

Voting day is yet another symbolic day where people who lust for power, play on your fears and hopes. An expensive and captivating project that serves as little more than a conquest and distraction, kind of like the Olympics. Democracy is a system of control by which the ruling class maintains its interests. Dictatorships are roughly the same thing although the control is generally more obvious, and widely understood.

For further information and inspiration:

Interview with an Anarchist (in England):

<http://vimeo.com/21575286>

Video about struggles in Greece: <http://vimeo.com/20879536>

<http://anti-politics.net/distro/>

<http://anarchistnews.org/>

<http://news.infoshop.org/>

<http://vanarchive.wordpress.com/>

<http://warriorpublications.wordpress.com/>

<http://wiinimkiikaa.wordpress.com/>

<http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/olympics>

<http://submedia.tv/stimulator/>

In hopes that we meet again:

<http://vancouver.mediacoop.ca/>

<http://12thandclark.wordpress.com/>

<http://vancouver solidarity net.wordpress.com/>

<http://antiprisonvancouver.wordpress.com/>

<http://noii-van.resist.ca/>

<http://stopthepave.org/>



Mayday 2011, The Federal Election, and Anarchy



An Anarchist Primer

Mayday, Mayday!

On May 1st, 1886 American labour unions organized a general strike in support of the 8 our workday. A march of 80,000 people went down Michigan Avenue in Chicago, led by two Anarchists, Albert and Lucy Parsons. A couple days later, as the general strike continued, there was a demonstration outside of the McCormick Harvesting Machine co factory. Workers, who had become enraged by scabs just finishing their workday, were fired upon by police.

The act of police repression was followed up by a demonstration at Haymarket Square, organized by Anarchists. Following an explosion, a massacre took place as countless workers were murdered, and only eight police officers were killed. A show trial later ensued as eight Anarchists were later hanged for murder. “The Haymarket Affair”, as it has become known, is widely considered to have been an important influence on the origin of international May Day observances for workers.

May 1st, 2011 is 125 years since that fateful general strike in Chicago. The fight for the eight-hour work day was fought, died for, and won. May 1st has continued annually to be recognized as International Workers Day all over the world. But what of today?

Direct Action

It is more empowering and effective to accomplish goals directly than to rely on authorities or representatives. Free people do not request the changes they want to see in the world; they make those changes.

Revolution

Today’s entrenched systems of repression cannot be reformed away. Those who hold power in a hierarchical system are the ones who institute reforms, and they generally do so in ways that preserve or even amplify their power. Systems like capitalism and white supremacy are forms of warfare waged by elites; anarchist revolution means fighting to overthrow these elites in order to create a free society.

Self-Liberation

“The liberation of the workers is the duty of the workers themselves;” as the old slogan goes. This applies to other groups as well: people must be at the forefront of their own liberation. Freedom cannot be given; it must be taken.

things to different people. However, here are some basic principles most anarchists agree on.

Autonomy and Horizontality

All people deserve the freedom to define and organize themselves on their own terms. Decision-making structures should be horizontal rather than vertical, so no one dominates anyone else; they should foster power to act freely rather than power over others. Anarchism opposes all coercive hierarchies, including capitalism, the state, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

Mutual Aid

People should help one another voluntarily; bonds of solidarity and generosity form a stronger social glue than the fear inspired by laws, borders, prisons, and armies. Mutual aid is neither a form of charity nor of zero-sum exchange; both giver and receiver are equal and interchangeable. Since neither holds power over the other, they increase their collective power by creating opportunities to work together.

Voluntary Association

People should be free to cooperate with whomever they want, however they see fit; likewise, they should be free to refuse any relationship or arrangement they do not judge to be in their interest. Everyone should be able to move freely, both physically and socially. Anarchists oppose borders of all kinds and involuntary categorization by citizenship, gender, or race.

The Federal Election

May 2nd, 2011 is the date of the next federal election, if you are reading this today there is a high chance that you don't participate in elections and won't be voting. Perhaps you don't feel that you know enough about this country's electoral system or politics to make an informed decision. Perhaps you rightly refuse to trust the government and recognize that your vote could never count, perhaps you are like us and recognize the spectacle that is created around mainstream politics, and don't wish to take part. Perhaps you choose instead to interact with society at your own level, to make yours and your peers' actions rather than your votes, count.

On another hand, perhaps you are terrified at the way that this society is going. Perhaps you'll take any chance you can get, no matter how insignificant to get that fascist scumbag Harper out of office. Perhaps you're a strategic voter and you'll even vote for the Liberals if it helps to deny Harper's party another seat. Perhaps you're a die-hard NDP voter, or whatever else. Perhaps you are mildly or extremely patriotic and passionate about your "right to have your voice heard." Perhaps you are even planning to vote for the Conservatives, allowing a bunch of rich mostly white men in suits to tell you that they have your interests at heart, while they play on your irrational fears from years of watching too much television and Hollywood. "Victims matter" they say, as the crime

rate drops, surveillance cameras go up everywhere, and prisons continue to be built.

What really are our issues in Vancouver? Wherever you live, from the Downtown Eastside to the North Shore to Surrey, condominiums are being built that you could probably never hope to live in, even if you wanted to. Rents are being driven up and it may not have occurred to you yet that you could actually do something about it. Food prices are continually rising. Parents have little or no time to relate to their children, neighbors have little or no time to relate to each other, and the television becomes a babysitter for all of us. Employment is tough, wages are low, there is war, racism, homophobia, homelessness, violent and sexual attacks on women and children, police brutality and harassment, nuclear threats and radioactive pollution the list goes on, and on. These issues are all in some way tied to, and a result of the capitalist system.

