

The issue of what Anarchism is was light-heartedly skipped over in favor of letting people know what was happening at the book fair. The fact that the North Coast Journal printed a favorable article about the book fair is to it's credit and everyone at Humboldt Grassroots is grateful to Bob Doran for the excellent article, short as it may have been.

So we're going to let you know what it's all about here. We're going to keep it brief because your understanding of Anarchism will come more from contemplation, conversation, research, and experience, rather than from the small chunk of terms and definitions you get from one newspaper article. This article will briefly cover the history of Anarchism, what it really stands for, and what influence it has today in the world.

To start with, Anarchism is both a social movement and a collection of ideas on how to create a society in which individuals freely cooperate together as equals. It opposes all forms of hierarchical control—be that the state, capitalists, bosses—and opposes the idea that concentration of power or the domination of one group of people over another (or domination of one person over the other), is necessary or beneficial for society. Instead, Anarchism advocates co-operative and anti-hierarchical forms of political, economic, and social organization.

Anarchism isn't some new idea. Many societies have lived without bosses (some do today!) In the brief 250 year history of capitalism people the world over have successfully resisted the imposition of theocratic capitalist and state rule in favor of a free cooperative society – this what we call Anarchism.

Anarchism does not depend on theory or programs, which try to grasp man's life in its entirety. It is a teaching, which is based on real life, which outgrows all artificial limitations, which cannot be constricted by any system. Anarchism's outward form is a free, non-governed society, which offers freedom, equality and solidarity for its members. Its foundations are to be found in man's sense of mutual responsibility, which has remained unchanged in all places and times. This sense of responsibility is capable of securing freedom and social justice for all men by its own unaided efforts. It is also the foundation of true communism. This led to the necessity of formulating anarchism's basic theories by the use of factual material and by systematized analysis. Some people (enemies of freedom, enemies of solidarity) were to try and conceal anarchism's truths or to slander its ideals; others (fighters for man's right to lead a proper life) were to develop and clarify this ideal. I think that Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, Most, Kropotkin, Malatesta, S. Faure, and others never believed, that they could harness anarchism, a framework of immutable scientific dogma, by their theories. Instead, the teachings of anarchism represent a concerted effort to show its roots in human nature, and to prove that man's creative achievements never deviate from it; anarchism's fundamental trait, the negation of all bondage and servitude, is likewise to be found in human nature”

-Nestor Maklno*

Here is just a brief history of Anarchism.

Anarchists have been active in almost every social revolution since the French revolution. So we're only going to mention major well-known attempts at Anarchist revolution from the 20th century, not including many very significant events in the fight for freedom (such as origins of May day or why that tombstone in Trinidad says murdered by capitalism), cause otherwise this article would get bogged down and excessive. Volumes have been written on this subject and we are trying to keep it brief.

So lets start with the split between the first international (big ass socialist group from back in the day) to there was the state-socialists who wanted political parties united by a political program to seize control of the government, and libertarian socialists (Anarchists) who wanted the group made up of unions, other workers organizations, and a unified workers movement—not a party elite.

So they split. Anarchists forgot that the state-socialists attempts at taking over the government would become a tyranny of party elite over workers probably worse than what came before. Plus, Anarchists criticized the state socialist strategy because running for office wastes time and energy that should be spent organizing, improving conditions, and overthrowing the system.

The Russian revolution had two civil wars: One against the Tzar and the wealthy aristocracy, the next against the Bolshevik state. Soviet means "workers' council" in Russian. Anarchists were all for the self-management of workers' councils. The Bolsheviks tried to get rid of them to get all power in their hands. Democratic anarchists' military rebelled in Konstadt, Ukraine, and elsewhere, coupled with strikes and slow-downs. This effort was crushed due to betrayals and mass executions and other stuff we can't go into here.

In the 1930s, a major Anarchist revolution in Spain occurred during the Spanish Civil War. With the inspiration from the C.N.I. (an Anarcho-syndicalist labor union) workers organized to self-manage all aspects of economic life and the war effort democratically. Even the revolutionary militias were democratic. After a fascist military coup, the workers took up arms and fought back stopping fascist revolts in ¼ of Spain. Between 5 and 7 million voluntarily pooled together land, tools, and livestock to be held collectively. Everyone, whether able to work or not, received the necessities of life as far as the collective could provide them.

While it is true all governments* that were supposed enemies successfully conspired to crush the Anarchist revolution in Spain, which threatened, by it's existence, all governments

and other class distinctions the world over incidentally workers from all over the world came to help the revolution any way they could. Though the revolution did not succeed in defeating fascism, it proved that working people (many of whom were illiterate) can run society on their own without bosses.

Anarchism is possible. Their was another more unfortunate truth taught too—that to make a free society, the state must be destroyed and replaced with Anarchist society by force.

Workers can't just take over the economy and expect the State* to wither away. The State has to be gotten rid of or the State will try to get rid of the Free society.

Lots has been happening since and lately.

Mexico, 1994, the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas in the jungles, where hundreds of thousands of people rose up against the Mexican state and organized themselves into libertarian-inspired federated communes, which are still in existence today.

Seattle, Washington, 1999 tens of thousands of people used direct action to successfully achieve their goal of shutting down the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Seattle.

The WTO is a form of empire held over from the ideology of colonial power but without borders. It is an unelected, unaccountable, and insatiable economic "world government."

Argentina, 2001, "After IMF policies led to economic meltdown and massive capital flight, millions of Argentians poured into the streets to protest the freezing of their bank accounts, the devaluing of their currency, and the bankruptcy of their state. This rebellion—of workers and the unemployed, of the middle class and the recently declassed—erupted without

leadership or hierarchy. Political parties and newly emerged elites had no role in the movement that toppled five consecutive national governments in just two weeks. People created

hundreds of neighborhood assemblies involving tens of thousands of active participants. The dozens of occupied factories that existed at the start of the rebellion grew to hundreds,

taken over and run directly by workers." (Quoted from Horizontalism, the book about this rebellion.) This rebellion has highlighted the possibility of a genuinely democratic alternative

to global capitalism. According to globalpost.com's Anil mundra, many more workplaces are being taken over this year. Nobody knows how many.

Oaxaca 2006 (Anarkismo.net) For the last half of 2006, and continuing well into 2007 the city of Oaxaca, Mexico, was the epicenter of a rebellion that defied both the the Mexican

state and its local incarnation, the governor Ulises Ruiz Ortiz. The social movement that emerged in Oaxaca challenged other centers of power, capital, and class within Mexico,

assuming a markedly anti-hierarchical and, over time, anti-systemic cast. As it grew, expanding well beyond its initial focus and demands, the uprising in Oaxaca also dispelled

conventional notions of centrality and importance tied to quantitative criteria. A provincial capital in the second poorest state in Mexico (after Chiapas), a city best known beyond its

borders as a tourist destination, became for a time the focus of considerable attention on the part of radical opinion throughout the world. This proves that a place doesn't have to be

an economic powerhouse or really well-known to change the world.

Anarchism in practice has been going on before and after these recent noteworthy rebellions.

Here are some large organizations you can see in your daily life that have been inspired by Anarchism

It is important to realize that there is no leading organization or vanguard parties. They are all founded on voluntary association and mutual agreements and solidarity. The forms of organization depend on the purpose of the group and the preference of group members.

con't page 5