

# Can Anarchy Work?

A round, black, grapefruit-sized bomb, its fuse sputtering, hurled through the air by a bearded, scruffy-looking man wearing a beret and a bandana: this is the image popularly associated with the term "anarchy". Even in the minds of the more sophisticated, anarchy conjures a scene of chaos and banditry. "Anarchy" is as misused and misunderstood as "capitalism". In spite of the fact that both concepts are absolutely central to the existence of a libertarian society, there is an apologetic ideological tiptoeing about both "anarchy" and "capitalism" in the movement. After all is said and done, however, anarcho-capitalism represents the essence of the political-economic system which is in keeping with "libertarian" metaphysics, epistemology and ethics. Nothing else will quite do, not minarchy, not "democracy" or any other of the various forms of statism. The reticence to accept the logical imperative of anarcho-capitalism stems mainly from the psycho-epistemological hangover which many libertarians still carry from the dying culture of altruist-collectivism.

Although the reticence about anarchy is analogous to that about capitalism, it is an affliction of two different groups within the movement. Those who readily use the word anarchy are for instance often tepid about the word capitalism. They substitute the term "free market" for the more classic "laissez-faire capitalism". Free market is a good term but capitalism is superior. Those employing "free market" consider capitalism a "loaded" term conjuring exploitation and greed. "After all", they will say, "why use capitalism, a concept so perfidiously exploited by Karl Marx and his progeny to connote all that is wrong with the world?"

As a result of this tendency, not a word about capitalism is mentioned in the 1976 platform of the Libertarian Party. Nary a mention is made of anarchy. An uninitiated outsider reading the platform might well conclude that the libertarian movement is an alliance of militant capitalists and equally militant anarchists willing to overlook each other's "faults". Having become a knowledgeable "insider" he would perceive a "capitalist" wing and an "anarchist" wing - the former strongly suspecting the latter of being depraved, anti-legal and even dupes (!) of the left, with the latter constantly suspicious of the legalist, minarchist, militarist tendencies of the former.

The dualism becomes extremely complicated by the fact that the capitalists tend to be anarchists at the emotional level, whereas the anarchists tend to be extreme capitalists in economic-affairs. The capitalists avoid admitting to anarchy by fastening their attention on voluntarism and rights. Rights for them can only exist under the rule of law. It is their fervent belief that unless government be given a monopoly of jurisdiction and at least a preponderance of police force, life would devolve to a constant conflict of rival gangs. Life and property rights must be enforced and codified in a form generally understood and respected. Vesting the institution of government with apriori authority to employ force and with power to subpoena is not an infringement on rights to the minarchists but an epistemologically absolute requirement for liberty. To them anarchy does not represent the zenith of consistent voluntarism but an invitation to license.

The anarchist in turn views the capitalist-minarchist position as an obvious inconsistency with the absolute right of the individual to engage in any enterprise as long as there is no resort to the initiation of force and fraud. The

condition of blanket jurisdiction associated with the minarchist position is anathema to the anarchist. It is nothing more to him than an assumption of authority and control over life and property without the consent of the owner. The fact that it is limited only to the military, police and judicial functions, and is supported by voluntary fees, is better but not good enough for the anarchist. In fact, he does not object to these functions per se but to the constitutional monopoly imposed on one or all of these. The anarchist resents, and with good cause, the fact that a threat of violence exists against carrying out a category of nominally peaceful activity. Establishing a court or military in competition with the State would defy the constituted minarchist monopoly. After all, free competition between defense agencies, courts and police forces would be anarchy; anything less is not.

Aside from this central issue, many peripheral and indirectly associated differences exist between the capitalist and anarchist "wings". There is the ideological conflict over military defense and foreign intervention. Although both minarchist and anarchist agree on the desirability of a purely defensive military and non-interventionist foreign "policy", the obvious mounting threat of communist aggression and despotism has been an unresolvable problem for the libertarian ideologue. It is here that leading intellectuals in the anarchist wing have made their most questionable assertions.

Murray N. Rothbard, the leading theoretician of anarcho-capitalism, has consistently underplayed the Soviet military menace to the remaining bastions of semi-freedom. His case centers on the idea that the Soviet Union, and in fact all communist states, are generically incapable of successful military conquest of western-style liberal democracies. There is the tendency to attribute communist successes as the result not of a generic superiority of communist strategy and tactics but of a susceptibility created by the prior intervention of western governments.

