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A Call for Democratic Education Pt 1

By M.M.



The current education system has failed to meet the needs of students, teachers, and society as a whole. One reason for this is the direction the education system has headed. That being in the direction of hierarchy, standardization, and the alienation of learning from the student. This is the wrong direction, and it is captained by those who should have no say in the matter. Administrators, politicians, and directors are all people who are not in the classroom and thus are separated from the very environment they are controlling. Education must become democratic. I do not mean the idea of a "representative democracy." That is not a democracy. I mean a directly democratic education.

The current system is built upon outdated and faulty notions of what learning is. The idea that students are buckets to be filled. This has created the problem of what to fill the bucket with, leading education reform to focus on standardization. These standards breed disengagement on the part of the student and hammers out their natural creativity and innate desire to learn. Students only learn to memorize and obey, not to actually internalize the information.

Standardized testing only deepens this value of memorization and obedience. It also tells students, and society at large, that these topics are what is considered intelligence. This is not to say that some students aren't able to survive this environment with good grades, but it is at the cost of their creativity and ability to learn. Many have to struggle needlessly hard, and many more fail and grow to despise learning. This system lacks adaptability, student engagement, and the environment to foster a love of learning. Teachers, as hard as they try, are not in a position to fix this. The system itself is inherently flawed, and the teachers are not in a position to change the system. Education reform is not handled by teachers, but by people completely removed from the classroom.

To counter the current system and address the flaws within it, democratic education provides answers and an alternative. Where the current system builds from hierarchy, democratic education's foundation starts within the classroom. It is based upon values of student-centered education and individualized learning. Giving students a direct voice in their own education and the function of their school. In the same way a

worker should own their own labor, a student should own their own education. This is not to say the teacher is subservient to the student. It is to say that the student and the teacher are equals in the classroom, both working towards a common goal. This requires students to have direct input on aspects of the classroom, such as the syllabus, classroom rules, and how they are to be evaluated. This can also expand outside of just the classroom, but also to the school level. Allowing students a direct say in how the school operates and their curriculum. Students and teachers would work together in free and open discussion to better meet the needs of both. Skeptics might call this utopian, but there are real-world examples we can draw from. Ranging from the anarchist schools of Spain, the Ferrer Movement, the Yasnaya Polyana school of Leo Tolstoy, or the Free School Movement.

To achieve this, it is important to build the system we want within the system of old. It is not enough to simply build the schools we want as alternatives and outside of the system, but to change the system from within through organizing. Students must organize themselves into horizontally

organized student unions. Unions that are built around the ideas and principles of anti-hierarchy, free association, mutual aid, discussion and consensus, and egalitarianism. Students need to organize and work with their teachers as well as other essential staff of their schools in order to create an environment that is reflective of these unions. A school that is designed around these ideas and principles. This should not be limited to just your school but also spread and coordinated with other schools as a large-scale movement. We must demand systemic change, not just superficial concessions. This responsibility is also not left solely in the hands of the students, but all necessary aspects of a school. Teachers, janitors, secretaries, school drivers, librarians, and all roles deemed necessary for a school's function should also organize and work together to achieve this change.

The system as it stands now fails to meet the needs of anyone but the state and the capitalists. It is not a system of education, but of domination and exploitation. It is felt by everyone who works in these schools. This necessitates change, change that must come from the bottom. This is a call for action for

all who are failed and exploited by this system to build a new system around the ideas of democratic education. A system of equality, a love of learning, and freedom. Students, organize yourselves. Talk to your friends and peers and organize your classrooms. Talk to your teachers and include them. Build democratic classrooms and cultivate them in other classrooms. Teachers, talk to your coworkers and your students and build this change together. Administrators and politicians work against your interests because it profits them. Make the school function despite them and without them. Unionize, demand this change, and accept nothing less.

YOU DON'T NEED

COPS, BOSSES OR POLITICIANS



Marion Koshy

Typically, when people are told about anarchism or anarchy in general, they are greeted with images of bombs exploding, unprovoked violence, and scenes from apocalyptic movies and shows. The "strong" reign, and the "weak" are powerless to stop them. The way society is now, but without cops or someone to "protect" people. But this is not what anarchism is about, anarchism is more complex than this simplistic summary.

Anarchism is a unique and flexible social theory that gives you, the individual, the ability to determine your destiny and complete self-determination. Anarchism allows you to fulfill your potential, pursue your goals, and live life without being hindered by structures that obstruct your ability to live freely.

A common argument is that anarchism would give people the power to restrict other people's freedom, but when self-determination is given to everybody, nobody can restrict other people's freedom without consequences. The power to determine your destiny does not mean the power to be free from the consequences of your actions. We have an interest in maintaining anarchism to prevent

people from building structures that would destroy freedom. This can be achieved by actively communicating with each other about our desires, and engaging as a group to bring about and maintain this freedom.

These may be interesting ideas, but very big claims. Naturally, one may have questions on the specifics of anarchism. This pamphlet will aim to illustrate what anarchism is, anarchist critiques of our current society, what anarchists suggest as alternatives, and what anarchism looks like in practice.

What are Anarchists Against?

