

Anarchism



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Anarchism: The belief that government and private property should be abolished. Also the concept that people should be allowed to live in free associations, sharing work and its products.

Anarchism is essentially an ideology that rejects authority, recognizing it as vehicle that deprives citizens of liberty. Since governments are often associated with authority, it is a common assumption that anarchy implies chaos and absence of government. However, this is not necessarily true.

Anarchism will permit government, providing that it serves the people satisfying individual liberty. The moment a government endeavors to restrict liberty and implement command, is the moment it is no longer desired. The concept stresses that free associations are imperative and it also recognizes that the nature of man is innately good. Too believe otherwise would compromise the safety of individuals. Anarchists rationalize in today's society that people who commit crimes, do so as a product of authority. Had they lived in an anarchist community, irrational behavior would not be present because all people are good and equal.

The philosophy of Anarchism has theoretical roots in two English philosophers: Gerrard Winstanley and William Godwin. Winstanley was a 17th-century agrarian reformer who believed that land should be divided among all the people. Godwin, on the other hand argued that authority is unnatural and that social evils arise and exist because people are not free to live their lives according to the dictates of reason. However, it was not until Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who coined the term anarchism defining its political foundations. He argued for the abolition of private property and the control of the means of production by the workers. Instead of government Proudhon desired a federal system of agricultural and industrial associations.

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Proudhon's theories attracted many followers, among them the Russians Mikhail Bakunin, Peter Kropotkin, and Emma Goldman; the Italian Enrico Malatesta; the Frenchman Georges Sorel; and the American Paul Goodman. These individuals all elaborated theories of anarchism based on Proudhon's work

At the time of its introduction in the 19th century, Anarchism was radically different from any other political ism. It's political strategies and principle ideologies were inconsistent from any other present at that time. However, its presence was very influential throughout Europe and Russia. It played a decisive role during the Russian revolution. Anarchism also bore greatly affected the industrial revolution and the Spanish civil war.

After World War II Anarchism lost the majority of its appeal but at present it still retains a following. One such leader of this following is a political theorist named Noam Chomsky. A professor at MIT, Noam has written several papers on Anarchism. The implementation of Anarchism is however rarely practised. One example could be considered a set of communes established in Israel called a Kibbutz. Here, equality governs, and liberty is the mandate of the organisation. Things are shared here and authority is rejected as a governing force.

Anarchism, like any major ism, is a utopian ideology. One, which could never be achieved, but can be attempted. It stresses a society where people are equal and suppression bears no relevance. The goodness of humankind is emphasised in this philosophy and the theory tries to acknowledge man for what he truly is: responsible. Anarchism has helped to influence the Russian and Industrial revolution providing a theoretical model that people could

actually strive to achieve. In other words, Anarchism is something to believe in, a perfect society for a perfect world.

More information on Anarchism can be found in these sources:

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