



The Kootenay Anarchists of BC are active agitators for social change in the communities in and around the Kootenay Lake region of BC. We seek to build the elements of a free society that are autonomous from governing authority. Some of our current projects include a free FM radio station we call Spontaneous Autonomy Radio (SAR) and we are working toward the formation of an anarchist Eco-village.

The numerous communities in the Kootenays make for a diversified social experience which is naturally decentralized. Social diversity and the dependence on cooperative economics make life style alternatives viable possibilities. Community controlled economic enterprise and cooperative work are becoming ever increasing presence here. With local economies that are failing due to government ineptitude and corporate irresponsibility people are coming together to create their own economy. Small businesses, craft fairs and farmer's markets, community forests and other societies and cooperatives are building a new self reliance among the people.

With political, economic and environmental disarray floundering our society we need more than a quick fix, we must question the basis of the state which controls through corporate and government organization the lives of millions for the wealth and privilege of a few. We must seek to break away from the taxation and control over our lives. Together we can form cooperative communities, Eco-villages and even share our creative work without paying homage to the powers of finance, political leaders who turn against us.

<http://www.kootan.org>

Kootenay Anarchists
1246 Affinity Place
Argenta BC Canada V0G 1B0

Anarchist Black Book



by Dick Martin

West Kootenay Anarchists



Money

Money is an instrument of authority, and essential to the existence of the state. It may be useful for merchants but it is not necessary because barter in kind is a skill all merchants are acquainted with. Money is minted by the state because it serves the state, it is the means by which the state is able to finance its demonic activities and maintain an entourage of functionaries, agents and gendarme. Money was created as a mechanism of taxation. By getting people to work for money the state was then able to appropriate the value that people created for its own purpose through taxation. The Romans built a long lasting and powerful empire because they learned very well how to use money to run their system of social authority. Barter, trade in kind and shared resources all strengthen the people and sever the bondage to the money/taxation system. Your solidarity, with each other and in community is something that cannot be taxed away.



Justice

There is no justice, not a least as long as there is any governing politic. Laws and systems of justice are all based upon privilege, don't expect any reprieve from your problems because there exist laws that protect human rights, or your property. Especially if you don't have a status as an educated professional, position of social authority or influence with the purveyors of justice. Seek instead the solidarity and mutual aid amongst your fellow associates. You are all in common, subjects of social authority; liberation means to wrest power from the state and share on the basis of the value of life, not property and wealth.



Propertarianism

The existence of private property, personal wealth and ownership are attributes of the state and are complimentary to systems of social authority. Better seek to share things in common rather than become a proprietor of material wealth. Property is theft, as Proudhon once said, because assets owned by one are denied to another, this is the basis of wealth, and is the substance upon which the state is built. Each piece of property is as a brick in the edifice of the state and is why there are so many laws guarding wealth.



Consensus

Meetings and processes for making decisions are generally confused with the issue of who controls the outcome. Most often what is called democracy is a means to broker social authority, electoral democracy is meant to enable a power structure in society. A decision can only be valid if all points of view and opinions have been clearly spoken and fairly considered. Every participant has their own piece of the reality, to proceed with formal democracy until there is a majority, but not have given full credence to all opinions so that leads to poorly formed decisions and allows manipulative control. Understanding all views is at the basis of a good decision. Consensus is based upon establishing the rights of individuals and minorities



Political Power

Anarchists are opposed to government, it is true, it is essential to impose government, on society if a ruling elite is to have control. More importantly, however, anarchists are opposed to the state, it is government which is at the service of the state, it is government which asserts the rule of the state and empowers a social elite. So we see government as the political arm which serves to implement the authority of the state and make the policies, laws that determine how international and domestic power is to be used. The state can easily exist without the facade of democracy, and government can be implemented by sheer power of rule. This is the default mode of all government, and it is the power of the state behind the authority of government to rule is the state which all anarchist oppose. To overthrow the government but allow the state to continue is contrary to the process of social liberation and an act against our efforts to create a freedom society. Politics allows the ruling elite, the benefactors of the system, to decide the direction and reason of their power, we deny the power of polity, command of authority and instead organize our lives on the basis of our needs in networks which extend in lateral connectivity.