The title of this zine could be seen as edgy and provocative. However, you would have a much safer, freer, and more enjoyable existence without police, bosses, or politicians. Additionally, you would have a much better life without banks, prisons, and economic systems that force us to compete with each other, and destroy our finite ecosystems for the sake of profit.

Many of these entities are assumed to be "natural" (which is a problematic word itself). People often think that these are elements of our societies that have been

around forever. However, this is untrue. A look at history or any sort of anthropology book would say the opposite. For example, humanity has only been forced into nation-states for the past 200 years or so. Compared to the thousands of years of human history, the nation-state has been only around for a tiny fraction of our existence. These entities have only been created to oppress other people.

These constructs: Capitalism, Money, and the State, are not physical entities, or things that one can see or touch. Rather, they only exist because some people at some point decided that they should exist. While these constructs may not be real, they still affect our actions and relationships to one another. Simply put, our acceptance and support of these constructs cause us to act in a certain way, and ultimately impacts the way we see things and make decisions.

"Food costs money," or "You need to pay rent," or "We need to vote to get what we want", are only truths because we agree and maintain them. Markets, Rent, Private Property, and Money in general are inherently mythological and are as materially real as any

fantasy. We choose to enforce them and make them into reality. These are human inventions that upon further examination can be changed or destroyed. Any power created by humans can be changed by humans.

Therefore, anarchists push for the abolition of these constructs and structures that have such control over our lives. If we didn't need to spend 40 hours or more working to pay rent, food, and other necessities of life, and instead reclaimed that time as our own, we'd have more time towards activities that enrich our lives. The only question is: how do we achieve this freedom?

What do Anarchists suggest?

You may ask then: what do you suggest? What do the anarchists have to say, if they oppose all of these ever-present structures? Before I address this, it is important to note that Anarchism is inherently a flexible and fluid ideology. Because of this, I can't assert to have the only solution for all these things. It would be quite contradictory to proclaim that everyone can determine their destiny while also proclaiming to have the solution to everything.

Anarchism as a framework gives you the freedom to identify what is the biggest injustice in your communities, your personal life, and your relationships, and gives you a set of ideas and practices so that you're able to figure out what works for you. There are no defined leaders, political programs, organizations, or vanguards that claim to know the solutions to our problems. The variety of answers can be overwhelming, but that portrays the flexibility and ultimately, the beauty of anarchism as a framework.

This is why it is flawed to look for leaders, the most perfect ideas, or the most correct definition. It is also erroneous to try to plan for every contingency and try to fully map out how all of this would work. Our future is not determined, and it is ultimately up to us all to build the society that we would like to see.

Beyond just what anarchists don't believe in, there are a range of beliefs that anarchists tend to hold. In short, Anarchists advocate for a society in which people can make informed decisions for themselves without the threat of violence or coercion.

As mentioned earlier, self-determination is a core ideal of anarchism. What we mean by self-determination in an anarchist context is that individuals themselves can determine their futures, and how exactly they wish to achieve their goals. On a more structural scale, this means that everyone can participate and make decisions for themselves. This means that self-determination extends from the individual, rather than a set of rules, societal norms, and rights that can be easily taken away by the state. When all individuals are entrusted with the ability to determine their destinies, then the threat of a centralized body or informal hierarchy to take away their freedoms is destroyed.

However, the only way that this personal freedom could even exist is through some level of interaction with each other, meaning that people have to work together to maintain this freedom. By everyone being able to have self-determination, power is decentralized across all members of this society, meaning that no one person can truly claim to wield political power over other people.

To create this sort of situation in the first place, anarchists usually advocate

building structures that embody anarchist values which not only take care of people's needs but also build the foundations of anarchist society. These structures build the necessary conditions for the anarchist movement to build on itself and thrive. This also serves to create a sense of direction towards what an anarchist society could look like and to establish a link between our current struggles against oppression and a liberatory society. This process is known as prefiguration.

When it comes to economic systems, some anarchists instead propose a form of socialism as a way to address the inherent inequality within capitalism. To some, socialism seems contradictory to the ideals of anarchism. The concept of socialism is commonly portrayed as meaning "big government", but this is false and absurd. Socialism is simply a system where the community at large controls production, distribution, and consumption so that what is produced, distributed, and consumed is in the interests of the community, instead of a few individuals controlling all these things for their self-interest.

The anarchist conception of socialism is also re-organization of the economy to where bosses no longer control production, distribution, and consumption; rather it is in the hands of the community at large. In addition, this means that workers are now free to determine their futures and organize themselves to meet the needs of the community without needing a boss or a bureaucrat to "organize" them. This conception of socialism integrates a critique of hierarchy and centralized governing power so that ultimately, the potential of socialism can be achieved by the individuals that reside in a community.

Anarchists also oppose the state or the government in general. Those who would think anarchism is impossible, or that it is absurd, might reflexively respond that anarchists instead would argue for a society where everyone is free to commit violence against each other. What this fails to consider is that the violence that exists in current society cannot be solved by the police, or the government despite their supposed best efforts.

