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Rotating and alternating tasks, sharing responsibilities, and mentoring are all examples of the dynamic participation that will be needed in reorganizing society.

The priorities of the revolution cannot be inflexible and uncompromising, even if it is expected of militants to remain diligent and principled. Today, if it is a radical proposal that workers receive just compensation for their labor, then it is obvious that a communist final objective, that of distributing the benefits of production based on need, remains beyond the scope of most people's imagination, much less their priorities. We must be dynamic and develop workable plans for immediate gains, and it is in the process of realizing these gains that we will develop the political unity and social force necessary to realize the ambition of a mass revolutionary movement (27).

Bibliography

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Related Link: www.youtube.com

A revolutionary transformation in society will not be a seamless process. Overall production in the global economy will inevitably be affected. So, the people will have to solve the problems of production in a socialist system by using technology, not to benefit owners through reduction of labor costs, but instead, to meet the consuming needs of society without occupying the time (and therefore the life) of exploited workers. In a libertarian socialist society, thanks to the elimination of artificially fabricated unemployment and the reduced demands on workers created by labor-saving technology, people will be freed up to spend their time doing a kind of work that they find rewarding. In their free time, some people will choose to occupy themselves with politics and democratic decision making; other people may spend their free time solving the logistical problems of organizing a complex, federalized society; but everyone will have the freedom to spend their time as they see fit, without fear of coercion or retribution (27–28). In describing this society, FARJ explains that:

> "[…] all those that are able to would need to work, there no longer being unemployment, and the work would be able to be performed in accordance with personal ability and disposition. People will no longer be obliged to accept anything under threat of experiencing want and not attaining their minimum living conditions. Children, the elderly and those unable to work will be assured a dignified life without depravation, all their needs being met. For the most tedious tasks or those perceived as unpleasant, in some cases, there could be rotations or alternations. Even in the case of the carrying out of production, where the coordination of some specialists is needed, rotations in function and a commitment to the training of other workers with similar skills will also be necessary for more complex tasks" (24).

This is a companion to *Social Anarchism and Organisation* by the Anarchist Federation of Rio de Janeiro. All of the references are to only that text which has become essential reading for social anarchists today. This article summarizes, paraphrases and interprets the original. It is meant to be an addition to the English language discourse on especifismo and social anarchism generally, as well as the FARJ text in particular. There is a link to an audio version with a slideshow presentation at the end.

Critiquing the State: Capitalist Exploitation and State Domination

Libertarian socialism describes a future society which is ideal but not fantastic. A socialist system prioritizes societal benefit over capitalist profit, and the use of term "libertarian" implies self-management and other, non-coercive, democratic methods. The transformation needed in society can neither come from market nor legislative means, so in order for the socialist revolution to be truly liberating, it must put an end to state domination in addition to capitalist exploitation. An anti-capitalist ideology would not be liberating if it was not also anti-statist because, while capitalism is globally pervasive today, statism has transcended economic systems (21).

Capitalism did not inspire the controlling nature of the state, which throughout history, has always been an anti-democratic management apparatus. All forms of the state limit and control society in favor of some at the expense of others, perpetuating inequality and facilitating exploitation. The state is a systematic propagation of inequality, and capitalism concentrates that inequality in the domain of property (18).

Critiques of the state should be precise, about specific states, but they should also be general, about the failing of states throughout history and about statism as an oppressive ideology. As a pre-

carious institution, the state finds its function and strength in the propping up of the status quo. While this may have always been true, the status quo is an evolving force, and the modern state has devised a system that consolidates that force by providing an outlet in society (the economy) where it is legally permissible to exploit those who are not part of the elite. Capitalism's longevity depends on constant growth and the ability to satisfy production needs. This means a reliable flow of necessary supplies, and the transformation of human labor into another exploitable resource. Capitalism uses people as it uses the Earth. In the modern, globalized economy, this requires the consent and encouragement of states because they manage the land, both its borders and its laws (19).

Local and regional problems with the state could be described as uniquely characteristic. For the last 200 years or so, as interested parties in a global capitalist system, certain states have had little reason to vary much from one another. Since economic power can systematically influence governments all over the world, the rich can effectively extinguish all forms of political dissent. So, the state of today is an ideal political system for the capitalist elite because it creates an international order in which a small minority are rewarded for exploiting masses (21).