Federation and Networks

Both Proudhon and Bakunin elaborated on federation as a principle of anarchist organization and many anarchists have upheld federation as a decentralist form of organization. Yet it is structured with an order of protocol with different levels of responsibility in that structure. One level represents another and so on. Anarchists are very concerned about social organization, understanding various organizational formats allows anarchists to promote anti-authoritarian principles so freedom displaces the power of command. Federation, however, applies to certain circumstances and is not powerful enough to drive any social system. Federation must exist in the framework of a larger organizational concept, that we now know as networks which consist of amorphous, fluid of ever-changing connectivity of peer to peer. The structure is defined by the connectivity and has no social protocol. This is the goal of anarchists is to replace the command type structure of corporations, governments and religious institutions with a network society that works on egalitarian means.



Nonviolence/Pacifism

It is inherent in the freedom of every individual to determine what is nonviolence and the necessity of peace. Pacifism is not a political statement but a matter of personal conviction. There is no one able to fairly judge the decisions of peace or violence any individual makes, although a peaceful means is most constructive. There really is no such thing as a peaceful way as peace and violence define each other just as night and day and there is a relationship between the two. Peace is allied to freedom because it is not something imposed upon the individual while violence is of the nature of authoritarian control which seeks to impose upon the free will. This is why anarchists value greatly peaceful process and wish to bring about the anarchist inspiration through nonviolent process and consensual agreement.



War

I think we must be aware that this is not only an environmental crisis but also a social crisis and we are faced with the emergence of a new fascism, totalitarian politics and increased international competition for the last remaining resource of the world. Ultimately states will need to maintain their power in times of decreasing affluence and increasing poverty and hardship. States will increasingly turn to national interest over public welfare and invoke war to strengthen their command over populations and gain the acquisition of strategic resources. We will see more wars like those in Afghanistan (where the issue is mineral resource like lithium) and Iraq and eventually in desperation to maintain power outright war between imperialist powers. We are powerless to change any of this, all we can do is cobble together the means of survival. Our best chance is through the formation of self-sufficient Eco-villages networked together and organized on anarchist principles. Social democracy is already dead, unions are fighting a losing battle, protests don't change anything, rebellion strengthens authority if it doesn't work and becomes another problem if it does.

Unions

Businesses have always been run by an elite of owners who control assets and direct the labour force for profit and grandiose schemes. It has been necessary, for the people who do the work to make it all possible, to represent their interests through organization, essentially Trade Unions. It is a struggle that never has been won, nor can be won, every union contract is a compromise; in the end the powers of capital have control. There have been better days for working people, and their have been worse days, but until the day that the wages system itself falls to give rise to egalitarian society there will be no respite from the domination of work. Socialism is dead and along with it lay the fetters of the labour movement, made now mostly of privileged workers who have professional status while the unorganized languish along lucky to even have minimum labour standards, although they often do not. The old labour movement has put their defence into the politics of socialism, the "left" have followed after the illusion that government authority can represent the interests of working people, but it does not, and it cannot. Consequently socialism has abandoned the commitment to liberation from work as a power over our lives. Socialism is a failing cause; immersed in politics and lost in its vision that was misguided to start with, socialism has found powerful friends in the domination of work over your life. It is almost daily news that one union after another is falling victim to essential services legislation or is finding itself being legislated back to work. Contracts are getting longer and gains, if any, are becoming more marginal. Government and business are finding more and more ways to prevent working people from negotiating reasonable contracts. Unions have turned to politics and away from the interests of working people. Politics is the scourge of freedom, wages are dread; work for their god, their money? say not. Find a life that is based upon what you share with others. Work to be taxed, bossed, controlled, so then be taxed again? Measure your wealth in what you share, build communities where this is possible; there is hope for this.



Community

If there is a fundamental characteristic to society that acts as a foundation to civil order it is community. Transcending the limits of economics and overcoming the authority of politics; breaking through the isolation and narrowed interests of family; community generates a wider unity which gives expression to cultural values of freedom and the greatest recognition of the individual. The state and its political process is an imposition on society while community provides a broad basis for social organization. While the power of the state diminishes the realization of community; the federative organization of social networks amplifies community. Community by its very nature is inclusive toward each person and consensual in active process.

Community cannot be realized as a political process because the foundations of community are social. In the expression of community the social process benefits each person in the ensemble of all through our social networks; that is, community is the best possible resolution to what under authoritarian social process appears as a general social problem; of the conflict between the individual and society which occurs under authoritarianism. Just as it is true that authoritarian society is empowered through the sacrifice of the individual, community is in its strength is an expression of individual spirit and initiative.