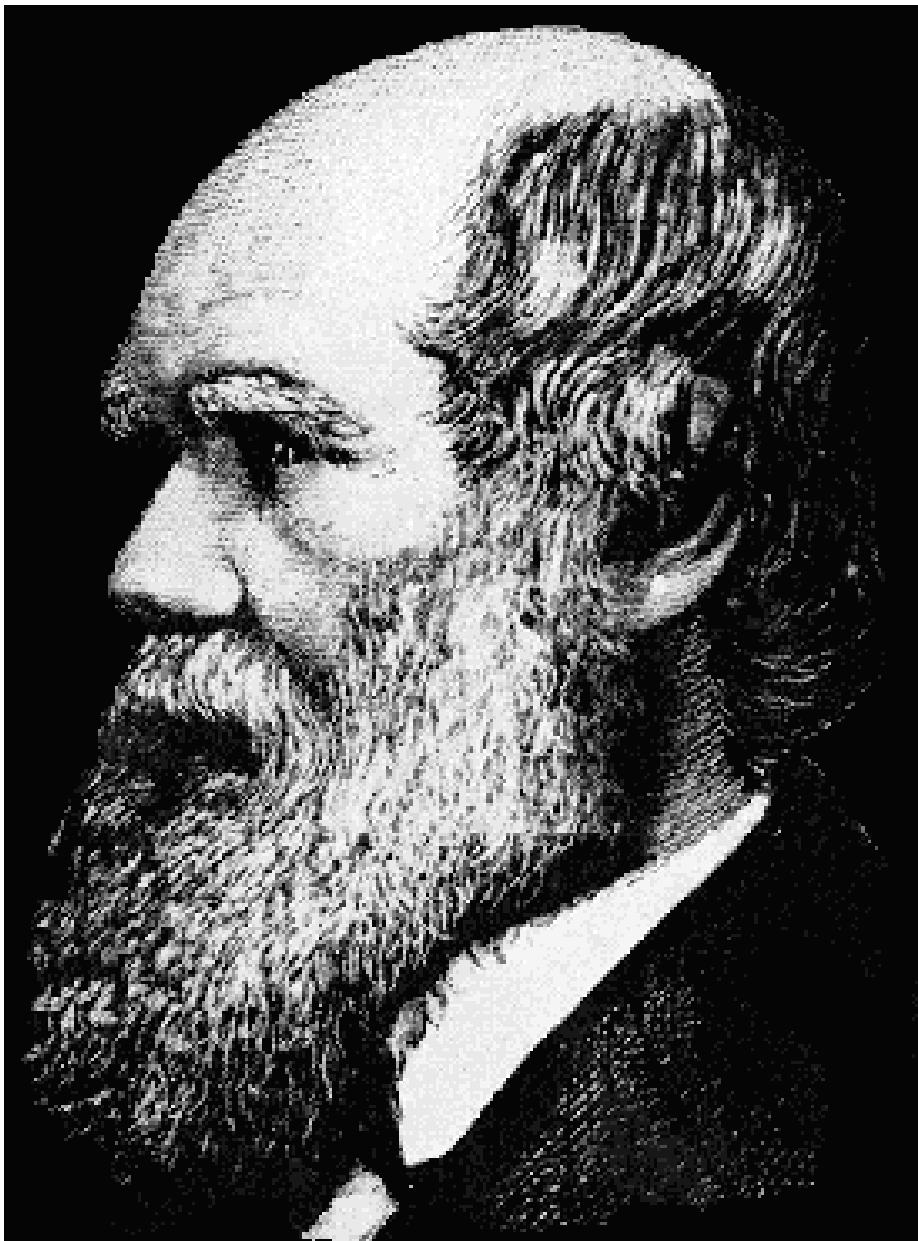


# Anarchism not suitable - Anton Pannekoek

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Short piece by Anton Pannekoek arguing why he believes anarchism is unsuitable for revolutionary organisation.

*The following article was originally published as a letter by Anton Pannekoek written to JA Dawson, the editor of the Australian journal, Southern Advocate for Workers Councils. The article appeared, under a title given by Dawson, in issue 42, February 1948. This version is reprinted from Pannekoek and the Workers' Councils, Serge Bricianer ed.*

In the present times of increasing submission by the workers to powerful state tyranny, it is natural that more sympathy is directed toward anarchism, with its propaganda of freedom. Just as social democracy, its opponent, it had its roots in 19th century capitalism. One took its necessity from exploitation and capitalist competition, the other from the entire enslaving and suppression of personality; one found its force in the need for and propaganda of organization,

the other in the need for and propaganda of freedom. Since the former was felt most immediately and overwhelmingly by the workers, social democracy won the masses and anarchism could not compete with it. Now rising under state capitalism it seems to have a better chance. But we have to bear in mind that both in the same way carry the mark of their origin out of the primitive conditions of the 19th century. The principle of freedom, originating from bourgeois conditions of early capitalism, freedom of trade and enterprise, is not adequate to the working class. The problems or goals for the workers are to combine freedom and organization. Anarchism, by setting up freedom as its goal, forgets that the free society of workers can only exist by a strong feeling of community as the prominent character of the collaborating producers. This new character, coming forth as strong solidarity in the workers' fights already is the basis of organization- without compulsion from above. The self-made organization by free collaborating workers is the basis at the same time of their personal freedom, i.e., of their feeling as free masters of their own work. Freedom as the chief content of anarchism may awake strong sympathies now, but it is only a part, not even the basic part, of the goal of the working class, which is expressed by self-rule, self-determination, by means of council organization. It seems, then, that in the present times there is in anarchism a certain approach toward the idea of workers' councils, especially where it involves groups of workers. But the old pure anarchist doctrine is too narrow to be of value for the class struggle now.

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