Its official role as a neutral arbiter obscures the undemocratic, centralized authority of the state. A key difference between a fascist state and a neo-liberal one is the degree to which it is made publicly explicit that the government is in favor of the most powerful interests of capital. In a fascist state, this kind of coordination between government and industry is publicly promoted as a point of pride and an indicator of a superior society. However, in a state with an unregulated economy, collusion of this sort is played down because the market is "free" from the intrusions of the state. This veil of neutrality is a favor paid to the capitalists by the neo-liberal state (19).

Janeiro (FARJ) defines the self-managers of society as workers and consumers, asserting that:

> "The workers create the social product and the consumers enjoy it. In these two functions, mediated by distribution, the people are responsible for economic and political life, having to decide what to produce, and the consumers what to consume. The local structures of libertarian socialism in which workers and consumers [organize] themselves are the workers' and consumers' councils" (25).

This establishes three domains of the future economy to be coordinated by these councils: the production, the distribution, and the consumption.

No one person made (or developed the knowledge necessary to make) the property that supposedly belongs to an elite few. This is also true in regard to the implementation of this property, which, for the worker or the peasant, is a lived experience. In cultivating the land, just as in utilizing private means of production, labor deserves its share of the value that is produced. However, the material lives of the exploited classes are not protected by property rights. People who do not own property are keenly aware of the direct use value of their personal possessions. Whether it's the roof over their heads or the clothes on their backs, thoughts of possessions occupy their fears and their dreams. And for the exploited, possessions include jobs because quantified work, broken up into increments of time, can itself become a possession when converted into money. Currently, however, possession is an insufficient basis for organizing society because, under capitalism, in addition to personal possessions, some people also own property which itself earns money, simply through its use and existence. This is something that possessions cannot do. Collectivization in a communist society would be an extension of personal possession to the point of abolishing private property (25).

Libertarian Socialism: Perpetuating Equality and Promoting Egalitarianism

Revolution brings about the end of one thing and necessitates the beginning of something else, but the objective of building a new society cannot really be distinguished from the work of destroying the old regime. The practice of developing and transforming society today has to be combined with a theoretically specific long-term objective. Social anarchism attempts to solve this problem by using the distant horizon to orient immediate action and inform short-term priorities. In this way, libertarian socialism is a universal guiding point for particular instances of struggle. The need to take political positions today is related to the universal and abstract final objective, just as the actions of mass movements are indistinguishable from the actions of individuals (22).

A libertarian socialist society would consist of the organizing of equals interested in perpetuating equality and promoting egalitarianism. By contrast, under a capitalist regime, equality and rights are principles that will inevitably be interpreted by the controlling elite, in courts and in workplaces. Since capitalist society organizes itself around the interests of private property, all relations in society begin to define themselves through that lens. This means that in disputes between bosses and employees, a capitalist state will predictably side with the interests of property because wealth perpetuates capitalism and ensures the privileged rights of capitalists within the state. This, in turn, protects the state from being overtaken by the rich since they have no need to sabotage the legal veil of neutrality established by representative democracy (25).

If there were no centralized state power, the people would have to take charge of the economic and political decisions of society themselves, but who exactly are "the people?" In Social Anarchism and Organisation, the Federação Anarquista do Rio de

Systematic privilege creates enduring hierarchy. But in order for inequality to survive generation after generation, it needs individuals acting on behalf of this system, protecting it from change and preserving their own roles and privileges. Representative democracy is a way of governing which functions ideally for aspiring elites, as well as heirs of systematic inequality. It establishes political power and political titles, not to mention political favors and political deceit (20).

Additionally, since politics has fixed ends which characterize its means, real societal transformation can only come from social engagement. And because the social level of engagement cannot guarantee power within a state system, social organizing acts as a safeguard against opportunism and co-optation of popular movements. Therefore, libertarian politics must promote and foster revolution on the social level, keeping militants and mass movements committed to strategies that build power outside of the state (20).

If the elite occupy a central position within the state, a position that facilitates capitalist exploitation of those outside of the central leadership, then we can understand "outside" or "periphery" as synonymous with "exploited" and "powerless". The dialectic between center and periphery can help to understand the relationship between the state and those it dominates, as well as the relationship between capitalism and those it exploits. Like a panopticon, the state holds power by keeping the masses away from the center, where they can be more easily controlled. Under such oppressive conditions, society develops a culture that specifically caters to isolated individuals who find themselves feeling like outsiders because, systematically, they are. Capitalist society lacks solidarity precisely because, when it is forced to survive on the fringes, coordination is easily broken up, preserving the status quo (10).