The oppression and violence against communities that create crime are caused by the police, and the state itself. Rather than tackling the root causes of violence, governments instead meet violence and crime with disproportionate amounts of force that does not solve, nor mitigate crime. Anarchists believe that the state itself perpetuates violence by not addressing the root causes of crime: poverty, and lack of community. Furthermore, the state has no interest in resolving crime because it would put the police out of business, and would get rid of prisons that rely on the exploitation of the labor of prisoners.

To respond to this violence, anarchists believe that when everyone can determine their own futures and make their own decisions, they have an interest in opposing any sort of violence that would destroy this freedom. The creation of communities of care, where the individuals within the community resolve to take care of each other, would mitigate violence, if not put an end to it.

Anarchists generally think that power should be concentrated in the hands of the people, or the masses at large. Individuals

who live in their communities are more in tune with the needs and issues of their community than any politician who claims to represent them.

The ability for people to determine their own futures through economic self-organization and the decentralization of power amongst individuals is integral to anarchism. Without people being able to achieve their freedom in both the economic and political spheres, freedom cannot be achieved. Anarchism sees economic and political self-organization as necessary to achieve a free society.

So does Anarchism only oppose the State and Capitalism?

Anarchism is more than just being against the State or Capitalism. It's a broad framework that advocates for a society in which individuals are empowered to develop themselves as people. To be able to expose themselves to the wonders of this world, and to explore themselves freely spiritually, mentally, and physically. To enjoy the solidarity and companionship of other people without unnecessary division and power

imbalances that put people against other people. To be able to create freely without being concerned about personal profit. It is also a framework that advocates for us to reanalyze the dynamics in our society, to see if they're beneficial for us, or if they are instead limiting us.

Hierarchies such as Capitalism, Patriarchy, Ecocide, Racism, and Queerphobia fundamentally create a situation where someone has "power over" someone else, or something else, and uses that power to limit other people's freedom, or to destroy someone's ability to determine their destiny.

The point of anarchism is essentially to find all these oppressive hierarchies and to uproot them and to instead build new dynamics that are free from oppression.

So how do we Practice Anarchism?

So, if you think that people are better off making their own decisions instead of relying on a government that doesn't care about them, that we should not work menial jobs to survive and afford necessities, and care about actively creating a better world - you might be an anarchist!

If this all sounds great to you, that's wonderful! The best way to be an anarchist is to practice anarchism. What good are beliefs if you cannot act on them? Furthermore, you don't need to wait for permission from a political party or some leader. Consider joining a local collective that aligns with your values, or perhaps start your own anarchist project!

Anarchism in practice looks unconventional when compared to other political ideologies. There are no membership cards, no anarchist political parties to join, and generally anarchists don't run for office. Anarchists usually focus on doing action outside of the political system to build an anarchist society.

This alternative manifests itself as direct action. As the name suggests, anarchists directly act to achieve their objectives without asking for permission from authority. Anarchists achieve their belief in their autonomy by focusing on direct action that addresses the instances of oppression in their communities. Direct action manifests itself by organizing food and clothing drives

for the unhoused, writing to incarcerated prisoners, giving out HRT to trans people in need, and much more. Direct action primarily centers around doing things physically in your communities, to meet a need or to fight against oppression.

Anarchist organizing often consists of encouraging mutual relationships that respects the freedom and needs of one another. This can manifest through a culture of mutual aid, where people assist each other without expectation of repayment. This is also supported by increasing people's ability to organize themselves so that they can make informed decisions without interference by self-proclaimed leaders. This ability to make informed decisions is built by mutually sharing knowledge so that there aren't any tasks that are reliant on a single person to be accomplished. By sharing knowledge, building up mutual relationships, and respecting the boundaries and needs of other people, we build more resilient communities.

We take respect for freedom and mutual support into our organizing on the ground, where no one person is responsible for a certain action. An example of this would be

anarchists organizing a food distribution. They would get more than one person to be responsible for cooking, shopping for items, and distribution of food to the unhoused, as well as people being able to take over certain functions when someone is sick or isn't able to make it. That way, there's no single person who can take advantage of the group's reliance on them and exert power over the group, or a single person whose absence would stop the group from being able to function. Through our actions and building these systems of mutual support, we can bring in more people and therefore increase our ability to do more actions exponentially.

Anarchists also participate in social struggles that currently exist in society. The struggle for freedom is dear to anarchists, so you'll often find anarchists participating in social movements that currently exist. Anarchists use the principles of direct action so that protest movements can have teeth, rather than waiting on politicians to make changes. This often looks like participating in protest movements, engaging in blockades, doing banner drops, and engaging in physical activity so that the demands of movements can be advanced. In social movements, anarchists

also oppose people who use social struggles for clout, or politicians who want to take advantage of movements to boost their electoral campaigns. This is in line with the anarchist ethos of self-determination and anti-hierarchy, to prevent a movement from being just represented by a few select groups of people who then can use the movement energy to further their own goals.

Anarchists also often organize into collectives, organizations, or groups based on affinity to work on projects in their communities that can help build a better society. This can be through specific projects, like the aforementioned food distribution, prisoner solidarity groups, or other projects that are based around mutual aid. Some collectives are created for a specific protest movement so that anarchists can coordinate together and resist attempts by leaders to take over the movement. Another example also includes the creation of anarchist organizations that function as radical communities where anarchists can coordinate and expand on projects to build an anarchist presence.