For example, the fascist colonial regime in Portuguese Angola and Mozambique not only engendered the development of marxist revolutionary movements but created the statist apparatus and military-bureaucratic cadre facilitating a shift to the institutionally similar form of communist statism. Rothbard points to Portugal and Chile as other examples of alternating statism. The covert American reinvolvement with UNITA and the FNLA are seen as having exacerbated what was basically a tribal war growing out of a national liberation movement into a pretext for great-power intervention. In Rothbard's view U.S. involvement forced the hand of the MPLA into relying on Soviet-Cuban aid.

Without discounting the enormous blunders of U.S. foreign policy and military intervention, which go back to the Spanish-American war and must include this country's involvement in the First and Second World Wars, there is a crucial difference between the muddled, sporadic and indecisive approach of the United States and the single-minded ruthless conquest-power machinations of the Soviet State. Rothbard's approach to geopolitics dismisses the Soviet intent of world conquest. His scholarship, as appears to be the universal case with other anarchist authors, does not extend to military science. The scope of his naivety on military affairs has led him to assert the impossibility of conquering a population living in anarchy. The lack of political organization would require a house-by-house, person-by-person conquest. Doubtlessly, such a situation would momentarily arrest the bloodstained automaton con-

querors of Eurasia.

It is fascinating, were it not so tragic, to observe this blind spot in otherwise brilliant writers such as Rothbard and Harry Browne blithely dismissing the greatest objective threat to human freedom of all time. In the nineteenth century, utopians asserted socialism would turn the sea into lemonade; now twentieth century anarchists would have us believe the Red Army dissipated by perplexity.

Perhaps this comparison is unfair. After all, the anarchist could defend Rothbard's position by asserting it wouldn't be worth it for the despot. The cost of occupying and collecting taxes would be too great and reap a net loss. An anarchist society would present no military threat, thus would not incite armed conquest and besides, the troops might go home with dangerous ideas. Freedom is infectious. Militarily, the occupying troops would be at a sharp disadvantage logistically and in terms of morale. Those fighting for their homes on their own ground would eventually wear down the occupying force. All these are standard anarchist arguments.

These are all good arguments in a situation where the imperial power is threatened by other great powers and/or the rebelling resistance can get support from outside. In such a situation the resistance to occupation and enslavement has a chance of strategically out-flanking the imperial power by linking up with its enemies or by exploiting political weaknesses within its home base.

The Soviet occupation of the United States would be last - after the destruction and genocide of China and the conquest of Europe. The United States or the "Anarchist Society of North America" would be completely surrounded by client states of the Soviet Empire. This would mean total economic isolation for the U.S. Long before this stage, the U.S. economy would have suffered shortages of raw materials of all kinds as the Soviet embargo forced our industries into ruin.

Even an anarchistic and militarily impotent and economically devastated U.S. would still constitute a threat to Soviet power. The existence of a large free society within a recently assembled Soviet world empire would portend an endless source of future instability. Just in terms of communicating ideas by radio and television, and providing safe haven for refugee groups from all over the world, many of which would contain revolutionary plotters to liberate their Soviet-dominated homelands, the U.S. would constitute an enormous threat. But if this were not enough, the potential of a free economy for producing advanced technology and thus sophisticated weaponry would move the Soviets to eradicate this last spawning ground for freedom. There would be every reason for a "rational" Soviet despot to bring the U.S. under control.

Given the Rothbard-Browne thesis of decentralism, how could the takeover of the U.S. be accomplished? It must first be remembered that the main motivation for a Soviet occupation of the U.S. would be to safeguard consolidation of its world conquest. There would be no hesitation in employing brutal methods.

The first stage of the conquest would involve landing troops in several major

cities. Water supplies and power generation points, communications and transportation centers, could be occupied with a minimum number of troops. The second stage would advance control to food storage areas (stockyards and grainaries) large industrial plants (not all plants, just the metallurgical and heavy engineering sectors). Soviet engineers and managerial staff would supervise the existing owners and staff of industrial plants. All resistors would be shot, along with their families and known friends. All collaborators would be appointed to supervisory posts and materially rewarded. Specially trained english-speaking Soviet administrative-tax personnel would be let loose to "farm" the populace. They would be permitted (in the beginning) to keep the lion's share of taxes collected as an incentive as well as benefitting from Soviet military protection. Any form of resistance to tax collection or to the occupation would be met with on-the-spot execution.

In neighborhoods, towns or cities in which resistance had proved impervious to Soviet penetration, chemical warfare or "clean" tactical nuclear weapons would be used to annihilate the resistors and anyone living there. It would only be a matter of time before the Soviet occupation had achieved complete coverage of the important centers of population and industry. From there, every inch of land and every inhabitant would eventually come under the total and absolute control of the oriental despot.