Building Social Force: Liberation through Class Struggle

Social groups are organized around lifestyle, consumption, work, religion, politics, etc., and in all of these domains of social life, capitalism and the state reenforce material conditions that create class conflict. This means that class consciousness can express itself through a variety of organizations and from any number of different origins in our society. And movements which are the result of class struggle merit support by radical revolutionaries, just as movements which use authoritarian tactics to gain popularity merit critique (34).

There is not a single, correct way to go about cultivating the social force necessary to transform society, but it will unquestionably include mass numbers of people organizing themselves. This will bring into question the ethics and determination of the individuals involved. How will the movement be organized? How committed are the masses? How responsible is the leadership (32)?

What the exploited classes of the world need is liberation from the forces of capitalism and the state, not a regime change. It is precisely because social movements organize, grow, and institutionalize themselves outside of the official mechanisms of the state that they have liberating potential. Unfortunately, liberation is not synonymous with revolution. Politicians use the word "revolution" to mean the capture of pre-established power which exists independently of popular movements. Political revolution may or may not be liberating; it may or may not be democratic, may or may not be popular (37).

The social force necessary for revolution begins with the actions of individual people. These may be militants, activists, dissidents, workers, renters, or other organizing and organized members of the exploited classes. Nevertheless, alone, an individual constitutes an incomplete force which needs collaboration and social aims to

fluential without resorting to unethical tactics that contradict its ideological limits or its political strategy (41).

There is no stability of political terrain, making social transformation a moving target. Revolutionary work requires intentional and strategic diligence that varies based on situational factors. The Federação Anarquista do Rio de Janeiro (FARJ) arrive at the conclusion that:

> "political practice in different camps requires that the anarchist organisation divides itself into fronts, which are the internal groups that carry out social work" (43).

If political space is not intentionally occupied by anarchist militants, it will inevitably be occupied by other ideological forces which may or may not coincide with the revolutionary aims of the class struggle. These forces could potentially defend the status quo from inside the movement, promote reforms within the oppressive system, and/or co-opt the movement for opportunistic political gains. The various fronts of a specific anarchist organization can specialize in their point of engagement, allowing them to hold positions that would be impossible for larger, popular organizations to maintain (43).

The specific anarchist organization has responsibilities ranging from education to social work, necessitating a constant study of theory and modification of strategy. This is work done by individuals, using the tool of the specific political group, not on their own. Militants need to be educated mutually by each other or this ideological and theoretical unity will inevitably be short lived. However, during this perpetual education process, there have to be constant efforts made by the active minority to stay connected to and part of popular, less ideologically specific, social groups (41).

the predictable nature of individual responses. A person alone presents no threat to this order because it was developed precisely to manage individualized, uncoordinated (31).

Nevertheless, having social anarchist principles does little to inform action on a daily basis. How can the long-term objective of libertarian socialism provide a radical perspective today, instead of disillusionment and feelings of ineptitude? One possible solution is a specifically anarchist group which can give militants an ideologically focused resource for increasing the social force of their political action. The specific anarchist organization is a space that exists explicitly for developing political strategy and theory, in collaboration with others, along the revolutionary lines of libertarian socialism. It is an ideologically specific group that is at once a democratic, an experimental, and a political organization (4).

If tactics, strategy, and politics are going to coincide, members of a political organization need a high degree of theoretical and ideological unity. Militants must act cohesively, in order to apply their political force to the social level in meaningful ways which in turn develop the social force of popular movements. This is the only way for an active minority to have a liberating influence on a mass movement. Being smaller in size and having more refined ideological priorities, a specific organization can achieve a greater degree of unity than mass movements. While it may be a hindrance or an impossibility in a popular organization, unity is a potential strength in a specific organization, allowing members to better understand the group's aims and capabilities, as well as preventing over-reach and future disagreements on foundational ideas (41).

