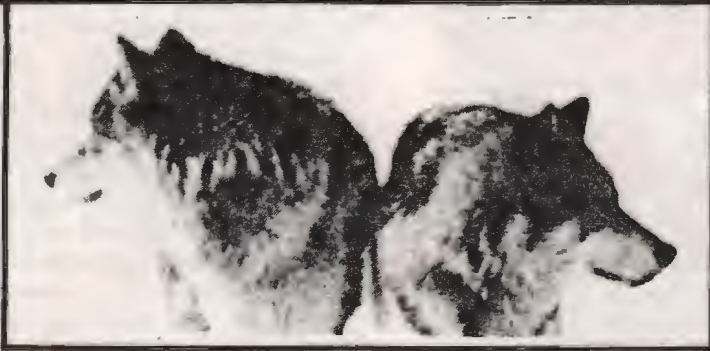
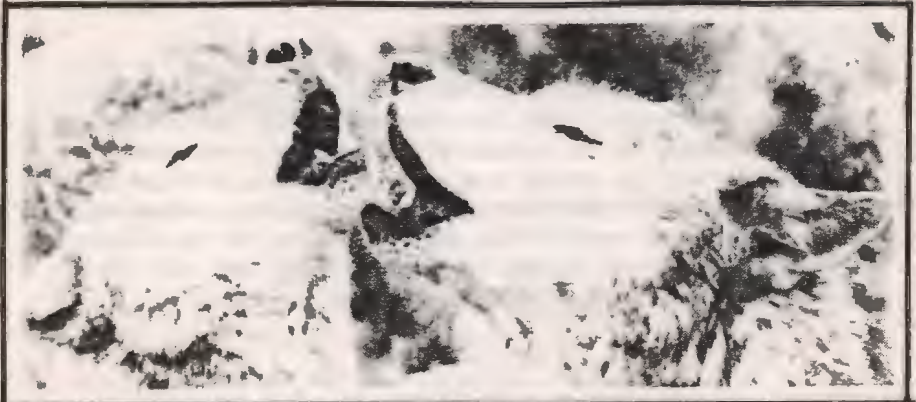


# Lone Wolf

*Bulletin no. 5*



**Yes, Once Again: What Is Anarchism ?**

Anarchism was dead — or so we've been told. But today, more than 100 years after it first became a political force in the life of the western nations, it is clearly alive once again.

A new climate of rebellion and good sense, a fresh current of sanity, self-confidence and outrage, is moving through society. The vital signs are everywhere, the evidence plain, that anarchism — that doctrineless doctrine which allows for the creation of freedom, justice and community among all humans — is coming forth again as an alternative to parliamentary republicanism, a burdensome bureaucracy, state capitalism, magic leaders, institutional medicine men, corporate pirates, and the conditions and crimes they foster through hierarchy, coercion, war, wage slavery, sexism, racism, and the neurotic destruction of our environment.

*"If you don't get it from yourself,  
where will you go for it?"*

— Zen proverb

Anarchism, of course, never died, though from 1940 thru 1970 its visibility in the world had been much reduced. Global war, state repressions, and Marxist "revolutions" had drawn much attention. The changes in the labor movement and liberal hedging and readjustments had seemed to offer fresh possibilities in the developed western nations. The continuing resourceful expansion of capitalism and unceasing propaganda campaigns by authoritarians of every coloration had also kicked up a dust storm which had seemingly obscured the anarchist vein continuing just below the surface of our social existence.

But now, in the last 15 years, since the experiences of the harsh testing-ground of the 1960s and its sweeping cultural transformations, people of awareness and courage on every level of life are looking to anarchism again as a means for combating world-wide social and economic problems and for bringing the struggle for freedom and human dignity into workplace, community and basic personal relations. Increasingly each of us sees that only we ourselves can build the free existence that is our birthright.

*"As man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy — the absence of a sovereign — such is the form of government to which we are every day approximating."*

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

Anarchism as a term is little understood today. When the word is mentioned people express horror, or begin acting silly and talk of the stereotype figure with black cape, maniacal leer, and bomb in hand. This is true even in the developed literate nations, although the non-violent practices and theories of anarchism have long been an important force in the labor movement of western Europe (Norway, France, Spain and Italy in particular), and more than 100 anarchist groups are currently active in North America alone. The misunderstanding of anarchism has been skillfully created by political figures and by the well-financed labors (and lies) of Establishment historians and ambitious journalists. Admittedly some of the confusion and misrepresentation has grown out of the lively diversity and continual changes in the anarchist movement itself since Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1808-1865) and Michael Bakunin (1814-1876) began to publish their theories for action and working-class consolidation. (We don't wish to brush over the history of violence that has marked phases of the anarchist and

world labor movements, but it is necessary to point out that non-violence and pacifism have been far stronger elements among anarchists than the "mad bomber" stereotype allows. While there is a general belief in the sacredness of human life, many anarchists hold there is nothing sacred about a tyrant's life, nor have anarchists felt they were acting unethically by defending themselves from gun-carrying thugs or soldiers. Perhaps what needs to be said here is that among most of the persons whom we would call anarchists random acts of violence against innocent people are clearly rejected while armed self-defense seems justified.)

