

Anarchism

Anarchists reject the state and its authority.

Most, though not all, anarchists are communistic in their outlook. i.e. they reject capitalism and want to replace it with a more equitable system.

In response to the Hobbesian view that humans need a state, anarchists reply that human nature is essentially cooperative and that the existence of the state is what “corrupts” us.

Kropotkin (1842-1921) observed nature and, unlike Darwin, saw cooperation, or “mutual aid”, as the driving force behind evolution. This led him to support a more positive view of human nature.

Problems

Anarchism has been criticised many times. Some of the main problems are:

1. If we are naturally good, then how did we end up with the state?

Anarchists need to explain how the principles of “mutual aid” led us into the situation we find ourselves in now. How did the state arise in the first place?

2. If an anarchist society was established, how would it deal with people who break the rules?

Anarchists may respond to this in different ways:

a) Nobody will break the rules as humans are naturally good.

b) Social pressure – We will feel the desire to conform with the other members of our society

c) Fear of a poor reputation – Although there is no formal punishment for those who break the rules, we will not want to do so because we are afraid that others may view us in a negative way.