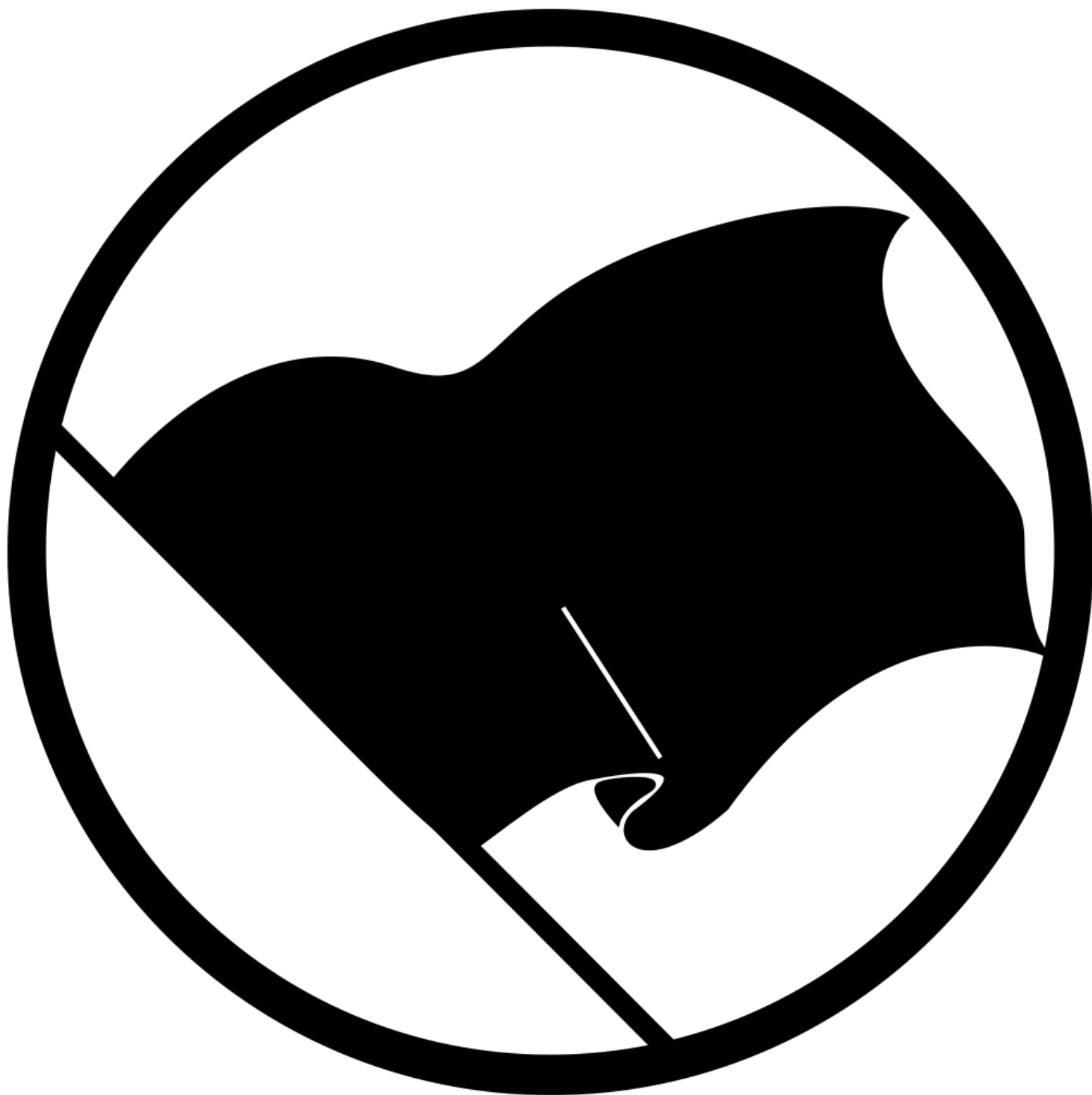


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A PRIMER ON ANARCHISM

What is Anarchism?

