

leaders must carefully represent peoples' needs or quickly lose their authority.

Anarchists are often portrayed as violent – usually by governments which themselves maintain huge armies and stockpiles of weapons. Those who use violence at protests are often dubbed 'anarchists' by the media, whether they are or not, and our peaceful activities rarely hit the headlines. However, most anarchists accept that violence, while a form of authority, is permissible in self-defence. Some, such as *War and Peace* author and Christian anarchist Leo Tolstoy, have been pacifists – believing that violence has dangerous consequences even when used in defence. Anarchists often point to the brutalising effect of even justifiable violence on both perpetrators and victims.

Anarchism offers hope, but to actually create a better world we need to get out and push. This means getting active with friends, neighbours and workmates to share and build and decide for ourselves what we want. And it means telling those who like to give orders to shove off – if we want something better, we've got to make it ourselves, because no politician, business-person or any other variety of boss is going to do it for us.

We all live on a planet full of the most amazing diversity of people and places, foods and forests. Human beings have flown to the moon, built buildings that reach the clouds and invented rotary milking sheds. At the moment, all this ingenuity, courage, labour and resources are being directed by a tiny minority to serve their own interests. Anarchism invites us to consider what could be achieved if we put all this into making everyone's lives richer, happier and more sustainable. Instead of trying to dominate the planet, and each other, anarchism says we can work together to learn better ways to live.

Check www.anarchismfaq.org for more information.



ANARCHISM AND CULTURE

A few anarchists you might have heard of include linguist and political commentator Noam Chomsky, fantasy writer Ursula Le Guin, film director Luis Bunuel, impressionist painter Camille Pissaro and comic writers Alan Moore and Leo Baxendale (the latter created *The Bash Street Kids* and *Minnie the Minx* for The Beano). Anarchist band Chumbawumba's song *Tubthumping* made Rolling Stone magazine's list of the 20 most annoying songs ever and George Orwell wrote favourably of the anarchist revolution in 1930s Spain in *Homage to Catalonia*, an event which is also the subject of Ken Loach's film *Land and Freedom*.

Anarchism has strong associations with good food. The appetite of renowned 19th century anarchist, Mikhail Bakunin, so impressed his jailers he was given double rations. Many anarchists are active as hunter-gatherers and gleaners and some are dedicated vegetarian chefs. In Spain, the popularity of both anarchism and paella, a dish which causes fierce debate about the ideal mix of its varied ingredients and is traditionally eaten straight from a communal pan, have led to suggestions of a link.

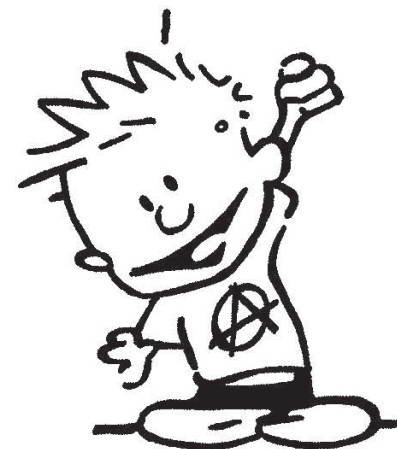
Local anarchist culinary advances include the discovery of both the peanut butter and creamed horseradish sandwich and the mussel and muttonbird pizza, popularising silverbeet and satay sauce lasagne and pioneering the use of tomato paste as a toast spread.



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So what is anarchism anyway?