We wish to build a better society based on these principles to guide our decisions on what we want to do to achieve what we want. Anarchists refer to this as linking our means with our ends. The way that we operate ultimately defines what our society look like. By organizing without leaders, building structures that operate on the consent of everyone involved, and a culture of mutual support and respecting everybody's freedom, we are essentially creating what we want our society to look like. Anarchists don't believe you can end oppression by creating new hierarchies and oppressive forces.

How do Anarchists plan to abolish Systems of Oppression?

Some might be curious about how anarchists exactly plan to abolish systems of oppression and achieve Anarchism. While anarchists differ on exactly how to go about this, a prominent concept that some anarchists espouse is social revolution. To create a better society, the fundamental parts of oppressive systems such as capitalism, the state, white supremacy, and more can't be legislated away. Why would those who benefit

from this system give you the tools to get rid of the system they profit from?

While some might think that revolution is a violent proposition, the anarchist conception of revolution isn't an entirely violent affair. While revolution involves the process of tearing down systems of oppression, revolution also is involved in the creation of communities of care that are necessary for healing divisions that are caused by the current system. Social revolution isn't just a violent catastrophic event where anarchists spontaneously take over the capitol and declare anarchy over the span of a day, or a year.

Rather, anarchists see social revolution as a continual process in which we build the structures here and now, that emulate the society that we want to see. As mentioned earlier, this is where the process of prefiguration comes in. This development of structures help propel our movement towards small-term gains in real-time, and as more and more people come into those structures, the potential of what we can achieve exponentially increases. These small-term gains look like the reclamation of public spaces so that

people can gather without the expectation of paying, creating spaces where people can learn more about anarchist ideas, and tying different struggles together to create a movement that combats all intertwined systems of oppression.

These might be rather lofty goals, but we can start building a better society by building the infrastructure for one today. Working through small-term goals consistently, such as setting up infoshops to spread ideas, mutual aid, and participating in social struggles, anarchists can show that a better world is possible through our actions.

Hopefully, you'll be inspired to learn a bit more about anarchism through this pamphlet! You can read more about anarchism, whether on the internet or through zines like these. Perhaps you'll find a compelling worldview that speaks to you.

Recommended Reading List

Anarchy by Errico Malatesta

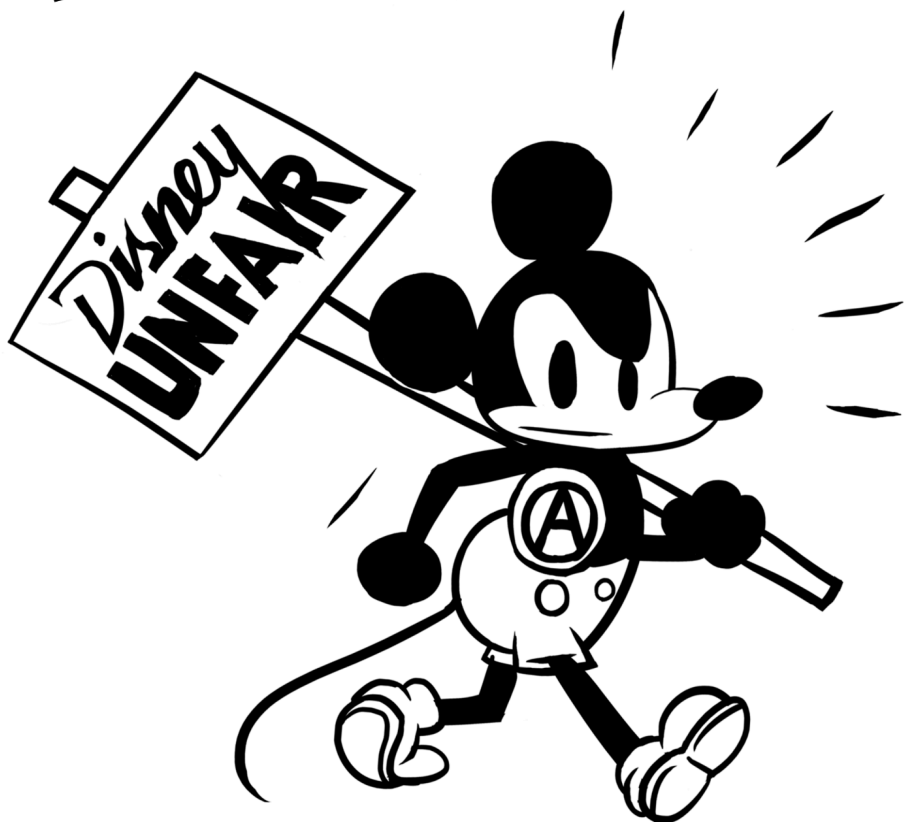
To Change Everything by Crimethinc

Life Without Laws by Strangers in a Tangled Wilderness

BEYOND RESISTANCE
presents
THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

FEATURING

MICKEY MOUSE



by Ridley Temples

Mickey and the Public Domain

So Mickey's old ass versions went into what the cool kids call "public domain" in America recently, meaning anyone can do anything they want with these versions without getting harassed by Disney's lawyers, maybe anyway. Turns out he's really popular, you could even say he's part of popular culture. He's been in movies, tv shows, on your t-shirt, toys, dishes, hats, schoolbags, and an actual costume worn by a monkey in the 1934 movie "Babes in Toyland" starring Laurel and Hardy.