This elaborate digression into the fundamental weakness of the anarchist position on geopolitics is necessary to understand their ideological cleavage with the minarchist position. And if the anarchists are naive about the nature of Soviet power, the capitalist wing of the movement has generally been inarticulate about foreign affairs or about military strategy. In fact very little has been said by anyone on the nature of military defense in a "libertarian" society. Jerome Tuccille in his book Radical Libertarianism does seem to recognize the Soviet threat. He discusses the Phyllis Schaffly report on the Oleg Penkovsky revelations of Soviet plans for world conquest. In spite of this, Tuccille does not appear overly concerned. At one point he declares that if the Soviets should gain strategic superiority then it would be up to competing defense agencies to solve the problem. Such truisms are not very reassuring for those aware of growing superiority of Soviet military strength.

In discussions with anarchists a military and foreign policy position can be discerned. It favors complete withdrawal from all foreign bases and termination of all alliances and military aid (and for that matter all foreign aid). All foreign intelligence and covert operations would be banned. In fact, there is considerable sentiment for abolishing the CIA altogether. In the area of strategic weapons, nuclear arms are considered undesirable because of their non-specific destructive power.

If carried out the present Libertarian Party military policy would assure the Soviets risk-free intervention throughout the world. The only possible opposition would come from China, and without U.S. support Chinese power would be strategically impotent. The practical result of the Libertarian Party foreign policy, if put into effect, would be Soviet naval domination of the seas, findlandization of Western Europe, domination of Africa and South America, and hegemony over most of Asia. More than likely, it would permit a Soviet pre-emptive attack on China. Once successful in East Asia, the Soviets could concentrate on the U.S.

The weaknesses of positions held by leading anarchists should not, however, obscure the fundamental truth of the anarchist position: that the institution of the State is an abomination which is inconsistent with an objectively based ethical system. On the other hand, weaknesses in the capitalist position (maintaining atavistic inconsistencies such as minarchism) certainly must not blind the anarchist to the objective requirements of military defense and its strategic deployment. Both capitalists and anarchists are guilty of permitting old cliches and superstitions to obscure their total understanding of what institutions the radically free and secure society must consist of.

Anarchy and capitalism are absolutely interdependent. Only in an advanced capitalist society can anarchy, the condition of statelessness emerge; and only in anarchy can capitalism survive and thrive. This relationship becomes more evident in an examination of the genesis of proto-capitalist constitutions. The essential feature of the two centuries of capitalist development is the regressive hybridization of capitalist economic organization with feudal and oriental agrarian political institutions.

The present world situation is the result of a partial replacement of feudal institutions in Western Europe by proto-capitalist institutions. Democracy is merely a reflection of the transition from feudalism to capitalism. The advance of capitalism in the United States has been far more rapid than Europe due to the lack of pre-existing feudal institutions. However, the failure of constitutional democracy and the rise of social democracy in the United States and in europeanized nations has resulted from the institutional solidification of never extinguished anti-rational and anti-individualist cultural and philosophical attitudes.

Economic capitalism which developed in the third quarter of the eighteenth century in Britian, and the capitalist political institutions which developed in New England in the same period, together never constituted more than a compromise revolution. The deep pathology of christian mysticism and the philosophic and residual power of statism was never extirpated. Even if all of Western Europe had been able to shake off the accumulated traits of medieval serfdom, there would have remained the massive, no the overwhelming, task of meeting the agrarian despotism of Asia and the collectivized savagery and illiterate mysticism of subsaharan Africa during the nineteenth century.

The rise, however, of advanced forms of economic capitalism provides the first possibility for attaining anarchy in all human history. And here I use the term economic capitalism very loosely to mean highly advanced forms of fiduciary institutions, an advanced stage division of labor, and a planetary system of communications and transport. This form of capitalism, however promising in material terms of productivity and technological advancement, is in fact a terrifying mix of institutions combining the material-scientific power of capitalist economic development with hybridized feudal political-statist institutions. Thus, over the past half century can be seen the emergence of not only the Occidental variant of feudal-capitalism but the grafting of neo-feudal political institutions on the old agrarian despotisms of Russia and China. This is essentially the genesis of fascism and communism.

The rest of the world in Asia, Africa, and South America is falling into regressive forms of facism and communism after an interim introduction of liberal constitutional democracy. South America, in spite of noble experiments in con-

stitutional democracy, the political expression of proto-capitalist proprietarian societies, has been subverted by the latent power of feudal constitutions and attitudes left by Spanish colonial systems. There are strong indications that under stress fascism easily regresses into communism. That is to say the institutional successor of feudalism is susceptible to the institutional successor of the oriental agromanagerial bureaucracy. Nowhere is the institutional regression from constitutional democracy, to social democracy to fascism, then to dictatorial one-party communist state, more evident than India. It is in this center of agromanagerial bureaucracy, despotism, and mysticism that latent tendencies have dramatically come to the fore to overwhelm the forced European graft of constitutional democracy. This is basically the case with the rest of post colonial Asia and Africa. Proto-capitalist political institutions are falling prey to neo-feudal and more pertinently to neo-oriental tendencies.