Do any of the parties have a need, or interest to get rid of the capitalist system, and hence get rid of these problems? Hell no! Of course the NDP will have their usual futile token demands for a national housing strategy along with other (un)initiatives, while it is clear that all over the world social welfare and workers rights are being rolled back as the only way to save the faltering capitalist system. The Conservatives will use their usual fearmongering in the form of cleverly veiled bigoted hatred. The Liberals will of course continue to be the purest of politi-

free of sexism, homophobia, and transphobia; a society in which the wounds from centuries of enslavement, colonialism, and genocide are finally allowed to heal. The only things stopping us are the prisons, programming, and paychecks of the powerful, as well as our own lack of faith in ourselves. Of course, anarchists do not have to be practical to a fault. If we ever win the freedom to run our own lives, we'll probably come up with entirely new approaches to organization that improve on these tried and true forms.

What exactly is anarchism?

Volumes have been written to answer this question, and millions of people have dedicated their lives to creating, expanding, defining, and fighting for anarchy. There are countless paths to anarchism and countless beginnings: workers in 19th century Europe fighting against capitalism and believing in themselves instead of the ideologies of authoritarian political parties; indigenous peoples fighting colonization and reclaiming their traditional, horizontal cultures; high school students waking up to the depth of their alienation and unhappiness; mystics from China one thousand years ago or from Europe five hundred years ago, Daoists or Anabaptists, fighting against government and organized religion; women rebelling against the authoritarianism and sexism of the Left. There is no Central Committee giving out membership cards, and no standard doctrine. Anarchy means different

should be the center of society, and all should be free to build the networks and associations they need to meet their needs in common with others.

The education we receive in state-run schools teaches us to doubt our ability to organize ourselves. This leads many to conclude anarchy is impractical and utopian: it would never work. On the contrary, anarchist practice already has a long record, and has often worked quite well. The official history books tell a selective story, glossing over the fact that all the components of an anarchist society have existed at various times, and innumerable stateless societies have thrived for millennia. How would an anarchist society compare to statist and capitalist societies? It is apparent that hierarchical societies work well according to certain criteria. They tend to be extremely effective at conquering their neighbors and securing vast fortunes for their rulers. On the other hand, as climate change, food and water shortages, market instability, and other global crises intensify, hierarchical models are not proving to be particularly sustainable. An anarchist society can do much better at enabling all its members to meet their needs and desires.

The many stories, past and present, that demonstrate how anarchy works have been suppressed and distorted because of the revolutionary conclusions we might draw from them. We can live in a society with no bosses, masters, politicians, or bureaucrats; a society with no judges, no police, and no criminals, no rich or poor; a society

cal parties, blowing with the wind, echoing and copycatting, but at the same time distancing themselves from the rhetoric of whichever party they deem to be their biggest threat. Like the Greens in the US, the Green Party of Canada recognizes people's concerns toward the state of the environment, and their disdain for the political process. The Greens then volunteer for the position of restoring people's faith in the democratic system, that it can be reformed or improved, or that capitalism can be nicer on the environment, all impossible; under capitalism the people and the environment will always be nothing more than money, and under the democratic system the population can be nothing more than a mass to be manipulated.

Voting day is yet another symbolic day where people who lust for power, play on your fears and hopes. An expensive and captivating project that serves as little more than a conquest and distraction, kind of like the Olympics. Democracy is a system of control by which the ruling class maintains its interests. Dictatorships are roughly the same thing although the control is generally more obvious, and widely understood.

How in all of this do we assert our own control? Workers in the 1800's and at the turn of the century didn't vote, make an ethical consumer choice, or take part in a public opinion poll to shorten their working hours or assemble in the streets, they got together and did it, without asking for permission from anyone. One of the major things

that stopped them from taking it any further and ending their exploitation, was when they decided to rely on representatives, whether from a union, or political party.

This pamphlet is being handed out in the hopes that you share in at least a few of these concerns. It is being handed out in the hopes that you might at least think twice about why you are voting, and if you aren't voting perhaps you might think about getting together with your friends, classmates, neighbors, or coworkers, and actually doing something about the problems that effect you. This pamphlet has probably been handed to you by an Anarchist. Perhaps you've never heard of an Anarchist before. Or perhaps you've heard a lot of things about us in the news that you don't like or understand. Perhaps you're certain (although were not sure how) that we are somehow magically able to survive, for years, in a capitalist world without having to work a job. Perhaps you're also certain that even though we manage to get together in large numbers and make the news every so often, that we must somehow not have any lives or friends. What do you know about Anarchists other than our vendetta against plate glass, or our tendency to make all hell break loose when a major event comes to town?

The author of this text can say for sure that you won't be finding many people that identify as Anarchists at the voting booths on May 2nd though you may find us in the streets on May 1st. We generally don't recognize the legitimacy of governments or nation-states, and we cer-

tainly reject patriotism, as it is and always will be blind. In the context of Vancouver we recognize that Canada is founded upon genocide and theft of the land from native people, and it would be pretty shameful for us to support in any way a government that presides over such a legacy.

What follows next is a basic description of Anarchism, taken from the introduction to the book "Anarchy Works" written by Peter Gelderloos, and altered to fit this pamphlet, (Anarchists don't believe in intellectual property) if interested you can download a copy of the book for free at this location: <http://www.flirp.net/posts/e-books-and-tutorials/295/Anarchy-Works-by-Peter-Gelderloos.html>

Anarchy would never work!

Anarchism is the boldest of revolutionary social movements to emerge from the struggle against capitalism-it aims for a world free from all forms of domination and exploitation. But at its heart is a simple and convincing proposition: people know how to live their own lives and organize themselves better than any expert could. Others cynically claim that people do not know what is in their best interests, that they need a government to protect them that the ascension of some political party could somehow secure the interests of all members of society. Anarchists counter that decision-making should not be centralized in the hands of any government, but instead power should be decentralized: that is to say, each person