

# Tyneside Anarchist Group



## WHAT IS ANARCHY?

The word anarchy simply means 'Without Leaders'. Anarchy is a system based on mutual voluntary cooperation - Free from all forms of state control and government. It is a fundamental belief of all anarchists that no person is of more worth than another, a myth constantly perpetuated by today's class system, Nobody has the right to set themselves higher than another, just because they were born with more privileges than others.

We believe that it is wrong that the minority (the ruling class) has power over the majority (the working class/poor) and that the middle classes are kept in line by state 'rewards' such as company cars for towing the line. As anarchists we cannot conceive how putting a cross next to someone's name every 4 years will change anything for the vast majority of people. How can a privately educated person who earns millions and has never had to go without possibly make decisions on behalf of someone who lives 200 miles away and is struggling to survive off social security? Anarchy is not a rigid blueprint and there are many different strains of anarchism all of which share a common aim, yet with varying methods to reach anarchy, i.e.. within the work-place, within the community.

## THE WAY ANARCHISTS ORGANISE THEMSELVES

A common misconception must people hold about anarchists is that we are against organisation, that we love chaos and like going around causing havoc. Nothing could be further from the truth! In society today we are led to believe that "ruling", "organising" and "managing" mean the same thing, BOLLOCKS! Rule and management are to do with power. A ruler forces, usually his subjects to do his dirty work. The fact rulers also organise does not mean we cannot have the latter without the former. People are born as equals and so should be treated as equals look at your own life and you will see examples of group organisation without the need for rulers. Even things as playing a game of football or arranging a piss-up, a few steps on from there we have experience of community centres and self-help groups and so on. Being told what to do by a boss is offensive, resentful and destructive. On the contrary, playing an active part in decision making is a positive, if sometimes a demanding activity.

Fine you might say, perhaps it works on a small scale but in a complex industrial society without the authority of managers that's impossible isn't it? well firstly we believe society should be broken down into smaller scale units as much as possible. Small groups are efficient and easily understood by those working in them. Large aimless groups, on the other hand are full of wasteful bureaucracy they get confusing and are vulnerable by domination (Just look at the TUC), the notion of 'bigger is better' is also being called into question from the running of steel works to the produce of plantations.

Much of the complex mess we have at the moment is un-necessary over-sea trading is far from essential, England could easily be self sufficient if resources were diverted properly, taking it further, as much as is reasonably possible should be produced and consumed locally. When organisations need to be conducted on a larger scale this can also be achieved, the best example of large scale Anarchism in an industrial society is the experience of Spain in the 1930's when the government all but collapsed during the Spanish civil war. The Working class organised themselves. The Barcelona bus company doubled services, made generous contributions to the city entertainment collective and produced guns to help fight the fascists. This amazing increase in efficiency was achieved despite war time conditions, a smaller work-force and a shortage of supplies. It just goes to show who can run a bus company/ the bus workers.

The Barcelona workers were organised into syndicates and sub divided into work-groups. Each group made their own day-to-day decisions and appointed a delegate to represent their views on wide issues concerning the whole factory or even the whole region. The delegates were instructed by their work-mates and could be recalled at short notice if it was felt they were getting out of line. By adding more levels of delegation it is possible to cope with organising activity on any scale, without anyone giving up their freedom to work as they choose. This system is called Federalism. It acts as a reverse of the current structure. Today we have a top down approach where a few bosses have a collection of managers who themselves control a larger number of supervisors and so on, all the way down. In this case power is concentrated at the top, by the those furthest from the factory floor. Is it surprising they don't represent our interests? Federalism is a bottom up approach where power belongs to the workers. The delegates help co-ordinate the workers but they do not control them. This system is resistant to domination by an elite because there are no positions of authority to grab. As a final note Anarchists are not opposed to leaders as such if somebody has a skill which can help the group complete a task, the group may choose to follow their instructions until that task is completed. The problem is rulers : those who use a position of authority to coerce and control.



## THE HISTORY OF ANARCHISM ON TYNESIDE

TAG does not claim to be a new movement or set of ideas. In actual fact, TAG is the newest of a long line of northern based anarchist groups. Our predecessors go back as far as a 150 years. These anarchist traditions date back to the 1880's when the Russian anarchist Peter Kropotkin visited the Northeast and Anarchism took root in the more radical of the mining communities.

When the Newcastle Daily Chronicle was under the editor-ship of Joseph Cohen, Kropotkin wrote a series of articles from 1881-1882. He also spoke at the 1882 Durham miners gala to around 50,000 miners. After his release in 1886 from prison Kropotkin again returned to the northeast, chairing meetings in the Haymarket pub as well as a lecture to around 4000 people in the Tyne Theatre.

In the 1890's the Newcastle anarchist club formed and continued to agitate on both Tyneside and Wearside from 1893-1894, holding open air meetings on Sundays.

