globe lived in anarchy. It is only in the last couple of centuries that states came to rule the entire world, primarily as a result of conquest. Although far from perfect, most primitivist societies were not the Hobbesian hellholes they are often portrayed as (see *Stone Age Economics* by Marshall Sahlins or *African Anarchism* by Sam Mbah and I.E. Igariwey). Well known indigenous anarcho-primitivist societies include the !Kung and the Igbo (prior to western imperialism).

Ukrainian Revolution: In early 1918 the new Bolshevik government of Russia made peace with Germany and agreed to give up the Ukraine, formerly part of the

Russian Empire, to Germany. The inhabitants of the Ukraine had little say in this and were opposed to it. A rebellion against German rule erupted which turned into an anarchist revolution. The revolution was rooted primarily among peasants although it included cities at its height. Village assemblies and communes were formed throughout much of the Ukraine. When it included cities, factories were taken over by the workers. They formed decentralised democratic militias, which fought guerilla warfare against numerous statist armies that invaded the Ukraine during this time period. The Anarcho-Communist Nestor Makhno played a major role in organising these militias. They successfully defeated the Germans, Austrians, Ukrainian Nationalists, and two white invasions led by General Denikin and then General Wrangel (the Whites were ultra-reactionary armies fighting the Bolsheviks in Russia). In 1921 the Bolsheviks, having recently won the civil war against the Whites, invaded the Ukraine. They used their vastly superior resources to conquer the Ukraine and implement a reign of terror.

Spanish Revolution: On July 19, 1936 General Francisco Franco launched a Fascist coup against the Spanish Republic. In response the CNT, an anarcho-sindicalist union, and the UGT, a union affiliated with the Spanish Socialist Party, called a general strike. The Republic refused to release arms to the workers so they broke into the barracks and distributed arms to the people. They fought and defeated the Fascist coup in two-thirds of Spain. The state was effectively destroyed; the military was in rebellion and the police forces had dissolved during the fighting. The workers and peasants proceeded to take over the land and factories. Collectives were formed throughout anti-fascist Spain. Collectivism was the main economic system, although a few villages abolished money and implemented anarcho-com-



Anarchism and the Spanish Revolution

The Website below has hundreds of documents and photos produced during the time and afterwards about the revolution, its successes and failures and why it was defeated.

<http://www.struggle.ws/spaindx.html>



Anarchism in the Russian Revolution

<http://www.struggle.ws/russia.html>

Anarchism in the Ukrainian Revolution

<http://www.nestormakhno.info/>

munism. There were also elements of mutualism implemented in some places. Decentralised militias were formed to fight against the Fascists. After three years of civil war the fascists won. The victory of fascism was due not only to their superior arms and assistance from Hitler & Mussolini but also strategic errors made by the anarcho-syndicalists and backstabbing by Marxist and Republican "allies" in the fight against fascism.

Common Questions and Objections

What Would You Replace The State With?

Nothing. Would you replace a tumor?

What About Human Nature

If human nature is bad then hierarchy should be abolished because those on the top will inevitably abuse their power. If human nature is good then there is no need for hierarchy because people will do good things without being dominated by others. Either way, we should have anarchy. If people are too evil to rule themselves then they are far too evil to rule other people. The immense majority of human history has been lived in hunter-gatherer societies, a form of primitivist anarchy. If human nature favours any particular social system it favours hunter-gatherer anarchy because that is what the majority of human history has been lived in. Given the immense diversity of social systems humans have created over the eons it is unlikely that human nature, if it even exists, plays a great role in determining social structure.

What Would Happen To Former Politicians and Capitalists?

Individual politicians and members of the capitalist class from the old society would be allowed to become part of the new society as equals. They would lose all their former powers and privileges and live alongside everyone else as equals. Those who do not want to are free to become hermits or leave. Anyone who does not want to participate in the various collective organisations would be free to leave and would be given access to a portion of the means of production so that they could support themselves on their own. During the Spanish Revolution 'if you didn't want to join the collective you were given some land but only as much as you could work yourself. You were not allowed to employ' wage-labourers. They could attempt to set up alternative systems so long as they are completely voluntary. They could attempt to re-establish capitalism (or some other form of oppression) so long as it

was completely non-violent and voluntary but doing so would be extremely difficult because few people would volunteer to be poor and work in their sweatshops. Few people will volunteer to be oppressed, especially in an anarchist society where hierarchy would be viewed quite negatively. Re-establishing some form of domination through purely voluntary and non-violent means would therefore be almost impossible.

How Could An Anarchist Society Defend Itself From Foreign Aggression and Statist Armies?

The same tactics used to overthrow hierarchy, direct action, could be used against counter-revolutionary armies. This includes, but is not limited to, civil disobedience, strikes, insurrections, street fighting, etc. If necessary the population could be armed and a decentralised network of democratic militias formed to wage guerrilla warfare against the statist forces. This can be done against both foreign invaders (if one part of the world is in anarchy and the other is authoritarian) and against domestic counter-revolutionaries who attempt to use violence to force everyone back into an authoritarian society.

How Would Anarchists Deal With anti-Social Crimes?