SMASH
THE
STATE



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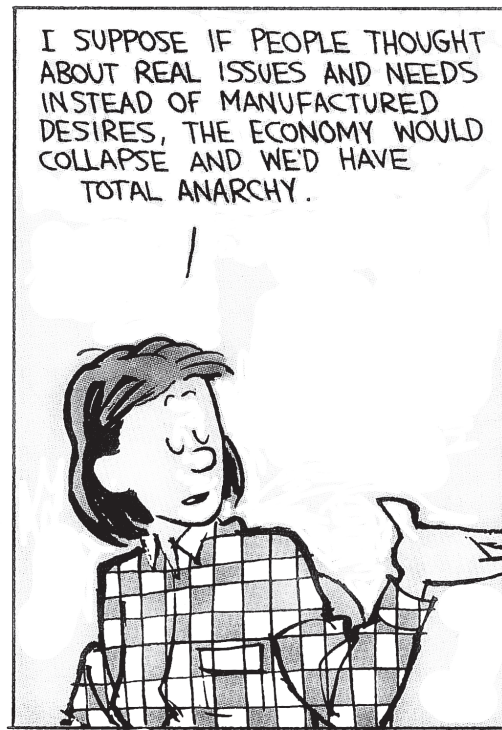
ANARCHISM is a personal and political philosophy based on the premise that no person has the right to have authority over another. We aren't opposed to organisation, but insist that it should always be fully democratic and voluntary.

Traditionally, New Zealanders have looked to the government to ensure people get "a fair go". As faith in the government has declined, anarchism has grown. Anarchists believe neither business nor government can provide properly for people, and call for everyone to work cooperatively in their communities and workplaces to do things for themselves.

Under anarchism, society would be organised by democratic communities which join together to work on projects of mutual benefit. It's often pointed out that people naturally use anarchist methods without naming them as such, when they voluntarily help out neighbours and friends and come together to share each others tools and resources.

Capitalism insists that a free market, in which people buy the goods and services they choose, is an efficient way to run society, but few people would choose to charge a friend for advice or the loan of a lawnmower. Many women share childcare responsibilities with their friends and people often come together in groups to do voluntary work. Without this "everyday anarchism" life would be pretty miserable.

Anarchists don't think people are saints – we just believe that people are basically cooperative and able to get along. Give a group of people a task and leave them to it and they usually manage to work cooperatively and efficiently. How often have you thought "This would be a lot easier if the boss would just stop telling us what to do..."? This is the essence of anarchism.



Anarchists say both capitalism and state socialism crush the individual and reward a small elite. We see the world being increasingly run for the benefit of business, with most people finding life more and more of a struggle and less free.

While the rich get richer, things once taken for granted, such as people owning their own houses, are getting out of the reach of the majority. If you are young, and not one of a tiny elite, your life as an adult either starts with a badly-paid job with little hope of advancement or a student loan. If the latter, once you pay it off you may earn enough to start paying off a mortgage. Once that's taken care of your kids can sell the house to pay for the costs of keeping you in a rest home. If you're not lucky there's not much on offer but a life spent desperately trying to pay the rent and bills.

At the same time as our expectations fall, government bureaucracy increasingly infringes on peoples' lives making people feel smothered, overworked and bored. This frustration leads to angry and destructive behaviour which provides an excuse for even more rules and regulations.

We see our lives being increasingly pushed to be competitive, violent and stressful, and for many, pointless and deeply unsatisfying. There seems to be no alternative to a life mostly spent trying to make ends meet, in front of a PlayStation or TV, or resorting to alcohol or anti-depressants, broken only by brief holidays. For the better off, travel and immersion in other cultures provides the colour and excitement that's lacking in their own lives.

We think people deserve better. Of course, getting rid of capitalism and the state and instituting a cooperative society is going to take a bit of work, but do you really have anything more important to do?

The philosophy of anarchism is in many ways similar to the "green" movement, and many anarchists are involved with environmental campaigns and projects. We see the values and methods of capitalism as at odds with any sustainable way of life. Our opposition to authority and domination also leads us to become involved in feminist, anti-military and anti-colonial movements, unions and to oppose racism and abuse. Anarchists are also often involved in mutual aid projects such as community gardens, collective workshops, art and music groups and rural communes.

We also see similarities to anarchism in many indigenous societies. While on the surface they may often appear hierarchical, there is often a subtle system of checks and balances that ensure