By 1895 Freedom, an anarchist paper, was listing meetings in Sunderland, South Shields, Newcastle, Stanly and Gateshead. The Clousden Hill colony at Forest Hall was also set up around this time. Chopwell also gained a reputation for militancy even having its own socialist Sunday school, teaching socialist and anarchist ideas. Felling, Washington and Usworth also gained the reputation as 'red villages'.

During this century the British Industrialist Union, the British Section of the IWW, was strongly represented on Tyneside. Indeed, arguably the most important English anarcho-syndicalist, Tom Brown, was a Geordie who worked and was active in the shipyards.

In 1963 the Chronicle reported how an anarchist led group tried to turn over a coach from which the Tory MP, Dame Irene Wood, was speaking, with the rest of the Town Moor crowd cheering them on. A year later the weekly all-night parties held by Tyneside Anarchists in Grosvenor Place ceased only after the police attacked the revellers, which resulted in a riot. In the same year, South Shields Anarchists forayed south and occupied Reading's nuclear fall out bunker. Closer to home, the Anarchist Club night which regularly attracted over 500 people was finally closed due to under-age sex taking place and the efforts of a local priest who said devil worship was occurring.

In the late 70's saw a rejuvenation of anarchism across the country, thanks largely to punk rock, the Sex Pistols 'Anarchy In The UK' getting to number one in the charts, despite being banned.

We have a long fine heritage, despite the media trying to ignore us.



## ANARCHISM AROUND THE WORLD

Anarchism around the world has more to do with syndicalism than other forms of organisation. Anarcho-syndicalists belong to an international movement called the International workers Association (IWA), which in its peak had over 5 million members. Through world war II and fascist oppression, the IWA was almost crushed, but recently has seen a resurgence in membership.

IWA Sections around the world are again moving from being propaganda groups to fully functioning anarcho-syndicalist unions and, particularly the CNT of France and Spain, have taken on the bosses and won disputes.

As Capitalism becomes more global, so does the need to combat it. The IWA holds meetings with people all over the world from Somali tribesmen to Peruvian mineworkers.

Another similar organisation is the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), or the 'Wobblies' as they're more commonly known. The Wobblies are an older movement than the IWA and through its rational and influential approach has organised millions of workers in the USA, although its membership does not reflect this.

Many Anarchist organisations across the world, act solely as propaganda and discussion groups. Some form national and even international movements centred around their papers such as Class War and Love and Rage, revolve around spectacular actions such as Class against Class in Germany, whilst some Anarchists stay within the confines of a purely ecological setting, though their contribution to the Anarchist movement as a whole has yet to be seen.

On the whole, Anarchist groups are more established and hold more influence and respect in other countries outside the U.K. Constant media slurs and the variety of nutters that call themselves Anarchists have done great damage to the Anarchist movement here at home. However, the fall of Marxism in the East and the ever tightening laws and cut-backs in order to protect the boss class has shown increased interest in the Anarchist alternative. We believe it's high time we made ourselves known!



## FIGHTING FASCISM

Fascism is inherent in all capitalist society, it breeds on peoples prejudices and hatred. It believes in a strong patriarchal belief system, a fatherland which is all imposing. Above all Fascists are nationalists, they believe in promoting the nation above all, and that there should be a unity of race and nation. They talk of love of their people (race!) but will always put the society and system above all else. They reject the idea of 'class' believing that both rich and poor all have a part to play in the destiny of the race, rejecting the aspirations of the individual.

Anarchists are completely opposed ideologically to fascism. Fascism disregards the happiness and fulfilment of the individual whereas anarchists believe that a good society can only be gauged as a success if the individual can fulfil their aspirations. Anarchists vehemently oppose racism which they see as divisive and used by the fascists (and the state) to a certain extent, to keep the working class in conflict with each other instead of realising the real enemy (Capitalism).

We believe in fighting the fascists both ideologically and physically, we have no time for the fascists, the last two occasions the fascists have tried to sell their papers in Newcastle they have been physically driven off the streets by anarchists....

THE ONLY GOOD FASCIST IS A DEAD ONE!!!!

CONTACT: ANTI FASCIST ACTION (AFA)

BM 1734, LONDON WC1N 3XX



## THE SOLIDARITY FEDERATION (IWA)

The Solidarity Federation was launched in March 1994 at a conference in Blackpool held by the Transport Workers Network, the Public Service Workers Network, the Education Workers Network and the British section of the International Workers Association, the Direct Action Movement.

The SF has a dual structure, organising in local communities and on a nationwide industrial level.

As Anarcho-Syndicalists, the SF is working to build revolutionary unions that fight the day-to-day problems such as low pay and bad working conditions, but also looks towards workers of those unions taking over industries themselves for the benefit of all and not just a privileged few.

When the SF talk about industrial unions, what they mean is all the members of a particular industry, for example transport, from cleaner to driver, belonging to the same union and organising from the bottom upwards and not the other way around like TUC unions that divide workers - one union for cleaners, another for drivers - while their leaders play go-between with its members and the bosses.