More importantly, the failure of economic capitalism to sustain political institutions protecting the rights of individuals is strongly indicative of a basic problem between statism and capitalism. The historical record suggests without exception that limited governments in capitalist economies, even under optimal conditions such as existed in eighteenth century America, cannot be controlled. Constitutional restraints erode into social democracy and thus eventually into various forms of fascism and communism. This is not accidental or merely a series of misfortunes growing out of idiosyncratic historical circumstance.

The death of capitalism is the State - even the limited State. Again I return to my original assertion that anarchy requires advanced capitalism and capitalism can only advance through anarchy. The essence of State power lies in its exercise of unconsented jurisdiction and its assumption of apriori authority. Even the minarchist state has unconsented jurisdiction. Democracy is the natural outcome of replacing the royal constituency of feudal vassalages with a larger and more diverse constituency of property owners.

The limited government state is a compromise - it is an attempt to replace a monopoly of political authority with an oligopoly. Nonetheless, it remains nothing more than a coercive monopoly, albeit with more owners. A constitutional minarchy must logically evolve into social democracy as the number and diversity of potentially powerful constituencies increases. The original simple oligopoly of power which replaced the feudal monopoly with a stratum from the top bourgeoisie becomes a clearing house of multiple oligopolies. The aristocracy is replaced by plutocracy and then by oligarchy and eventually by a corporate State. This clearing house is the social democratic state.

The attempt to maintain a minarchy, which as I have described is nothing more than the original chartered monopoly over jurisdiction and apriori authority, ultimately leads into conflict with growth of new constituencies as the social order complexifies. Ultimately, minarchy in the context of dynamic capitalism can only lead to social democracy or revolution (or both).

Thus the State in any form is inimical to laissez-faire capitalism. Thomas Jefferson intuitively attempted to meet this problem by suggesting that the tree of liberty had to be watered with blood every generation. Unfortunately, the willingness to fight is not sufficient to develop new and radically different institutions especially when the struggle is to protect or restore

democracy and/or the minarchy. Minarchy is creeping democracy and democracy is creeping socialism. Shedding blood to conserve statist institutions leads to either more social democracy or regression into fascism and communism.

Anarchy works on the principle that no one may morally claim apriori jurisdiction over the lives and property of others. This means that protection and retaliatory force are economic goods to be bought and sold in the capitalist market. In anarchy, competing private defense agencies may not prevent individuals from using force to protect themselves or to gain restitution. A private defense agency may not force some of its clients to subsidize the protection or oppression of others. The threshold of minimal state obtains when: (1) an agency enforces the prohibition on uses of defensive force or on certain types of defensive force; (2) claims and enforces itself as sole arbiter and sanctioner of the use of force in a particular area; (3) an agency compels redistribution of protective services from those who pay for them to those who do not.

The minimal state is nothing more than a coercive monopoly which enforces itself in the marketplace of voluntary exchange. Instead of being the fountainhead of law and justice it is a poisonous cancer of arbitrary force and injustice. The minimal state in its fundamental stage is a center of anti-market and anti-individualist attitudes and ideas. Its redistribution of wealth to protect the "weak" is the embryo of collectivism. The minimal concept of redistribution inherent in the State ultimately becomes the ideological essence, and the justification, for democracy and socialism. Thus, the minimal state is inimical to laissez-faire capitalism. Anarchy, the condition of statelessness, is absolutely necessary to the functioning of capitalism i.e. the free market. Throughout history, states of all kinds have evolved from limited states into vast entities geographically and constitutionally which ultimately collapsed. Even where the ideology of the minimal state was most developed and most auspiciously founded, in the case of this country, the State has grown into a monstrosity anti-capitalist system.

Anarchy is the wave of the future because it represents the ultimate decentralization of decision making, accountability, and then authority and responsibility to the individual level. It compels each individual to be an entrepreneur over his own life.

Anarchy can work in the United States before the end of this century if the proper choices are made by libertarians now. First of all, capitalist libertarians must realize that anarchy in its true form does not prevent the development of highly-disciplined, large-scale organizations such as military defense forces. Nor is anarchy inimical to their proper funding and long-term stability in terms of esprit-de-corps and maintenance of strategic and technical superiority over potential aggressors. On the other hand, anarchists must realize that largescale military forces do not necessitate statism and are absolutely necessary to defend anarcho-capitalist society.

