

# Green Anarchism

Richard Harris

February 1992

Green anarchism starts with the idea that the technological society with its cities of millions of inhabitants are not workable. Europe and the USA rely on third world resources, and to keep this situation governments sympathetic to the 'Old World Order' are kept in power. Puppet regimes are supported by aid packages, education, technical and military assistance, and weapons. The situation is not much better here, where the colonisation of the third world is mirrored by the creation of an underclass as a sump for cheap labour and as an incentive to those in the middle-class to keep on the treadmill while the whole is enforced by the ideological colonisation of the mind by the media.

Cities enable the system to keep people together for social control. They provide the appearance of a world of affluence with their shopping arcades and supermarkets with full shelves. They also produce alienation on a grand scale. The cities rob the surrounding countryside, and this robbery also works on a global level. Agricultural workers are forced to subsidise the cities by producing food for them. In the former USSR we see the start of the breakdown of this. People working on the land no longer see why they should produce for others, and are starting to take back control of their land.

In Russia the problems for the cities have been made worse by years of bureaucratic incompetence and corruption. The system of distribution is breaking down. For all the surpluses of the EEC<sup>1</sup>, we too are starting to get problems, for example BSE<sup>2</sup> and nitrate in the soil, caused by the over intensive exploitation of resources. In the third world, governments imposed by the west are losing control, and the increasing hopelessness of the debt crisis will force rural populations to take back control of their land.

We can expect the west to try to enforce its domination, so it is quite possible that we will have other Gulf Wars. But Vietnam might be a better analogy, the more dispersed the opponents of the west are, the more likely the west is to lose. The system will find itself fighting on two fronts, for all the resources it wastes on foreign wars the weaker it will grow domestically.

This trend will come to Britain. As the government loses its grip, no-go areas will develop in isolated areas. The cities will collapse. Estates built in the 1960's are already turning into urban wastelands. The rich will retreat into their areas while the rest of the cities will rot. The economic

---

<sup>1</sup> European Economic Community

<sup>2</sup> Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (mad cow disease)

crisis will further weaken their position. Public utilities will collapse. With the structure of the cities breaking up, together with the loss of resources from the third world the cities will be unable to feed themselves, and many will leave. (The industrial revolution in reverse.)

What will come out of this? Well, in the first instance, chaos. The state will break down, and tribes of scavengers will flood into the countryside. Warring factions will fight with each other to dominate areas where there is food. Without the industrial base, technology will wither. The people who will survive will be the ones who are able to feed, clothe, shelter and defend themselves. Society will start to rebuild itself, but it will have to be a radically different sort of society. Rather than a world based on mass-production for others, alienation and exploitation, Green Anarchists see the future world as one which draws from our own resources rather than one which takes from the resources of others. We must produce the things we need for ourselves on a small scale without taking more from the earth's resources than we put back. We want to try to bring about a society without alienation, guided by mutual respect.

Cities of millions of inhabitants are too large — we need to function at a much smaller scale. Communities need to be no more than village sized, less than 500 people. (The highest number of people you can know.) These people will make and grow everything they need themselves. With this self-reliance they will not need politicians hundreds or thousands of miles away, nor will they be dependent on political or social structures like the DSS<sup>3</sup>. They will not have outsiders telling them what to do or what to think. Without the domination and control of technology over them they will be free. With this small scale, the anonymity of the cities which enables crime to take place will be abolished. In the cities possessions, and this gap between the rich and poor, are a motivating factor in crime, as even quite a senior policeman pointed out only recently. With only the bare minimum of material goods we will be less likely to steal. The fact that everybody is known, and has self-respect, and is respected in turn, with a proper function as part of society will reduce and eliminate this alienation and make crime unlikely.

With their self-reliance, and the capability of defending themselves, the small community of the future will be free, and will keep that freedom.

Green Anarchism is a call to abandon the materialistic and self-destructive philosophy of capitalism. Green Anarchists are in a direct line with Winstanley and the Diggers, or the nineteenth century utopian religious communities. It is a call for 'a free society in harmony with nature'. Already several communities have been started up, no doubt others will follow as the strength of the idea is seen. We will be building the new society out of the ruins of the old. The continuation of capitalism is not an option — we must abandon consumption *now* before it destroys us!

---

<sup>3</sup> Department of Social Services

The Anarchist Library  
Anti-Copyright



Richard Harris  
Green Anarchism  
February 1992

Retrieved on 3 July 2022 from <https://libcom.org/article/raven-17-use-land>  
This article was originally written for *The Raven Anarchist Quarterly* #17: Use of Land, pp.  
82–84. Acronyms were given footnotes for clarity.

**[theanarchistlibrary.org](https://theanarchistlibrary.org)**