As well as organising in industry, the SF has strong community and works to set up Solidarity Centres where possible, similar to the SF's centre in Norwich, which serves as a meeting place for militants with advice on organisation, health and safety and company profits, amongst other things.

AS the new British section of the IWA, the SF is part of a more international structure than other Anarchist organisations, and although not as big as some European sections, is optimistic about its future.

**The North East Solidarity Federation Can be Contacted at:**

**PO Box ITA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA.**

## ANARCHIST BLACK CROSS (ABC)

The ABC aims at practical solidarity with prisoners. We support anarchist and revolutionary prisoners and those incarcerated for their political actions or beliefs. We support people framed up by the police and prisoners organising and resisting on the inside. We welcome contact from prisoners their relatives and anyone interested in getting involved in our work. We actively support people with letters, contact, material aid, pickets and publicity. Ultimately we work for a class based movement that will destroy prisons along with capitalism, in a revolution to create a real classless society. People working together without exploitation, hatred or terror, for a world based on Co-operation.

**CONTACT: LONDON ABC 121 Railton Rd. London, SE2 40LR**

**NEWCASTLE ABC PO BOX ITA, Newcastle, NE99 1TA.**



## THE A.C.F

The Anarchist Communist Federation is a national grouping of class struggle anarchists aiming to abolish all hierarchy and the creation of a worldwide classless society. As both a federation and individuals we are involved in continuous struggle against the current political system as well as promoting the Anarchist-Communist alternative.

We work towards creating an international revolutionary anarchist movement which is necessary to completely overthrow the capitalist system. As revolutionaries we understand capitalism cannot be reformed and the ruling class will relinquish its power without the use of armed force. Therefore we are aware that the revolution will not only be the time of liberation but also a time of violence.

We have groups throughout Britain, and contacts with groups abroad. We produce various propaganda including a quarterly magazine, pamphlets, posters, and stickers.

**CONTACT: A.C.F**

**84b Whitechapel high st, London, E17QX**



## CLASS WAR FEDERATION

Born out of the riots, strikes and class actions of the early eighties, CW started as a one off paper, put together by a group of bored angry people. Since then it has enjoyed enormous success and popularity due to its style of straight to the point anarchist politics, news and aggressive humour.

More than a decade on and the small group has grown into a nationwide federation. An organisation of groups and individuals who have come together with the desire to take back control over their lives and communities from the bosses and bureaucrats who try to dominate every part of our existence.

The CWF believes its roll is not to attempt to lead the next revolution or act a peoples vanguard but rather to try and convince the working class people by propaganda of word and deed, that our best interests are to participate actively in solving the problems most of us have to face in our lives, be it dealing with scum like bailiffs, anti-social criminals like burglars and smack dealers or eventually going the whole hog and binning this whole rotten to the core class bias system. the CWF believes we don't have to rely on the police, MP's or central committee of some 'radical' trendy lefty party to tell us what to think or how to act. We can do that for ourselves.

**CONTACT: LONDON CLASS-WAR**

**PO-BOX 467, London, E8 3QX**

## WHERE WE DIFFER FROM THE LEFT

Unlike the left and particularly the SWP, as anarchists we do not see the point in the "Say anything to get the members" tactic that many left wing groups adopt. In anarchy there is no set party line to tow, people are allowed to disagree with us! You wont find true anarchists 'hi-jacking' causes such as the miners struggle and the poll tax and then claiming them as victories on behalf of the 'poor old' working class who only we can help because they need middle class leaders. We don't believe that you can gain any degree of freedom by replacing one set of leaders for another (as shown in the Russian revolution). Anarchy is not about intellectual masturbation, it is about working with people to achieve a common aim, not drowning out genuine protests and replacing them with a sterile version that suits our own needs better. Anarchy is not about providing token gestures, such as the Anti Nazi League in an attempt to recruit more sheep. Anarchy is not about having leaders such as Paul Foot, Tommy Sheriden and Trotsky. Anarchy is born out of the working class, not imposed by trendy middle class intellectual Marxists. Anarchy is realising that voting Labour but building a socialist alternative is total bull-shit. Why support a system you are trying to destroy, When they wont support you?

## THE ROLE OF TYNESIDE ANARCHIST GROUP

TAG has been set up to act as a focal point for the aforementioned organisations and ideas. It also hopes to build on the strong and noble actions of the Anarchists long history on Tyneside. Were not an organisation as such - were just a bunch of individuals with broadly the same goals - everyone in TAG is treated as equals and everyone is actively encouraged to participate as fully as possible in group decisions. We primarily aim to push Anarchist ideas through propoganda (leafletting, stalls etc.), though unlike the lefty whingers (SWP and their ilk) we see the shortcomings of a purely propogandist approach and in the longterm we believe in a more dynamic approach from food-cooperatives to direct actions.

We WILL support both legal and illegal actions.

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