An Anarchist Postive Program

Here are some things that I wrote for an episode of the Anarchy Bang podcast. The episode itself can be found online here.

Introducing An Anarchist Positive Program
Alright, enough with all the negativity, and time to get positive. Now, I know very well that we don't want **this**, and we don't want **that**. **This** is fundamentally corrupt and needs to be destroyed, and **that** is entirely oppressive and needs to be abolished. **This** is completely fucked-up and needs to be attacked, and **that** thing over there… well, let's not even talk about that!
Instead, let's get clear: what exactly is it that we DO want in terms of "anarchism" and/or "anarchy"? In other words, let's say that all of the Big Bad Things are made to go away, through some means or another, then what exactly would our brave new anarchist world look like? What specifically would the people in an anarchist society (or "community", or whatever) be DOING? What is our big End Goal? What's the beautiful dream?

Back in the day, various books were written about this topic, both non-fiction such as Fields, Factories and Workshops and Bolo'bolo, and fiction such as "The Dispossessed" and "The Fifth Sacred Thing". And of course there is the whole solarpunk phenomena that is floating around the interwebs. We can talk about these writings, if they describe the kind of anarchist world that you would like to live in. And if not, then fuck it. What's important is your anarchist dream, your ideal world and what it would look like. Let's go into it.

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An Anarchist Positive Program – Editorial
For me anarchism has always been a two-sided coin. There is the destructive "anti" side, the side that says that all forms of capitalism, government, hierarchy, authority, etc. should be completely destroyed ASAP. And then there is the positive side, the part that says that "another world is possible", and that that world would look something like people coming together voluntarily as equals to cooperate, share and help each other out. My concern is that in recent years the positive side of anarchism has been overlooked, or even forgotten about, while the attack-and-destroy negative side of anarchism has become more of what people think about when they think of the big A-word.
I would like to see this change. I would like to see anarchism become more positive. Now, I know that I may sound stupid and hokey saying this, but I really do believe that positivity in some form really does serve a purpose. I believe that positivity can sustain & nourish people, that it can keep people going. And with a big social-political philosophy like anarchism, it also serves the purpose of providing a sense of direction, a way to orient

yourself towards what it is that you do want, instead of just getting away from what you don't want.

There is an Israeli anarchist guy I've known for a long time named Ilan Shalif who recently said this online: "*If I had no vision of libertarian communist alternative for human society I would not have survived the full 82 years of my life*." Now, I am definitely not as old as he is, but I do feel the same way he does. Having a vision for what human beings are capable of, in the positive sense and on a large-scale global level, has certainly kept me going all these years that I have been alive. And with the anarchist scene being what it is these days, this positive sense of our human potential has kept me sticking with anarchism, even though there are a million and one reasons presented to me as to why I should leave it all behind.

Let me be clear here, just because human beings have the potential for great and beautiful things does not at all mean that these things will happen. Possibility does not mean inevitability. And likewise, having a wonderful vision for how human society can be does not mean that this vision will ever be realized. In some sense our visions for a future anarchist world are siblings to the fantastic worlds created in science fiction. The difference is that our anarchist visions are of worlds that we actually do believe can happen, and they are ones that we are ostensibly working to make into a reality.

So with this episode, I would like to hear what your anarchist utopia looks like. I would like to hear how your ideal society (or lack thereof) would function, what daily life would be like, how stuff would get done. Would your ideal society keep the old anarchist dream of workers' councils, neighborhood assemblies and mandated recallable delegates within massive federation structures? Or would you go with more of a 21st century approach and make collective decisions via directly voting for things on your smartphone that is connected with a mesh network and uses heavy encryption? Or would you keep things really old school and instead have humanity be organized the way it was for most of its history, as small bands and tribes of nomadic hunter-gatherers?

Speaking for myself, the centerpiece of my ideal anarchist society would be authentic heartfelt connection between people. So my ideal anarchist world would have people taking the time and effort to be honest with themselves and those around them, really taking the time to listen to and understand those around them, and working through the conflicts and difficulties that inevitably arise in human relationships. My ideal anarchist world would then have specific times and spaces set aside for people to do this kind of messy personal/interpersonal kind of work. And then with that foundation in place, the whole gamut of non-hierarchical meeting facilitation processes and organizational systems can be utilized to help the various "councils", "assemblies", "tribes" and "collectives" run more smoothly and harmoniously than a group of alienated antagonistic people using Robert's Rules of Order or Formal Consensus would ever be able to.

And then, ultimately, we would have bad-ass anarchist colonies on Mars, the asteroid belt, and the rest of the solar system. That is my dream, anyway….