

**WHAT IS ANARCHISM?**

“ANARCHISM (from the Gr. an and archos, contrary to authority), the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government - harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being. In a society developed on these lines, the voluntary associations which already now begin to cover all the fields of human activity would take a still greater extension so as to substitute themselves for the state in all its functions. They would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees, local, regional, national and international temporary or more or less permanent - for all possible purposes: production, consumption and exchange, communications, sanitary arrangements, education, mutual protection, defence of the territory, and so on; and, on the other side, for the satisfaction of an ever-increasing number of scientific, artistic, literary and sociable needs. Moreover, such a society would represent nothing immutable. On the contrary - as is seen in organic life at large - harmony would (it is contended) result from an ever-changing adjustment and readjustment of equilibrium between the multitudes of forces and influences, and this adjustment would be the easier to obtain as none of the forces would enjoy a special protection from the state.” (1)

“Anarchism is a political theory that is skeptical of the justification of authority and power. Anarchism is usually grounded in moral claims about the importance of individual liberty, often conceived as freedom from domination. Anarchists also offer a positive theory of human flourishing, based upon an ideal of equality, community, and non-coercive consensus building.” (2)

“...a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.” (3)

**QUESTIONS:**

What is authority?

What is power?

Is political authority justifiable under any circumstances?

Are there situations in which political authority would be acceptable?

What are common misconceptions of anarchism?

What social forces (other than the state) might preclude free association between individuals?

Won't life be solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short without the state?

## **FURTHER READING/REFERENCES:**

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6. Goldman, Emma. (1969) Anarchism and Other Essays. Dover publications.
7. Berkman, Alexander. (1972) The ABC of Anarchism. Dover Publications.
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"To be GOVERNED is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonored. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality."

— Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, The General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century