

Further Reading

Against His-Story, Against Leviathan! Fredy Perlman, Black and Red

A Green History of the World, Clive Ponting, Penguin

Anarchy, a Graphic Guide, Clifford Harper, Camden Press

People Without Government, Harold Barclay, Left Bank Books

"We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. The ruling class might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world here in our hearts. That world is growing this minute."

Buenaventura Durutti, Spain 1936



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Anarchist Teapot collective
PO Box 74, Brighton BN1
4ZQ, UK

Your Anarchist Teapot Souvenir INTRODUCTION TO ANARCHY



"For too long have we given up our pleasure for the sake of production and development. Those who want to maintain this arrangement appear to have great power over us, but this is just cheap art. It is you and I who have maintained this by performing our tasks on a daily basis. It is you and I who can do away with them."

What is Anarchy?

Like most pretty good ideas, anarchy is pretty simple when you get down to it—people are at their very best when they are living free of authority, co-operating and deciding things among themselves rather than being ordered around. That's what the word means: 'without rulers'. Most of us know this anyway. We trust and rely on our friends, neighbours and workmates far more than on the politicians and bosses that we're supposed to need to run our lives. In fact, most people haven't got a good word to say about politicians from any party, and how many people like their bosses, or even think they do anything useful? But why stop at just slagging them off? Why not do away with them and let the people that live in a street, town or whole area decide what happens there in co-operation with other areas? The people who work together how to do the job, or even if it's worth doing at all? Produce



organised in the MST ('Movement of the Landless') in Brazil are squatting land to live on and work collectively. In the LA riots some years ago, the poor revolted, looting and making their communities no-go areas for the authorities. In 1994, the indigenous self-organised army of the Zapatistas liberated many villages in Chiapas, Mexico, and their struggle against free trade agreements which have disastrous effects on the large peasant population has found international solidarity.

But anarchy is also about the small-scale resistance, about individuals ignoring authority and coming together to improve their lives. Everyday, we can experiment with and learn ways of dealing with each other without leaders or domination, with mutual respect, building the world we want now—in our relationships, our interactions and our resistance.

about our dreams and desires. Find examples of what life could be like, put our ideas into practise in everyday life.

Creating anarchy is helping your neighbours, stealing from your workplace, growing your own food, throwing a brick at riot cops, organising a stamp collectors' club, showing solidarity with someone getting hassle, going on strike, babysitting for a friend, talking back, phoning in sick, not being what authority expects of you. Anarchy is mutual aid, co-operation and not leaving your life to others to determine over it.

We don't see the mythical Revolution as something that will just happen suddenly one day after we've polished some ideology long enough. Revolution is a process of individuals and collectives reclaiming what's been taken from us, rediscovering our power and creativity together. Sometimes gradually, sometimes in huge leaps during times of greater struggle.

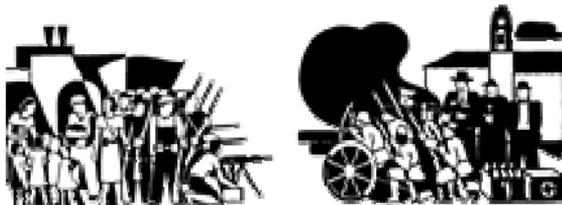
By the hundreds of thousands, peasants or-

the essentials of life for need instead of profit and distribute it freely and equally? This isn't some party platform. Obviously, anarchists have ideas of how society could organise itself, but they aren't trying to become the next 'government'.

At the moment, we're all forced to surrender our independence, with no opt-out clause or exception, to the 'authorities'. And what kind of society has been created through this? One built and dependent on oppression based on gender, race, sexuality, species, nationality. Oppression based on class, with a whole section of society made dependent on dull, exploitative work. We're left with the false choice of voting in one bunch of lying scum or another, while the people with money and power remain untouched—landowners, directors of industry and finance, high ranking police and army chiefs, and the rich elite in general, ruling through their middle class administrators. According to our democratic system the problem is just with the policies of political parties—every time one of them fails

in government, we're supposed to hope the next lot do better. Of course they rarely do. Even when a so-called revolutionary party takes over, the names may change but the essence of politics, of handing over your life to someone else, remains the same and most people still find themselves shat on. After all, we all know what great places the 'communist' dictatorships of Eastern Europe were.

So what hope is there for change? We can't just vote for it, and trying to act for ourselves can be difficult—people with power don't want to give it up, and on top of that, it's kind of scary to imagine a world turned upside down. But throughout history, people have tried to do just that. To live freely. Sometimes on their own, sometimes in great popular movements. From the Peasant's Revolt to the Poll Tax,



orientated industrial agriculture and economy, the rivers could run clear and forests grow again.

This society is quite blatantly showing its flaws. Many people are pissed off with the way things are run, from how the ecology is being destroyed to the misery and monotony of everyday life. You have to spend most of your time working your arse off to make profit for someone you probably don't like or something you don't care about, and then you struggle to pay the bills while being pressured to buy more consumer crap and unnecessary technology. It's also difficult to build connections with people, real friendships and community, when there's a general air of mistrust, deceit and anonymity and when society's based on the motto 'you have to fuck people over to survive.'

Many will not swallow all the lies anymore and also see the futility of voting. But a widespread mood of cynicism and apathy has been created. We want to get past this. Let's talk

to shackle humanity and control nature, we'll need to do away with both the bosses and the factories to sustain life. Anarchists have been up trees, occupying offices, trashing machines, stopping roads, sinking whalers, fighting against a system which is wiping out the future and making the present a misery.



