



WORKS

who stop seeking power for themselves, or seeking the powerful to rescue them, and they do life for themselves. I have met people who live Anarchism in India, Kenya, Jamaica, Ethiopia, and in Papua New Guinea, but when I tell them they are Anarchists most will tell me they have not heard of such a word, and what they are doing is natural and uncomplicated. I'm an Anarchist because I've been wronged, and I've seen everything else fail.

I spent the late seventies and the eighties living in London with many exiled ANC activists – after a long struggle Nelson Mandela was freed and the exiles returned home. I remember looking at a photo of the first democratically elected government in South Africa and realising that I knew two thirds of them. I also remember seeing a photo of the newly elected Blair (New Labour) government and realising that I knew a quarter of them, and on both occasions I remember how I was filled with hope. But in both cases it didn't take long to see how power corrupted so many members of those governments. These were people I would call and say, "Hey, what are you doing?", and the reply was always something along the lines of, "Benjamin, you don't understand how having power works". Well I do. Fuck power, and let's just take care of each other.

Most people know that politics is failing. That's not a theory or my point of view. They can see it, they can feel it. The problem is they just can't imagine an alternative. They lack confidence. I simply blanked out all the advertising, I turned off the 'tell-lie-vision', and I started to think for myself. Then I really started to meet people – and, trust me, there is nothing as great as meeting people who are getting on with their lives, running farms, schools, shops, and even economies, in communities where no one has power.

That's why I'm an Anarchist.

*You don't riot if you have a nice job and a home to come to at night.
You don't riot if you're well fed and unemployment doesn't pressure your head.
You don't riot if you live in the city but have a country cottage with a view so pretty.
You don't riot. Riot happen too late. And that's South Africa, Britain is great.*

Benjamin Zephaniah