Now I know what you may be thinking: "So he's in the public domain, who cares?". Well, this has been an issue that can be traced back to copyright's inception. Copyright was conceived out of the early privileges and monopolies of fifteenth-century Europe and eighteenth-century British stationers who wanted to maintain their censorship over the newly emerged printing press. Because of this, copyright should be abolished to prevent art from getting monopolized by large companies that severely limit artistic innovation and creativity.

Copyright wasn't made to protect artists.

Back when copyright was first made, it was during the time when the printing press was recently invented. The problem it created was that it easily spread ideas such as science that challenged religion and the state. So in response the state suppressed and censored topics with a new stationers company who would regulate what could and couldn't be published. Over time these regulations would slowly loosen. This led to the stationers, along with the church, missing it. These stationers would go to the state to lobby to bring them back but reworded it so the authors themselves would "own" their work and have them be "protected"[1]. This would lead to authors essentially giving that "ownership" back to the stationers so that they censor again. Even in the beginning copyright was made from censorship and abuse from the upper classes.

Next, let's look at the time Disney rejected a man wanting to put Spider-Man on his son's grave. The child named Ollie Jones died at the age of four due to leukodystrophy. Spider-Man meant everything to him so his dad

Lloyd Jones asked the council for permission to add Spider-Man on his grave as a reminder. However, Disney rejected this because they wanted to keep the “innocence” and “magic” around its characters, a policy made by Walt himself[2]. Lloyd wasn't trying to “steal” or “plagiarise” Spider-Man and take money away from Disney, he just wanted to honour his son. Plus having characters lose “innocence” and “magic” is only really a concern for the company more than any artist. I wonder how the creators of Spider-Man, Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, and all the artists who worked on him would've thought about this.

Copyright does not protect artists. No amount of copyright law will properly protect artists from getting screwed over from competing artists or large companies. It does however serve as an excuse for large companies to have an army of lawyers charge at anyone who dares infringe on their copyright. Even if small artists were to successfully sue anyone for infringing on their copyright, they would probably walk away bankrupt. It's just not feasible for any small artist to actually use copyright to protect their art.

Speaking of companies and bosses, let's get anarchist and ask if art should be turned into marketable products and be treated like property to begin with. For capitalism to work we must have products made in the most efficient and cheapest way possible while bringing in a profit for the already rich bosses. This gets in the way of artistic creation as what artists want to do is entirely different to what capitalism demands of them. Usually this means creating half baked messes as long as people buy it and the artist gets barely paid enough to scrape by in life. Property including intellectual property is owned by big corporations to monopolise resources away from the public. We as anarchists wish to get rid of both the capitalist mode of production and property, so the same is true for copyright and only then will both artists and society in general have artistic and creative freedom.

At the end of the day art is built on the foundation of copying. When we as a human species first started to make art we copied what we saw in real life and then people copied those artists before them, then again with new artists and so on and so forth. Renowned artists before copyright even existed

like Ludwig van Beethoven and William Shakespeare copied other artists of their time like Joseph Haydn and Thomas Kyd. Hip hop was founded on sampling. Disney movies were built on the legacy of public domain works like Snow White, Pinocchio, Fantasia, Alice in Wonderland, etc. To act like artists shouldn't copy each other is to not see the whole picture.

How do we solve copyright?

First thing we can do is utilize what we legally already do have, which is the public domain and creative commons. When it comes to the public domain there's an absolute goldmine of characters and stories that are created by wonderful artists that are just begging to be used. Artists can still get paid in the meantime by letting others' copy which is essentially free advertising, and have a creative common licence indicating you're the original creator which people can support. There are also commissions which no amount of copying or plagiarising can ever replace. Piracy is a good way of accessing works otherwise locked behind a paywall. If we fear plagiarism we can always ask people to credit

their inspirations similar to how academics have to cite their sources.

When people talk about copyright they usually want copyright to be reformed to shorter terms but to never abolish it. This is fine but I do not live for reform. For anarchists it's never enough to polish bad systems and call it at that. Copyright is just fundamentally mistaken in both its assumptions and practice. So just keeping it in any amount is not useful for artists except for the corporations that exploit them. The only thing left to do is to abolish it for good and only then will we see the full potential of what artists can do.

Going back to Mickey.

Mickey entering the public domain in the US is a huge win for artists and the world as a whole. Disney had such a monopoly on him and tried to keep him as much as possible but alas. There's so much potential in the character and his world that is yet to be tapped into and I'm here for it. No amount of bad horror movies or game adaptations will convince me otherwise. Here's hoping we put an end to this abuse of the copyright system,

with it being completely abolished to prevent art from getting monopolised by large companies and artists will be allowed to truly be allowed to be creative again.

