

Autogestion: A Project of Everyday Practice

Acción Libertaria

1992-3

1. We understand anarchism as an ethical, individual and social project, which works towards the transformation of society in the direction of maximising freedom and welfare in complete fraternity.

Anarchism seeks the elimination of all hierarchical organisations and organisations separate from society, which function basically to control and command.

Anarchism proposes, to impede the creation of new privileges and as a mechanism of functioning, autogestion.

2. We understand as autogestion all the types of social and communitarian self-organisation, whether the community is composed of trade unionists, cooperatives, peasants, women, retirees, marginalised people, or whatever other sector is socially oppressed in our society, to take into their own hands the task of meeting their own needs.

3. We understand as autogestion a series of practical principles that lock-in the basic fundamentals of an autogestive society.

Direct democracy.

Direct action.

Mutual aid.

Extension.

Formation.

4. Direct democracy: The interested parties take decisions, without delegating to intermediaries the responsibility to decide the issues. Consensus decision-making is the preponderant way of taking care of affairs. Only in extreme cases does voting reappear, avoiding the formation of a “majority” and also permitting, when possible, the positions taken by minorities.

5. Direct action. Just as the interested parties take decisions without intermediaries, in direct action they also arrive at the proper agreements, again without intermediaries.

6. Mutual aid: We develop the concept of solidarity as the fundamental ethical principle in all cases in which we participate or offer advice. We get started in this way.

7. Extension: The increase in our practice of these autogestive principles, so much in the community, we understand our influence in the sectors and the regions, and apply in this way the autogestive principles also in our intimate relations. We cannot handle autogestion in the unions and cooperatives and yet be tyrannical and intolerant in intimate relationships, with our families, companions, or the workers of our organisation.

8. Formation: Study and permanent actualisation/updating permit us to handle a large number of alternatives and to rate them when making decisions.

9. These basic principles of autogestive practice are adapted to the particular circumstances of each case. They are applicable in any organisational instance, whether a small trade-union group, a cooperative, a neighbourhood or ghetto, a community, a town, or the entire society. Nobody is prioritised over others, nobody is sacrificed for others' purposes. There are five principles and they are taken together.

10. Autogestion is not only a project. In the long term, it is in itself the practical method to get where we want to go. The means we use have to be in accordance with the ends we seek.

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Translated by Andrew McLaverty-Robinson.

This is a translation of a short pamphlet distributed in Mexico through the Biblioteca Social Reconstruir. According to a recent paper by Livia Stone (Popularizing Autogestión: Punk, Zapatismo, and Anarchist Ethics in Mexico City), the pamphlet played a central role in the redefinition of autogestion – previously a syndicalist principle – in a direction similar to the term DIY.

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