Anarchism has experienced many developments, come forth in a variety of forms, and expressed a multitude of perceptions about the social and economic human. Included in this remarkable history are: the European and Latin American class-struggle doctrines of anarchist collectivism and anarchist communism; the "individualist" anarchism of Benjamin Tucker; the federated anarcho-syndicalist laborers of the Industrial Workers of the World



(still alive and growing in Chicago and elsewhere despite obituaries stating the contrary); the peasant communards of the Ukraine in the Russian Revolution; the artisan and small-scale farmer anarchists of Western Europe; the disciples of Tolstoy and Landauer who have built communities around the world; the anarcho-pacifists and anarcho-communitarians of Britain and North America; the zany, colorful street practitioners of the 1960s (calling

themselves Provos, Diggers and Situationists); those who have offered a refurbished approach to ethics and means, styling themselves "social anarchists"; the hippie, heal-the-earth anarchists of the Rainbow Nation; the new Autonomists of the European labor movement; and the Krakers and "enrages" of Amsterdam and Zurich (who have chosen to take charge of their own lives — and a certain amount of real estate — in very special ways).

*"Those who fear anarchy and seek law and order should know that all life is in perfect order and nature's law is never broken . . . it is only our primitive human structures that are in disarray."*

— Paul Williams, *Das Energi*

Despite this diversity anarchists traditionally have grown out of only three modes of belief and have usually been in agreement on a set of rock-bottom principles. Historically all anarchists (whether Right, Left or otherwise) can be placed broadly within Individualism, Mutual Aid practice, or Collectivism. In this Bulletin, we are concerned only with the Left — the "organized" anarchist activists — which is chiefly collectivistic but draws from other anarchist modes as well. The Left may be further divided for purposes of definition into three areas of focus or concern; (1) revolutionary anarchists (devoted to class-

struggle politics and workplace activism); (2) anarcha-feminists, centering on the vital anarchist concern of sexism; (3) evolutionary anarchists (most usually stressing the value of alternative lifestyles, non-violent philosophy and communalism). All may be called direct actionists and many anarchist militants today could fit into all three categories simultaneously. Of course, since these currents within the movement are made up of mere humans and must often shift practice as conditions alter, these categories must be seen only as generalizations of limited worth.

The principles, however, that anarchists embrace never truly change, for anarchism is not an ideology in the familiar sense (no party line, no sacred texts) but rather a sequence of natural responses growing out of a powerful and commonly-held ethic. The principles on which anarchists agree are based on the conviction that the individual human is capable of freedom and also possesses the personal skills (or potential skills) which permit her/him to allow others to achieve freedom as well. The keys to anarchist practice may be found in an extraordinary faith in egalitarianism, the small or human-scale organization, mutual aid to one's fellow humans, and the open possibilities for cooperation on all levels of society.

All anarchists would agree that the problems of the world take place when a human, societal or ecological imbalance or waste is permitted. To an anarchist all unnaturalness is evil and waste is a sin, perhaps the only sin;

thus the principles which must permeate all anarchist thought and practice will include a belief in the primary value of the individual human and the sacredness of human life; a conviction that central control, hierarchy and the dominance of one person over another (or one section of society or gender or race over another) can only add to our woes; and a belief that coercion in any form — whether by the State “for the good of the whole” or by capitalism in the name of profit over people — is totally unacceptable. Reduced to a few words, all anarchists believe in individual freedom, economic equality and the utter worthlessness and evil of the sovereign State. If you agree with these principles you may well be an anarchist; if you disagree that these principles are essential for the social good (but have faith instead in elites, leaders, the value of class divisions, or the worth of top-downward institutions or decision-making) then you are possessed by a non-anarchist mode of perceiving, response and judgement.

*“The essence of anarchism, the one thing without which it is not anarchism, is the negation of authority over anyone by anyone.”*

— Nicolas Walter

Anarchism is idealism, but a highly practical form of idealism, bringing one's desires into reality through the pragmatism natural to all humans living unalienated within a healthy society. It is open, organic, flexible

and ready for inevitable change, thus demonstrating its pronounced differences with both Marxist and liberal or bourgeois capitalist ideologies. Anarchists see the individual as a complete human fully capable of self-management and possessing an infinite



potential for achieving personal happiness, fulfillment and social harmony. Capitalism offers a partial vision of the person as "Private/Economic Man," one willing to trade away "community" and much of his/her private life and public value for wage payments. The Marxist view of "Social/Economic Man," tied to a theory of fixed historical process, attempts to create "economic community" while asking that we trade away personal freedom for the individual and large segments of society outside the party elite. Capitalism offers justice as an abstract at the price of community. Marxism offers the abstract of community at the price of justice. Unfortunately freedom minus a community of equals makes the poor and weak less free than the rich and strong; equality without freedom makes us all slaves together. The anarchist vision offers an opportunity for both community and justice at the very base of society itself. For ourselves and all others we demand total freedom and total equality, and we offer the tools for achieving this.

