

★ *Thinking about Anarchism* ★

The Need for an Anarchist Organisation

Once you get past the caricatures of anarchists as bomb-throwers in black cloaks, you'll probably find that you have a great deal of sympathy with anarchist ideas. Reading through the articles in this paper, you may agree with our perspective on issues, and you could become one of the many people who are happy to be described as anarchists. Having got that far, and acting as anarchists in their everyday & political lives, why is it that so many don't see the need to go further, and join anarchist organisations?

★ Individualism

Part of the reason for this is the emphasis anarchists put on the freedom of the individual. When you look around and see how most political organisations operate, with decisions being made by a small group of leaders, and everyone else being reduced to paper sellers and posterers, political organisation can seem incompatible with anarchism.

On the other hand, what is the alternative? As an individual, there is very little you can do to win people to anarchism. One can try to convince friends and work mates, but that is generally a long process, and after a few months, or years, you'll burn out. Then your anarchism will be just pub talk, or worse, the self-defeating acts of propaganda by deed.

There is another way forward. Rather than working on your own for very little gain, or working for others who assure you that they know the one true way forward, you can join an anarchist organisation - a really democratic organisation, where every voice carries the same weight. When we work towards the



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same goals, and agree on the methods that must be used, it makes sense to work together.

★ Concerted Action

Working for anarchism is just like working for access to abortion, for trade union rights, for the environment, but it's even more necessary that we work together where we can. Anarchism is an alternative that many are unaware of, and one that is regularly vilified on all sides. To change this, to show people that real freedom is possible, is a long and difficult task.

This work becomes easier when it is shared, when our resources are pooled. Producing a magazine, a paper, even a leaflet is a difficult task for an individual, but a lot easier for a group. Speaking at a union or campaign meeting can be nerve-wracking, but to know that at least some people support your position, and are willing to say so, makes you feel less isolated, more confident.

★ Action

As well as making it easier to get anarchist ideas across through propaganda, being a member of an organisation means that when an issue arises that you feel is important, you can count on having others there who'll help work on a campaign, and the more people there are involved, the more pro-active the campaign can be. Instead of waiting for someone else to set up a group with which you can work, or trying to set up such a group yourself (almost impossible, and very hard work), being a member of an organisation lets you take the initiative.

Of course, the organisation will only work if everyone is prepared to put some effort into it. Producing papers and leaflets, working on campaigns, requires time and energy, and maybe this is why you are unsure about joining a group. If though, you're serious about your anarchism, and committed to making this a better world for all, then the question to ask is not how much work you should do, but where are you most needed, where will you make the biggest difference? Working with others who share the same goals, and, importantly, the same understanding of the importance of democratic methods, you can accomplish much more than you ever would on your own. So, what are you waiting for?

Ray Cunningham

From *Workers Solidarity* No. 44 - Magazine of the Workers Solidarity Movement in Ireland - www.wsm.ie

Local Contact:

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