Citations

1. Bently L, Deazley R, Kretschmer M. Privilege and property: essays on the history of copyright. Open Book Publishers; 2010. pp. 77-79, 81-4

2. Menendez, E. (2019, Nov 15). Disney bans grieving father from having Spider-Man on son's grave. Metro.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/07/05/disney-bans-grieving-father-spider-man-sons-grave-10118348/>

The standard narrative of capitalism is that the wealthy elite have earned their station because they are able to suss out the best strategies for maximizing profit gains and cushioning losses. More explicitly stated, the roles of C-level executives are essentially to act as department heads and answer to the CEO who (depending on the company) then answers to the board of directors, who ultimately answer to a gaggle of affluent gamblers and privileged pensioners otherwise known as investors. Ostensibly, C-level executives are supposed to act as glorious leaders of their departments, showing a cunning and shrewd business sense. In reality, it's just a bunch of bookkeeping and decisions they realistically know little about. Business-speak is a strange language of pageantry and theatrics, where such boring and debatably useful positions of esteem are praised like feudal lords or petty kings. Really anyone can do these jobs and getting one is not unlike the kind of mediæval politicking I joke about.

What's funny to me then, is how these princelings in bullshit jobs are the ones ultimately responsible for the appearance of AI in the media and the threat of

incorporating it into automation. Neural networks capable of carrying out learning algorithms are already capable of doing fast and advanced mathematics for tasks like accounting, forecasting, and creative arts. Although the ability of networks to do these tasks is presently limited, executives are continually seeking to improve that ability. We were promised a world where the robots would take over the drudgery and free up the humans to lead fulfilling lives of leisure, and yet it's the robots that are being charged with both. What of the surplus labor that comes as a result? Without jobs and income now that machines have replaced them, how are the masses supposed to fuel the bourgeois economies and systems of power? We can't buy their goods, we can't pay their taxes, and our debts become essentially meaningless. The leaps and bounds with which Artificial Intelligence is growing and realizing the potential to replace the rank and file thus threatens the very foundation and operation of the capitalist consumer system while serving the bourgeois fetish for profit accumulation. Even a responsive manufacturing of bullshit jobs and make-work systems to maintain a working/consumer class would either fall prey to the desire for profit, or lead to a

strategic stagnation that would ultimately undermine the system.

Neural network programs (the ones being used for these tasks) work by taking a digital brain and plopping it in front of a pile of data and situations called a training set, and teaching it to make sense of it all. Kind of like operant conditioning for all you psych nerds. With that in mind, all that is really needed for a bureaucratic or bullshit job to be automated is the right neural network structure and training set(s), some of which are already being developed using actual worker data¹. Let's flip the script then, why are we who create the value and generate the profits so expendable that we should be the first on the chopping block, rather than the executives? The rank-and-file do some of the most nuanced and skill intensive work and face maximum risk of automation, while the top brass do very simple busy work with minimal risk. Their logic dictates c-level execs should be first on the chopping block for automation, but they aren't. This illustrates that the rhetoric of those execs is hypocritical! The prevailing narrative held as

¹ <https://www.wired.com/story/corporate-surveillance-train-ai/>

almost religious doctrine by our society is illogical! so there's no reason for us to use their logic!

Let's review what executive officers do in exchange for their massive social control. A member of the executive board in a corporation acts as the Duke of a departmental fiefdom. They all answer to the King (their CEO) but within their department (operations, HR, IT, etc.) they have supreme authority. Their role in that position is to execute the business plan laid out in the board meetings and by the CEO, maintain the records and information about the goings on in their department, and give orders down the chain of command. Really, what they are is just a manager of managers of managers of actual employees. They exist to act as a caste of dictators to those below performing the drudgery. The only reason they make any meaningful decisions at all is a consequence of titles and not really of qualifications. In reality, anyone could do these jobs and it makes more sense for the AI to fill that role because they can do them faster, more logically, and use vast amounts of info from their training sets. Some examples of this automation are already being tested:

- Accounting and data analysis: AI can totally do this, it's a large part of why the field of Comp Sci exists at all. In fact, it's already being done by neural nets in large part for things like marketing and consumer facing functions. You know how sometimes you'll get an ad for something you were just discussing with someone in like the car or something? AI figured it out. No wiretaps, just math and location data. Business planning and decision making: With the right training set and neural net infrastructure, an AI can be trained to analyze market conditions, assess options, and ultimately make business decisions on par with Steve Jobs or Walt Disney. In fact, Walt and Steve would likely be in that training set in some manner.
- Management: AI can easily interface with other AI units that have replaced human proletarians to manage and document work, while also monitoring and delegating tasks with the remaining human workforce. Management is largely monitoring, meetings, and make-work, all of which can be automated away.

