

Fundamentals of Anarchism:

What Is Equality?

Bread and Leisure

Work is an act of love and creativity, but Capitalism and Plutocracy have turned it into toil and wage slavery. In the mid-1800s Michael Bakunin told us the measure of our emancipation (and humanization) from endless toil for survival would be Bread and Leisure: (1) A society which provides for our “Daily Bread” (our daily needs as Humans) and (2) A society where all have time for leisure at the end of their workday (where leisure is not monopolized by the ruling classes; the “*leisure class*”). 4/5 (or more) of the value of what each worker produces through their labor is now stolen by capitalists (stock-owners), bosses, banks, landlords, and governments. Without Capitalism and the State, we would all receive more compensation for our work, but not have to work as many hours to earn it. **Equality means the measure of humanity for all people, is the humanity or well-being of each individual. (Bakunin)**

Equal Education

Equality means that “everyone should have the moral and material means to develop their humanity.” (Bakunin)

All work requires intellectual and physical skills and labor. A system with brain work reserved for the upper classes and toil for working people is irrational. Technology is omnipresent in production, engineering, and bureaucracy (information, logistics, *etc.*). Different people will have different aptitudes regardless of ethnicity, gender, or social class. So, we need **EQUAL EDUCATION** for all people, and it must be an “integral education” which teaches us a variety of job skills. Francisco Ferrer (Anarchist founder of the “Free School” movement) taught that education should be based on the ideas of the Enlightenment: (1) Science(s), (2) Practical Experience/Applications, and (3) Reason (not, superstition or tradition). Public schools, student meals, school clothes, textbooks, and teaching supplies, should be free to students and paid for by contributions from all workplaces.

Capitalism gives better education to the middle and upper classes and dis-invests Working Class education. As Anarchists we need to fight this with self-education, skill-sharing, and mutual aid. Along with equal education, we need, we need to give early job opportunities to everyone (including paid apprenticeships/internships). Part of the Class War is that workers help each other when the system tries to obstruct, control, or exploit them. We refuse to “know our place.” We fight back!

Respect

We, the exploited, must shun the exploitation and corruption of those who want to dominate us and disrespect us. **Equality means that all working people are entitled to respect and exploiters deserve our contempt and resistance.** This means we must cooperate rather than competing with each other. We must respect each other and work together to eliminate inequity, bigotry, and institutional discrimination/defamation based on ethnicity, gender, and sexuality from our culture (and, from the dominant culture). With each generation, these ideas should fade away. We begin with self-awareness, consciousness, and familiarity with each other that develops into mutual trust. The politics of social division (by skin color, gender, culture, *etc.*) are a trick used by our exploiters

to con us into competing with each other. Cooperation is a step towards organization and concerted direct action to win our freedom and equality back from those who stole or would steal them. Mutual trust builds solidarity and mutual aid.

Against “Colonialism”

Capitalism was founded on “colonial” exploitation: In nations overseas **and** in our own Working Class communities (especially, immigrant communities and communities of color). Equality is the opposite of “Big Brother” and the surveillance society. **We must take back the power that we have allowed the Rich to exercise over our lives:** Political machines in Working Class communities rule like Third World oligarchies and dictatorships with the cops repressing dissent and freedom (and corrupted by power) like an occupying army. Community residents get poorer quality schools, health care and utility (water, electric, sanitation) services than in wealthier communities. Community residents are exploited by absentee landlords/slumlords who don’t reinvest their rent in the community. They are “redlined” (discriminated against in banks, insurance, and grocery/retail store services). They are also exploited by organized crime (capitalism in the underground economy). Military recruiters target working class youths for military cannon fodder and more effort is made to put youth in jail than to get them a job and/or college education.

We are opposed to gentrification, redevelopment, eminent domain and any other legal trickery used to steal our communities and give them over to rich profiteers and speculators. Our communities should be refurbished for the benefit of their *current residents*, not yuppie colonists. **We advocate “building the new society within the shell of the old.”** We don’t have to wait for a Social Revolution to begin taking back our communities from those who exploit us. Working Class communities have already built their own financial institutions, community centers, and free clinics. They demanded citizen review and accountability from the cops, political machines and public services/utilities. They have organized neighborhood rebuilding, employment, and mutual aid projects. We can build these things through “self-gestation” (Do-It-Yourself creativity), cooperation (pooling resources), and direct action, rather than soliciting those who want to exploit us.

Leveling

Equality requires that we eliminate the Class System. This requires abolition of Capitalism and the State [military, police and bureaucracy; –Bakunin], and: (1) Equitable remuneration for brain work and manual work (based on hours worked or an equal share of the labor cost of the workplace), (2) The abolition of inheritance of *family wealth* (abolition of patrimony), and (3) Community control and worker self-management of the workplace and community.

“The Socialist is distinguished from the bourgeois by Justice, since he demands for himself nothing but the real fruit of his own labor.” (Bakunin)

Each person should be entitled to all that they can earn in a single lifetime. This does not mean an *equality of outcome* when we die. All people are entitled to choose their appropriate mix of work and leisure (and family). We don’t have the same aptitudes and appetites, dreams and choices, hopes and windfalls, *etc.* But there is room for freedom, equality and well-being (happiness) for everyone, if we want it.

After capitalism, national financial institutions will be expropriated and decentralized to serve each community. After death, *family wealth* will be used to bury the dead, educate/employ poor people and provide mutual aid for orphans, handicapped persons, and persons with special medical needs.