

To be a revolutionary

Today

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Being an anarchist is not at all as easy as it sounds. It is significant that among people who consider themselves anarchists, not everyone will call himself or herself a revolutionary and even less anarchists seriously think about what does it mean to be a revolutionary. But it's impossible to be an anarchist and not to be a revolutionary.

A revolutionary is a person whose striving for fundamental social change is embodied in the consistent life path — in the revolutionary struggle. A serious approach to the struggle requires the development of a number of personal qualities. What are the characteristics of a revolutionary?

Belief in victory

Perhaps it all starts with this. It is necessary to believe that your activity will be crowned with success. Otherwise, a person simply has no reason to make proper efforts in doing it. Disbelief in final success is tantamount to alienation from his activity.

We want to remind all pessimists that there are no “objective” reasons for considering the social revolution and the triumph of libertarian ideas to be a matter of an indefinitely distant future. The speed and unpredictability of social changes in the modern world teach us one important lesson: everything is possible. Including freedom and justice.

It is normal to have doubts. All thinking people doubt. And yet, when doubts prevail at the end, resurrect in the soul that force with which your convictions were originally filled. Feel the enormous size and significance of your goal, dignity and fullness with the meaning of your chosen path — the path of the revolutionary. We are sure that faith will show the way to escape from the darkness of any doubt. And go ahead!

Also we are to note that revolutionary struggle is such a gigantic task that everyone who consider himself to be a part of the revolutionary movement should perceive the fight as the main occupation of his life, his main work and craft.

Discipline and responsibility

We understand discipline as the willingness to take on tasks related to preparations of the struggle, and as the capacity to fulfill taken tasks. Discipline begins with small things: not to be late for meetings, and then implement the decisions taken at these meetings in time. And yet, it begins even a bit earlier — it begins in the head, with an internal desire to work systematically and without sloppiness in order to develop movement and struggle.

Discipline is a very broad concept, intersecting many aspects of our life. For example, it intersects with psychological restraint — the ability to stay cool at crucial moments associated with the risk of repression, arrest or physical confrontation with a political enemy or at the time of the direct action — is a real manifestation of discipline.

It is also associated with ethics. Discipline is the understanding that “everything personal is political”, that each of us is the face of the movement in which we participate. This, in addition to pure ethics, is an additional reason not to violate anarchist principles in your daily life. This is a discipline of life behavior.

Finally, the discipline is manifested in devoting the proper time and energy to self-development, both individual and collective: the acquisition of knowledge, the development of practical skills, physical training, thinking and analysis.

We know, that the word discipline is not always welcome in the anarchist community. And yet, we hope there are only few who will stigmatize this understanding of the discipline as “authoritarian.”

Readiness to hardships

For the fight against the oppressors relies hatred from the state machine, the capitalists and their servants. Revolutionary activity causes problems and hardships. There is nothing new, and so it always happened with all the fighters against evil. We talked about the subject of self-sacrifice in the article *Giving Your Life. What did Zhlobitsky recall?* and we don't want to repeat – we just summarize that anarchists will most likely have to pay a price for their worldview and life choice, someone less, someone more. And anarchists should be ready for it.

Loyalty and devotion

One of the most important qualities that the members of the movement often forget is loyalty or otherwise devotion. Devotion to his comrades, his team, his obligations and chosen path.

Today in the anarchist environment one can often see how people easily change priorities and positions (and the reference to the “ideological search”, as a rule, is only a mask for changing superficial hobbies), such activists don't want to solve problems that arise with colleagues, and prefer to make scandals in order to waive their obligations.

Often such behavior is served as part of an anarchist understanding of freedom. One can say that affection and loyalty are attributes of possessiveness. However, it is not. Volatility is a manifestation of the liberal ideology and liberal lifestyle of the era of consumer capitalism (in the frames of which people and ideas are beginning to be treated as disposable goods). The impermanence and lack of devotion are companions of egoism and inability to feel and deeply love your comrades with whom you once sealed your union.

Anarchist understanding of freedom is different – anarchist freedom does not exist without brotherhood and sisterhood. Therefore, anarchist freedom cannot be the freedom to repudiate your own comrades. Anarchist freedom is the responsibility to make an active contribution to the common goals, not to obey and not to subordinate, and also not to give up.

Finally, in a revolutionary struggle it is very important to be able to rely on a comrade, on the immutability of his or her basic values and life priorities. Without constancy and devotion, one cannot rely on anyone, just as one cannot fully trust anyone. As a result, without trust it is impossible to fight. Consequently, freedom understood in a liberal way as the right of the constant variability makes resistance to the state monster and capitalism impossible.

Even when discord and conflict arise with comrades, and you think that they are seriously mistaken or do not want to overcome their weaknesses, it is your duty as a comrade to make all possible efforts to help them by your criticism and, ultimately, to come to an agreement or at least to a compromise.

Checking results

It is sad to see people who have devoted dozens of years to stewing in a political subculture by performing ritual actions that imitate a political struggle (for example, internal scandals or “dialogue with the masses” through leaflets and publications written with the use of lexics that can’t be understood by these masses).

A genuine revolutionary as a person who sincerely wishes to achieve victory over the system of injustice always evaluates the results of his or her own actions, treat his or her tactics and strategy with great criticism, constantly rethinks and corrects them without falling into inertia.

After direct action you should check the reaction of people and how widely the information was spread. It will help you understand the effectiveness of your action or what has been done wrong. If you remain in a narrow circle for years, look for new ways to recruit people, establish new connections with other groups and initiatives. That are the examples of how to asses the results on your way to make the revolution come true.

The principle of control over results applies to learning useful skills. We too often stop halfway without mastering this or that skill thoroughly. For example, sometimes we are ready to be satisfied with a hundred readers for our site, when a simple set of promotional activities can bring us a thousand. This principle applies to any other area of anarchist activity.

And a bit of magic

A revolutionary will certainly find a response in the hearts of the people around him. This is because the suffering, hardened in the throes of doubts. Convictions overwhelm this revolutionary and pour over the edge. Perhaps no one will agree with this revolutionary at first. Surely many will argue with him or her. But the ideas he or she expressed, in which her or she sincerely believes, as well as he or her life example, will make people think about what they have never thought before and feel what they’ve never felt before. To be a spark igniting a flame — this is truly a magical ability. If you are still unfamiliar with this feeling, it certainly awaits you ahead. This property is a reward to a revolutionary for lots of difficulties that cannot be avoided.

We have described only some of the features that seem fundamental to the personality of our revolutionary comrade-in-arms. Of course, it is impossible to create step-by-step instructions, “how to become an ideal anarchist.” Here we need a creative approach, but in this text we talked about the problems we all face.

Comrade, you can no longer live like a beast. The revolution can not be an imitation, there can not be a game. The qualities of a revolutionary are not given to anyone from birth. They are brought up by like-minded people in themselves and in each other.

Our day has come. Our duty is to be at the height of the declared goals. The road arises under the feet of the walking.

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”Phil Kuznetsov” has been identified as Dmitry Petrov, who died fighting in the Battle of Bakhmut on 19 April 2023.

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