In order to understand the exigencies imposed on the functioning of anarcho-capitalist society, we must view the capitalist economy which is the basis for anarchy in its real setting. The backbone of the present advanced industrial capitalism are large corporations with relationships which are often global in scope. Raw materials, resources, regional divisions of labor and mass con-

sumption markets no longer permit true isolationist and local decentralist tendencies which overlook the requirements for global security and economic interdependence. Both anarchist and capitalist minarchist wings of the movement have been blind to these requirements. They also seem unaware of the potential consequences of their success in the United States and abroad.

Consider the following scenario in which a libertarian movement has succeeded in gaining the support of one-third of the population in the United States and through its influence has achieved the virtual abolition of many areas of government intervention. The date is January 1990. The Soviet Union has achieved military supremacy and is in a position to gamble a first strike against the United States.

What could be the only reasonable response of responsible libertarian leaders and ideologues? They would have to form a voluntary association of the biggest capitalist enterprises and prepare for war! Secondly, they would organize an alliance of libertarian movements world-wide.

A political victory by libertarian forces in the United States will be interpreted as a short-term weakness and long-term threat by the Soviet Union. It is very likely that war will ensue shortly after a libertarian political victory.

How can such a threat be met under anarchy? How can the war be won? First, let us look at the advantages. A voluntary military may be sure of its personnel, and it can require obedience as part of the contractual sign-up. Thus, it will be made up of free humans voluntarily and knowingly agreeing to the disciplinary requirements of the military and the risks of warfare. They will be facing a military system composed of conscripts and supported by slaves. Second, but just as important, the libertarian military will be unencumbered by civilian control and demands. It will have all the benefits of civilian contributions with none of the liabilities.

But these considerations do not even begin to account for the advantages of a libertarian military. Capitalist industry released from the tanglefoot regulatory bureaucracies, from the burdens of taxation, government enforced monopolies, the state enforced coercion of labor trusts, will produce weapons at lower cost, and advanced design. The existence of these factors should be sufficient to permit victory if the caliber of the industrial and military leaders is equal to the task.

The disadvantages include the old fears that there will be no volunteers for the military and that not enough individuals will see it worth their while to voluntarily contribute their treasure towards the war efforts.

The industrialist will contribute because they will have no choice but to fight for their lives and for the enterprises. We must remember that with a libertarian political victory, major corporations whose fortunes were made by government protection will be auctioned to retribute the victims of monopoly fascism. The new owners will owe their ownership to the revolution and will have every interest to spreading successfully the revolution to other parts of the world. They will contribute and contribute heavily.

Will the broad masses voluntarily contribute to the fight? With the yoke of taxation and bureaucratic intervention lifted from their shoulders, can there be any doubt of their fervent allegiance? Have the vast majority of the American people ever really misunderstood the threat of Soviet aggression and despotism? Will the young long remain socialist with the disbanding of statist indoctrination? Has there ever been a lack of fervent patriotism and devotion in a just war? The productivity and creativity of the American people, once unleashed, will voluntarily support a defensive war effort without undue sacrifice. The example of the United States will quickly sweep into other parts of the western world. It will be a matter of months, not years, before the U.S. economy becomes prodigiously strong.

If the Soviets procrastinate two years after the libertarian political victory in the United States, they will never be able to assure themselves of first strike victory or any other kind of victory for that matter. It will be all downhill for them. With the break-up of the Soviet empire, the major vindication for minarchist systems will have passed. Anarcho-capitalist societies will flourish both on Terra and in space. Thus the question is no longer "can anarchy work?" But when will it come? The answer is up to us. Only our work towards liberty can make us free. Anarchists and capitalists have everything to gain by working together and dropping the old superstitions so cleverly promoted by the MACS complex.

**Richard R. \$lomon**

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# TO KEEP & BEAR

*One of the issues on which anarchists, minarchists, John Birchers, and conservatives all agree is the right of the individual to keep and bear arms. Inteed, this issue may serve as a binding force in future years when these factions are divergent on all others.*

*Important as this issue is, and hard-pressed as its defenders and beneficiaries are in their efforts to keep even some vestige of this right for themselves and the American people, the fight for the right to own guns has received only peripheral attention in QUEST up to now.*

*Therefore, this issue of QUEST contains an interview with Alan Gottlieb, who is the National Director of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. The interview was conducted by managing editor Richard R. \$lomon.*

*Mr. Gottlieb began with a brief political autobiography.*

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