Crime is the result of hierarchy; the abolition of hierarchy will cause it to disappear. 95% of crime is caused by patriarchy, private property and capitalism (stealing, etc.); its abolition will result in the end of 95% of crime. What little is left over could be better dealt with by the community than by any police force. Many historical pre-capitalist societies had little or no crime; a few weeks after the Spanish Revolution began, crime plummeted. The state has proven completely incapable of combating crime - it has been trying to prevent crime for years yet has been a complete failure. At best it merely punishes people after the fact. "Prisons fail to improve or reform anyone. Local people aware of each other's circumstances would be able to apply more suitable solutions, in keeping with the needs of the victim and the offender. The present penal system, on the other hand, creates criminal behaviour. Long-term prisoners are often rendered incapable of surviving outside an institution that makes all their decisions for them. How is locking people up with others of an anti-social turn of mind ... supposed to develop responsibility and reasonable behaviour? Of course it does just the opposite. The majority of prisoners re-offend."⁴ The state and capitalism are far worse than crime; they kill and rob on a scale far greater than any ordinary criminal. Under the present system petty criminals go to prison but the big criminals run the country.

But We Need Co-ordination and Administration

It is possible to co-ordinate activities without hierarchy. Any group of people can

get together and hold a general assembly where they can divide up the tasks they need to do and decide who will do what. If needed they can assign one or more people to act as co-ordinators. Such co-ordinators would simply implement the plans developed by the general assembly and would have no authority themselves. In the Ukrainian and Spanish Revolutions when workers took over factories, the worker assemblies often created factory committees that performed administrative and co-ordination tasks. Decision-making power stayed with the worker assemblies, the factory committees simply implemented what the workers decided in their assemblies. Co-ordination between multiple assemblies can be done through the council system.



Notes

- 1 "Chomsky on Anarchism, Marxism and Hope for the Future". Interview in Red & Black Magazine 1995 <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/rtr/noamrtr2.html>
- 2 "Consent or Coercion" by Affinity Group of Evolutionary Anarchists
- 3 "The Spanish Civil War: Anarchism In Action" by Eddie Conlon, Chapter 2 http://www.struggle.ws/spain/pam_intro.html or downloadable from the zab.net website
- 4 "Everything You Ever Wanted To Know About Anarchy" by Anarchist Media Group, Cardiff (UK) <http://www.spunk.org/texts/intro/sp000145.html>

Websites For More Reading:

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| http://www.anarchism.ws | http://illegalvoices.org/apoc/ |
| http://flag.blackened.net | http://www.infoshop.org |
| http://www.anarchyfaq.org | http://www.anarchosyndicalism.org |
| http://www.anarchyarchives.org | http://www.spunk.org |
| http://www.mutualist.net | http://www.ainfo.ca/ |
| http://www.parecon.org | http://question-everything.mahost.org |
| http://www.primitivism.com | http://www.zabalaza.net/zababooks |

Further Reading

Introductions:

- Anarchy: A Graphic Guide by Clifford Harper
- ABC of Anarchism by Alexander Berkman
- Anarchism by Daniel Guérin

Theory:

- Anarchy in Action by Colin Ward
- Quiet Rumors edited by Darkstar
- Anarchism and the Black Revolution by Lorenzo Komboé Ibram
- What is Property? by Joseph Proudhon
- Rakunin on Anarchism edited by Sam Dolgoff
- Conquest of Bread by Peter Kropotkin
- Mutual Aid by Peter Kropotkin
- Anarchism and Other Essays by Emma Goldman
- Red Emma Speaks edited by Alix Shulman
- Anarcho-Syndicalism by Rudolph Rocker
- Nationalism and Culture by Rudolph Rocker
- Ecology of Freedom by Murray Bookchin
- Post-Scarcity Anarchism by Murray Bookchin
- Manufacturing Consent by Noam Chomsky

What Uncle Sam Really Wants by Noam Chomsky

Propaganda by Jacques Ellul

Politics of Individualism by L. Susan Brown

Instead of a Book by Benjamin Tucker

The Ego and it's Own by Max Stirner

Marx: A Radical Critique by Alan Carter

Against the MegaMachine by David Watson

Webs of Power by Starhawk

Historical:

Third Revolution by Murray Bookchin

A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn

The Great French Revolution by Peter Kropotkin

Against His-story, Against Leviathan! by Fredy Perlman

The Cuban Revolution by Sam Dolgoff

Living My Life by Emma Goldman

Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution by Arif Dirlik

Spanish Revolution: Spanish Civil War by Antony Beevor

Homage To Catalonia by George Orwell

Anarchist Collectives edited by Sam Dolgoff

CNT in the Spanish Revolution by Jose Peirats

Anarchists in the Spanish Civil War by Robert Alexander

Free Women of Spain by Martha Ackelsberg

Lessons of the Spanish Revolution by Vernon Richards

Russian & Ukrainian Revolutions:

The Unknown Revolution by Voline

History of the Makhnovist Movement by Peter Arshinov

Nestor Makhno in the Russian Revolution by Michael Malet

My Disillusionment in Russia by Emma Goldman

Outline at Work by GP Maximoff

Fiction:

The Dispossessed by Ursula LeGuin

Anarchist Farm by Jane Doe

News from Nowhere by William Morris



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