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Hierarchy

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HIERARCHY, noun. (from the Greek *hieros*, sacred, and *arche*, command). The order and subordination of sundry ecclesiastical, civil or military authorities.

Hierarchy lies at the root of the whole authority principle. Starting off with the leader and ending with the henchman, through a whole scale of different executive agents; conjuring up a multitude of gradations which, as one rises through them, confers an ever greater measure of authority; splitting the authority of the State to infinity and bestowing a greater power of resistance upon it by virtue of its multiplicity and variety; organizing within the State a graduated scale of sinecures, benefices and privileges; the essence, in fact, of theories of government.

The yearning for prominence, the lust to command and to rule is, sad to say, a passion that still drives quite a few people. The moment an authoritarian regime is established on the ruins of its predecessor, its first care is to shower its supporters with honours, income and positions of command.

One who today is an ordinary citizen dreams of becoming a town councillor; another dreams of a generalship; still another, no more than a workingman, is gnawed by an ambition to become a supervisor or foreman.

Every authoritarian faction — even the so-called workers' parties — cultivate this hierarchical mind-set. For it is only by planting ambition in men's hearts that rulers or would-be rulers can pull the wool over their eyes and turn them into playthings.

Anarchists are opposed to all hierarchy, be it moral or material. They counter with respect for the freedom and absolute autonomy of the individual.

And if they think in terms of a Social Context of the future, it is an environment wherein every human being will have rights equal to those of his contemporaries.

We must banish the sentiment of hierarchy from men's minds and replace it with love of anarchy.