

On (don't spell it backwards) Anarchist Organization

Fifth Estate Collective

1991

FE Note: There continues to be a sometimes rancorous debate within the anarchist movement about how best to combat the system. What follows is meant to be critical but comradely. We in no way doubt the spirit of those we criticize in this article, only their judgment.

Unfortunately, even for a small number of those who espouse the ideas of anarchy, the modern form of organization (which both the left and the right employ) holds an allure as a seemingly efficient manner in which to confront the state and capitalism. However, when adopted by anarchists, the formal organizational mode has been no more successful than it has for leninists.

In our Summer 1990 edition [FE #334 Letters, see Love & Rage: RSL or Independent?] we criticized the anarchists and ex-trotskyists grouped around the publication, Love and Rage, as heading in such a direction, using their paper as a starting point. What began as speculation on our part now seems quite evident.

The November 1990 *Love and Rage* reprints a revealing article entitled, "Organizing for Anarchy: Principles of Organization," from the London-based Anarchist Workers Group, which contains such a self-exposure, it need only be quoted from to make the point. It is no less pompous, pretentious and grandiose about the role anarchists should play in the revolutionary process than any leninist tract, and it uses identical language.

The article informs us that there should be "no hesitancy in identifying anarchists as part of the 'vanguard,'" and "that a minority of workers have a clearer understanding about the role of the state and the nature of capitalism, and by virtue of this fact these workers are in the forefront of the class struggle and play a leading role in that struggle." This self-appointed centrality, this monumental arrogance that anyone has the ability or the right to direct or define the lives of others is exactly what constitutes leninism, is the root of its authoritarian qualities, and finally, what caused its historic defeat. When its concepts are repeated by even well meaning "anarchists," it is no less misdirected.

The Love and Rage article states self-servingly that, "A mass anarchist organization can only be built on a foundation of activists who have the skills necessary to 'educate, agitate, and organize,'" and that it will be a "cadre organization." You can bet this will be the L&R inner core. Discovering this overriding agenda has the unfortunate result of bringing the quality of their positive contribution into question.

Just as one knows a leninist group is more interested in recruiting members than the issue at hand, so one must suspect an instrumentality in all the activities of Love and Rage. Whether it is publishing a newspaper, organizing anti-authoritarian contingents, or sponsoring an anarchist conference this summer, the larger strategy of organization-building seems lurking behind it all.

Love and Rage can be reached at Box 3, Prince St. Station, NY, NY 10012.

fifth Estate

Fifth Estate Collective
On (don't spell it backwards) Anarchist Organization
1991

<https://www.fifthestate.org/archive/336-spring-1991/on-dont-spell-it-backwards-anarchist-organization>
Fifth Estate #336, Spring, 1991

[fifthestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fifthestate.org)