However, operating on the political level, rather than the social level, has its own limitations since a liberating revolution will be the result of societal transformation, not political wins. Political organizing increases its focus and usefulness through unity, whereas popular organizing, since it benefits from being less ideologically constrained, employs mass appeal. The specific anarchist organization has the task of developing a way for its ideas to remain in-

realize its full potential. In order to collaborate in revolutionary ways, people use groups as tools, one of these tools is the mass movement; another one of these tools is a specific political organization; and still more of these tools include social clubs, workplaces, families, classrooms, and friend groups (31).

Maintaining efforts to cultivate knowledge and skills amongst militants requires the long-term practice of radical pedagogy because individual learning and teaching are permanent endeavors. But liberatory education that is reciprocal and dynamic still needs a place to be practiced. And so, the class struggle, because of its pervasiveness, serves as both the training ground for radicals and the arena for the revolution (38).

Every collective and organized act is a potential training and learning moment for the radicalized and radicalizing. Through various iterations of the class struggle, over time, the exploited classes learn to dismantle the mechanisms of capitalism more effectively and thoroughly. So, in a popular movement, the daily work to coordinate and plan has a real effect on the growing social force of the movement. Regardless of the short-term outcome, participants in popular movements gain an understanding of the specific historical context of their time and its dominant forces. Through this engagement, they can become active agents in the development and dispersal of new strategies for future conflicts (12).

Social Anarchism: Political and Social Engagement

To increase the likelihood of successful social movements with revolutionary potential, we must move away from subjective visions of a utopian future because a truly egalitarian future will be the result of a new, popularly established way of life. That is to say: it will not be the successfully communicated, "unique idea" of a persuasive leader that brings about socialism. Building and supporting

movements outside of pre-established political channels requires ideological principles that prevent co-optation by politicians and capitalist interests. In order to have revolutionary potential, popular movements must be situationally spontaneous, not generically directed from a centralized governing body (9). Therefore, there is a current need to evolve our organizing and mobilizing strategies away from campaigns that prop up leadership because political power alone will not be sufficient to bring about the kind of societal transformation that is already necessary today (28).

The history of political revolutions, in France and in Russia for example, can be seen as culminations of struggle, brought about by historical circumstances. But there is a debate about whether these revolutions were political or social struggles, whether the resulting systems were power grabs by an opportunistic few or a genuine popular response to conditions of inequality in daily life. Were these efforts to end exploitative systems or were they efforts to put "better" leaders in power? A strictly political struggle occurs within the existing social order, with the aim of seizing control of society, not transforming it democratically. Within a political system, leaders are incentivized to tailor laws and policies to their own needs as a way of legitimating and guaranteeing their positions of power. By contrast, social struggle takes place outside of the State or other officially sanctioned outlets. This is a fundamental difference between a popular revolution of the people and a political revolution of a centralized leadership (22).

Revolutionary social movements cannot grow in an environment of ideological purity. So, creating purity tests for a mass movement will never be an effective organizing strategy. Real people have material needs, and political indoctrination alone does not satisfy them. Unlike ideology, which abstracts material conditions and infinitely splits itself up into various interpretations, needs are more common precisely because they are undeniable features of shared daily existence. Having our needs met provides the stable context for the rest of social life to occur (35).

Social anarchist ideology must differentiate between directing mass movements and influencing them. The influence of anarchism should aim to promote and never weaken popular power. This libertarian influence could take the form of education, debate, strategy and methodology, mobilization, etc., and its effectiveness should not threaten the movement but rather strengthen both the individuals and the ideology which give the movement its force (42).

Ideologically, social anarchist politics and organizing must become more specific and distinct because this helps to make connections between current needs and long-term objectives. Still, the ideology cannot be allowed to morph into a hardline that predetermines our actions and categorizes the exploited classes into ineffective and adversarial subgroups. The evolving understanding of current conditions and how to strategically respond to them results from this connection between theory and practice. Revolutionaries learn through experimentation and experience and improve their efforts through rigorous reflection on their actions (9).

The Specific Anarchist Organization: Employing Ideological and Theoretical Unity

Mass movements are dynamic and spontaneous because they are a convergence of individuals and other social forces. In an attempt to maximize these characteristics, some revolutionary extremists promote individualism and other ideologies that are anti-organizational. On the surface, this amorphous response to exploitative and dominating forces makes a big splash. But broken windows and isolated acts of conscientious objection, regardless of their moral prerogatives, are void of social force and have the unintended effect of strengthening the status quo. Our current society is the reproduction of these disorganized tendencies. The existing capitalist system is a mode of order made possible by