

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

Anarchists are often portrayed as violent, particularly by governments which themselves maintain huge armies and stockpiles of weapons. Those who use violence at demonstrations are often dubbed "anarchists" by the media, whether they are or not, and anarchists' 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 of something better, but to create a better world we all need to get out and push. This means getting active with friends and workmates to share and build and

to decide for ourselves what we want and how to do it. 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, businessperson or any other variety of boss is going to do it for us.

We have a planet full of the most amazing diversity of people and places, foods and forests. Instead of trying to dominate it and each other, we need to learn a new way to live.

We can choose to make the world better, or choose to make it worse, but things will only be wonderful if we have both the hope and the learning to make them wonderful.

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 Liberty*. Check www.anarchismfaq.org for more information.

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Why do we need Anarchism?



Because everything is slowly getting worse...

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 coop-



erative 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, even basic needs such as housing are 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 so 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 indulging in 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