Anarchy — that ideal condition desired by anarchists — seeks its process and means in all people. The methods for bringing it forward into our lives can be found in: (1.) the individual's commitment to an autonomous life for self and all others; and (2.) an organizational form which permits and sponsors the principles listed above and encourages the initiatives of working persons and community members to build on unitary consciousness. Anarchists have never been against organization but instead have favored such horizontal forms as free communes, cooperatives and worker councils, where collective consciousness and direct implementation of decisions may be achieved.

Almost all left anarchism practiced in the world today draws from a number of methods for action and/or organization. The individualism of Godwin and Tucker, the mutualism and federalism of Proudhon, the collectivism of Bakunin, the communism of Kropotkin, Malatesta, and Goldman ("From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs."), the syndicalism of Pelloutier, Pouget and the Spanish C.N.T. trade unionists — all have a part in the beautiful free-form mix that is the militant contemporary movement.

This may be confusing to non-anarchists, but each of these major areas of practice has been developed to meet needs in the real world, and as time passes the differences between them appear to be less important and can be best seen simply as differences of emphasis. As the British anarchist Nicolas Walter has written in his fine brief pamphlet *About Anarchism*, Freedom Press, London: ". . . in our private lives we are individualists, doing our own things and choosing our companions and friends for personal reasons; in our social lives we are mutualists, making free agreements with each other; in our working lives we would mostly be collectivists, joining our colleagues in producing for the common good — and in the management of work we would mostly be syndicalists, joining our colleagues in deciding how the job should be done; in our political lives we would mostly be communists, joining our neighbors in deciding how the community should be run. This is of course a simplification, but it expresses a general truth about the way anarchists think nowadays."

*"Refuse to have anything to do with any thing (like a nation or person or corporation) that seeks to grow wealthier rather than healthier, larger rather than truer. Do nothing to contribute to that cancerous growth. Isolate it. Let it die."*

— Paul Williams, *Das Energi*

The newly revitalized anarchist movement of North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia is coming forth to confront a great historical crisis. We have at last become aware of the cataclysmic waste and disharmony which are the facts of our daily lives, conditions which are rapidly pressing us toward the destruction of the human race and of all life support systems on this planet. These conditions have come to exist in part because of our own inattention and confusion, our greed and lack of knowledge; and also in part because of the structure we use for making decisions, the monopoly of resources we have allowed to take place, and the subtle controls over our lives which our true enemies — the State, its corporate commanders, and their institutional handmaidens — have been permitted to extend. The working people and providers of this planet have come to realize that only through revolutionary change in every aspect of our existence can we alter our economic, political, social, ecological and spiritual practices and halt this destruction, thus bringing the world back into natural balance, peace and shared prosperity.

What truly separates the liberals

and most Marxists from anarchists is the secret perception in the minds and hearts of the latter that freedom already exists within. Only persons who have experienced the naturalness and wholesome quality of freedom within themselves can see the preciseness and essential correctness of allowing freedom (and its companion virtues of generosity, compassion, equanimity and magnanimity) to develop and find fulfillment.

To grasp the precise defining element in anarchism we must look to the character of each individual "avowed" anarchist. For the workability of anarchist society or a left libertarian social revolution must always rest with: (1) the self-knowledge and commitment of each person, (2) the mutual respect and open cooperation of the affinity group composed of individual anarchists, (3) the representative structure of group federations, and (4) a special recognition of the social and ecological interdependency we all share. The success of anarchism will depend on how well these stages of process are developed — and finally on the raw human qualities and desires that each of us, only within ourselves, can bring to fruition.

*"When enough people have seen through the swindle of authoritarian systems clearly enough to feel cheated themselves, then it won't matter whether they vote with their hands or their feet. One way or another society will just have to move in an anarchist direction."*

— Bob Green, "Anarchy" June 1962



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But, most of all, it is your ideas and your support in our common struggle we seek.

Lone Wolf Collective —September 1982

(Note: This leaflet does not attempt to be original and is intended for those generally unfamiliar with anarchist writing. If you find it useful as an attempt at outreach please do what editing or rewriting you find necessary, then reproduce it and distribute it on your own. No credit to Lone Wolf is necessary.)

*Dedicated to the memory of Richie Stock (1957-1981).*