Anarchy as a Vision

Imagine living in a world where people were able to come together to create a new, free society, making their desires reality. Grim and anonymous cities could become places we can actually live in. Tedious useless work would become redundant and room made for play and productive activities we can enjoy. Crime could be reduced drastically by a return to living in real communities where people look after each other. With a decline in profit-

people have taken action in grassroots movements that challenged their oppression.

Brief History of Anarchy in Action

History reflects the values of the people writing it, in the mainstream usually the ruling class. Looking at history with an anarchist perspective reveals more interesting stories than those of Kings and Queens we got bored by at school.

“Has all this Anarchy business ever been tried at all?” you might rightly wonder. Actually, about 99% of human existence has been shaped by tribal society, real communities hunting and gathering and having a good time without any conception of needing states or government. Their lives were nothing like the constant struggle for survival against hostile nature and other tribes we might imagine. In fact, some primitive anarchic cultures have flourished to modern times, but are now facing extinction at the hands of corporations and armies, and the destruction of their ways of life at the hand of aid workers forcing development on them.

Anarchist ideas reflect a basic human desire which can be found throughout history, from Taoism in the East and the Freethinking peasant heretics in Europe, to the first movements calling themselves anarchists in the 19th century. Anarchistic ideas and actions have surfaced in most revolutions, from the Peasant Revolt in England in 1381 to the global uprisings in 1968. However, the wish of people to be genuinely free was always subverted by the forces of Control, whether liberal, reformist, Marxist-Leninist or whatever. Just a few examples...

In the French Revolution of 1789, the people who carried the struggle forward and physically overthrew the monarchy were fighting for a complete overhaul of society, until their 'representatives' from the emerging middle class who assumed the power in the new government beheaded and intimidated these movements.

The Mexican Revolution at the turn of the century was the result of traditionally commun-

which needs to oppress some people so those in control can prosper. Women have been conditioned and beaten into the roles of dedicated mothers, housewives and general carers. We were, and still are, there to make everyone happy, but not to expect anything in return. Feminists broke away from this, challenging the way women are brought up, sexually used, and denied our own thoughts and judgements. And they fought on all fronts for this, bringing about many changes we take for granted today. Feminists have also created their own structures to deal with life and to practise mutual aid, from the disguised support networks of freethinking nuns in the Middle Ages to the consciousness raising groups and squatted women's centres in the 1970s.

One large anarchist current today consists of those influenced by ecology, which seeks to understand the living earth as a whole, including us. This is one of the most critical periods in the history of life on earth—by the end of next year, 10% of the world's species will be extinct. Industrialism is a tool created by elites

Propaganda by the deed experienced a revival in the 1970s with an equally notorious urban guerrilla movement in Europe and the US (many groups of which were more Marxist-orientated than anarchist) - a failed strategy not to be confused with widespread armed struggle as a popular movement.

The 1970s also saw a growing discontent with wage slavery, most famously in Italy. Often escaping the control of unions and left-wing parties, a general resistance to work developed, using sabotage, absenteeism and wildcat strikes to put human needs before the demands of production.



Also more recently, women's liberation has emerged as an idea and movement, attacking our systematic oppression as women in a society based on power over others. A society

ally worked land around villages being seized by large landowners in a military dictatorship. With Emiliano Zapata as its most prominent figure, a revolutionary indigenous peasant army was formed under the rallying cry of 'Land and Liberty!', reclaiming the land. Zapata was offered the presidency but declined, preferring to live and fight with the people.



In the Russian Revolution of 1917, soviets (workers councils) were spontaneously formed and wrenched back control over their lives, until the Bolsheviks installed their centralised State apparatus and crushed any free federation. In the Ukraine, an area of 400 sq. miles was held for over a year as an autonomous region based on communes without government. One of the larger uprisings against the Bolshevik dictatorship was in 1921, when

Petrograd sailors and workers occupied the fortress of Kronstad. They were massacred by the Red Army, after which Trotsky boasted, "At last the Soviet Government, with an iron broom, has rid Russia of Anarchism."

In the German Revolution of 1918, anti-State ideas were put into practise, various self organised council republics were formed, declaring themselves autonomous. This was destroyed by an alliance of the socialist government and fascist militias, state-ists of the left and right uniting against a common enemy.

Probably the largest modern example of anarchy in action was the Spanish Revolution of 1936. Working class resistance to a fascist coup led to widescale social revolution with millions of people organising their communities and workplaces on anarchist principles (the slowly spreading influence of anarchist ideas during the previous decades having convinced people this was possible). This proved successful until the movement was crushed first by the democratic government that the anarchists



foolishly allowed to survive in the name of anti-fascist unity, the obliterated by the fascist victory.

Anarcho-syndicalism (from the French word for union) has been a movement of workers' self organisation in federations, which has especially flourished in Latin American countries where there was little alternative for a labour movement other than revolutionary struggle. In the early 1900's, for example, anarcho-syndicalists in Argentina launched a series of spectacular strikes forcing the government to declare a state of emergency five times.

After many of their networks had been smashed in a general atmosphere of repression around Europe and the Americas, anarchists became notorious in the 19th century for 'propaganda by the deed' - bombings and assassinations of prominent economic and political figures by desperate individuals.