Of course, these AI models are still being tested and trained, but even if they aren't currently being deployed to this extent, there's no reason they can't be promoted in the near future. We could have a sophisticated enough neural net to do these tasks to the exact criteria required. 10-15 years before now, such technology that companies take complete advantage of today for tracking consumer trends and marketing were rudimentary. So too might current models appear to people of the equidistant future! Cutting the human element from the C-suite would save companies entire mountains of capital that would've been paid to executives, reducing overhead simply to server space and utility bills. Since this strategy would streamline the business, multiply profits and value, and free up capital to be funneled back into growing the company, then by the logic of capitalism as it's taught to us this is a very plausible and desirable future that would improve our society. Yet, this isn't an option being discussed in tech circles. This is because the realities of capitalism and class interests conflict with the logic used to justify its actions and dominance to the masses. While there are grains of truth to the aim of accumulating capital and profit, of

constant expansion and consumption, the interests of the business class in automation and accumulating wealth is for the sake of asserting power and keeping their place atop the social hierarchy.

Corporate executives can expect yearly incomes that exceed human comprehension and a single individual's ability to fully spend in a lifetime, nevermind a year. After achieving and maintaining a cushy standard of living for oneself and relations, what more cause is there to persist in expanding that income? No one needs a yacht within a yacht! They push the envelope for no other reason than expanding their power over others, and raising their position in the socioeconomic hierarchy.

There is one function of the C-levels and bureaucrats that AI can't replace: the figurehead. The truth of the matter is that the only meaningful functions they serve in the capitalist and hegemonic structure of the world is to provide a human face to the corporate body and act as a symbol of authority to maintain the illusions of capitalist realism. They sell themselves as geniuses and essential components because that's how they fool people into believing

that productivity is impossible without hierarchy or a cult of professionalism. Without a character like ~~Lex Luther~~ Jeff Bezos, it might be harder to sell the idea that people can build a behemoth company from a garage. Even through capitalist realism, he provides a useful function as a name behind the amazon logo for people to direct their hate into and dissociate in part from the actual business, greasing the wheels and making anticapitalists slightly less apprehensive about buying from them. Elon Musk as well acts as a lightning rod of class antagonism as the CEO of successful companies despite being a very public moron.

Even those detestable creatures that crowd the stock exchanges need a human CEO for this figurehead job, assuming they themselves haven't also been replaced by neural networks. The human qualities of a company's avatar allow investors to almost play poker with the market and other people's money. "Does this statement from Bob Iger give hints that Disney is staying afloat?" "Does it seem like he's not telling the whole story?" "Maybe he's hinting at a new show on Disney+?" Such a statement or interview with Artificial Iger might be too clinical or forthcoming to really

sway investors, and a world full of them might lead to a stagnation of capital flow, investment activity, and business creation. A bubble of uncertainty or even over certainty that could threaten a fundamental crisis of financial capitalism. Yet again we see their own logic preserving their system.

It's at this point that the logic of capitalism as a benevolent force and perfect system either bends or breaks. Either they accept this conclusion of their own propaganda and version of reality, thus admitting that they've been lying to the world and that capitalism sucks, or (more likely) change the rules yet again and gaslight us with newer propaganda to maintain class hegemony. Either all animals are equal and can be replaced by market demands, or some animals are more equal than others and are allowed to shirk the economic laws that they demand the rest of us abide by.

History has shown us that the latter is the world we live in. The logical and ethical solution to this dilemma of automation reducing the consumer class would be to institute systems of universal basic income (UBI) and to limit the extent of automation to

maintain a middle class. Reformists and impotent academics will cite Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a potential solution to these contradictions, however the political climates and economic realities of the world will stop at nothing to arrest its realization. The state that would be charged with means-testing applicants, measuring allotments, and meting out payments is itself designed by those who benefit from exploiting a struggling working class. Were it so simple, currently existing social safety nets would be sufficient and yet countless in need fall through the cracks. There would be no need to seize the state for ourselves. The solutions will not come from above. They must be designed from below to abolish the state apparatus that perpetuates social hierarchy and enforces its disparity. The ruling class could allow UBI policies but press onward with AI roll outs. A consumer base could scrape by with each generation struggling to raise the income rates as rents and costs inevitably rise, much like we've seen this past decade with campaigns for a \$15 minimum wage that have already been eclipsed by living costs. The rate of profit would see some depressed effects from taxation and lowered sales each quarter, but profitability would still be enormous. The next potentiality

is a grim dark future of destitution. In this scenario, the capitalist class presses onward with full automation to maximize profit and without considering the long-term effects of their actions.

Corporations are terrible at long-term forecasting and strategizing. They prefer to boost profits and minimize costs now and to make their earnings reports look incredible than to be more methodical and operate sustainably. Those in power, who's forebears designed the state that so many seek to use for salvation, are draining the world and will leave behind a barren husk after their exploitation of nature and worker leaves less and less behind to sustain ecosystems and communities. They would sooner liquidate the current proletariat consumer base and create a new consumer class from their own population, than allow their power to be threatened or abolished. With the state to impede systemic change, they protect themselves culturally and physically by clamping down on the vocal and fomenting growth of ethnonationalism, authoritarianism. They ramp up the policing powers of the state exponentially to contain a derelict mass of former workers committing

both crimes of desperation and campaigns of class warfare.