Anarchism derives from the greek *ἀναρχος* which means *without rulers*. Anarchists believe that we can live in a society without the state or social class through horizontal, non-hierarchical voluntary associations. Anarchists reject all forms of coercion, whether financial or through agents of the state.

A popular myth perpetuated by the media is that all anarchists are troublemakers hellbent on making mayhem. While this kind of behavior can be attributed to some anarchists through certain kinds of direct action, however this tempered with the fact that Fascists, Statists and Criminals violate the rights of people on a daily basis.

Another popular myth is that such an anarchist society would be apocalyptic, with roving gangs raping and pillaging their way across the wasteland. This is mythical precisely because a society without rigidly enforced power structures does not necessitate a society without laws, morals and social norms. Would your family members turn into rapists and pillagers? Would you?

What are some of the issues in anarchism?

There are many anarchist schools of thought, but they all share the same belief that the state is unnecessary in regulating society. A common trait to most schools is that the means of production for goods and services should be owned and operated by all who provide the labor.

A point of contention is the role of capital after the revolution. People hoarding capital, using it to gain leverage in society, and passing it on to their kin upon death is one of the reasons we live in such a inequitable world. Is capital a necessary evil, or are there other economic models we can adopt to obviate current ills?

Another point of contention is that of social welfare and providing

for those that cannot provide for themselves. Should a portion of the one's labors be put aside for those who are infirm or disabled? How is this labor assigned and divvied up?

Has this ever worked?

Yes. There have been a few instances of anarchist-type societies working in history. Following the end of the Great War, a stateless anarchist society called the Free Territory was formed during the Ukrainian Revolution protected by citizen militias. Until being brutally put-down by the Red Army, the eight million citizens of the Free Territory participated in workers councils (*soviets*) and enjoyed the freedoms of speech, assembly, and press we all strive for - all without a formalized state apparatus.

During the Spanish Civil War, regions of Spain collectivized the means of production and instituted a series of workers councils. From factories to farms, the workers owned and operated their livelihoods without their lives being managed by the state. This lasted for just under a year until being put down by fascists.

Today, the black flag is raised by the Zapatistas of Mexico who live in the Chiapas. Outspoken opponents of globalization, they operate in a bottom-up fashion with citizens instructing representatives to represent their interests in larger representative bodies. They also have a strong sense of community: *for everyone, everything, for us, nothing*.

What is direct democracy?

Instead of electing officials to represent you, people come together to decide on issues. It may be easy to say "one man, one vote" however the problem with that is that minorities may be negatively impacted by the majority - *tyranny of the majority*.

A better model for direct democracy is employing consensus-

making processes within a community or affinity group to decide on issues. When coordinating efforts with other communities, the use of recallable representatives to represent groups in a larger association (*hub and spoke*) can be employed.

What is direct action?

Direct action is an activity that does not usually occur within the current sociopolitical channels (e.g. voting in elections). These actions can range from civil disobedience (protests, sit-ins, blockades, strikes) that may or may not be legal, to more coercive means (destruction of property, sabotage, assault, assassination). The use of these coercive means in dismantling the state, also known as *propaganda of the deed*, is a contentious issue in anarchism - do the ends justify the means?

What are affinity groups?

Affinity groups are autonomous groups of people with a shared concern for a particular issue or activity. These groups can be confederated into larger groups of people into clusters. Typically they employ consensus decision making in order to get things done.

The Black Bloc is just another kind of ad-hoc affinity group that dresses in black as a way of promoting solidarity. Aims and motivations vary between individual groups and activities can include supplying medical or legal aid, resisting police, demonstrating without permits, vandalism and the symbolic destruction of property.

Where to now?

If you're new and you like what you see, try reading the anarchist anthology "*No Gods, No Masters*". Organize, unionize and proselytize until we're all free of the coercion of state. Everyone needs to come together to tear the state apart!