These powers of hierarchy and privilege are themselves causes and must be abolished. Seizing policing power and the halls of the state will not eliminate the degrees of separation that authoritative hierarchies and influence create between the working masses and “the people’s” party. The only feasible solution is to dismantle the systems of exploitation and enforcement of exploitation, abolish the power structures that divide us and allow abusers to form cliques and new ruling cadres, and expropriate the wealth usurped by the ruling elites who never toiled for it. We must build a new world based on horizontality instead of verticality, solidarity instead of selfishness, equality for all instead of division and strife.

Unless we eliminate capital and state, we have 3 potential futures: Cyclical neoliberal decay and strife where we are damned to repeat the same dances and struggles with each generation, Cyberpunk’s grunge and permanent underclass, or outright slavery and police-state a la Half-Life 2. This is the world neoliberalism is building now and has

been building for us since the 1970s. Like Strigoi, the capitalists and their accomplices in the state siphon every bit of life and wealth from both the working class and our planet.

We can choose to accept this future they've pressed upon us, or we can create a new world, one that respects human dignity. One that embraces the kaleidoscopic variety of life, and cultivates a garden world. A new world that brings freedom, prosperity, and autonomy to all who walk under the sun!

The dilemma we face is anarchism or collapse. Which will you choose?

Sun Tzu Under the Black Flag Part I

By E. M. Spartacus



Throughout human history and especially the modern age, there has been no shortage of revolutionary ideologies to change the zeitgeist. Some which caused waves across vast regions or even the entire earth like Leninism, Liberalism, various forms of Arab Socialism, African Socialism, and Fascism. Others within certain countries like Khomeinism, Labor Zionism, Pancasila, Fenianism, Tridemism, or the various ideologies that popped up in Revolutionary Mexico. One thing that unites these ideologies is that they seek to establish some form of revolutionary state. This process always becomes, whether intentional or not, a war. Sun Tzu mentions the importance of war in statecraft in *The Art of War* when he writes "The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life or death, a road either to safety or to ruin." Anarchism is the revolutionary ideology that stands out. We as Anarchists are the stateless revolutionary ideology. As we are not seizing state power, our revolution does not involve war per se, yet this does not mean that Sun Tzu is useless for us. On the contrary, we can obviously learn the tactics of our enemies, the state, as all military academies require the reading of Sun Tzu's seminal text, but also to form

tactics of our own, to revise and analyze his work for our purposes. This will be done chapter by chapter, released in multiple issues. We will begin with chapter one.

Chapter One is all about Initial estimates., Sun Tzu says, "The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life or death, a road either to safety or to ruin. It must be thoroughly pondered and analyzed." We already went over this in the introduction, but I will expand on it. When we wage revolution, it is the single most important thing our movement does, so we need to have it down to a tee.

Sun Tzu continues, "Therefore, structure it according to five factors, evaluate it comparatively through estimations, and seek out its true nature. The first is termed the way, the second Heaven, the third Earth, the fourth generals, and the fifth the military laws. The Way causes the people to be fully in accord with the ruler. Thus, they will die with him; they will live with him and not fear danger." The Way would be our ideology. We cannot be fighting for a better world without fully believing in our cause, this is why defeatism or opportunism are the death knell

of any anarchist movement for as soon as we do not believe in what we are fighting for our movement risks being destroyed as we give up easily. In addition, this also means that we must understand our ideology activism is important obviously, no genuine Anarchist would deny this, yet theory is important, we must read all of our relevant theorists, and strive to create theory of our own., How are we supposed to be willing to fight and even die for something if we do not know what it is?

Sun Tzu says furthermore “Heaven encompasses yin and yang, cold and heat, and the constraints of the seasons.” Heaven would mean that we as anarchists would have to be flexible. Our world is ever changing. We need to adapt to pop culture and current issues, as well as different worlds being a global movement. Few people would care if we started out by telling them the points that Bakunin, Kropotkin, Goldman, or Malatesta said in the original way they said them. They want these points that interest them, we need to make as many analogies as we can.

Once again, he writes “Earth encompasses far or near, difficult, or easy, expansive and

confined, fatal, or tenable terrain.” Earth would be the physical environments we would need to operate in. Anarchism thrives in urban centers and that is great, but we need to expand our ideology to the countryside, the jungle, the desert, mountains, and all other physical environments as everyone is impacted by their environment. To appeal to working people across the world.

Sun Tzu again writes “The general encompasses wisdom, benevolence, courage, and strictness.” As for generals, obviously we are neither an army nor do we have authorities. So, substitute in this one for our behavior. We are better than the state, we must act like it. As anarchists we must avoid at all costs committing atrocities. Only commit violence, when necessary, avoid rape, murder, torture, and all the other ugly things that statist armies commit.

Sun Tzu writes “Military laws encompass organization and regulations, the way of command, and the management of logistics. There are no generals who have not heard of these five. Those who understand them will be victorious; those who do not understand them will not be victorious.” The final factor is

military laws which we lack in an official manner, as we are not a military. Yet it is important for us to come to a consensus on our strategy, on our methods, and our plans. The other message we learn in this chapter is as follows: We have the disadvantage in power, but if we play our cards right, we can prevail. We can inspire their men to join our cause, we can make them underestimate us by appearing on the brink of collapse, we can deceive them into making every mistake in the book, making them a mere paper tiger.

Continued in Part II.

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