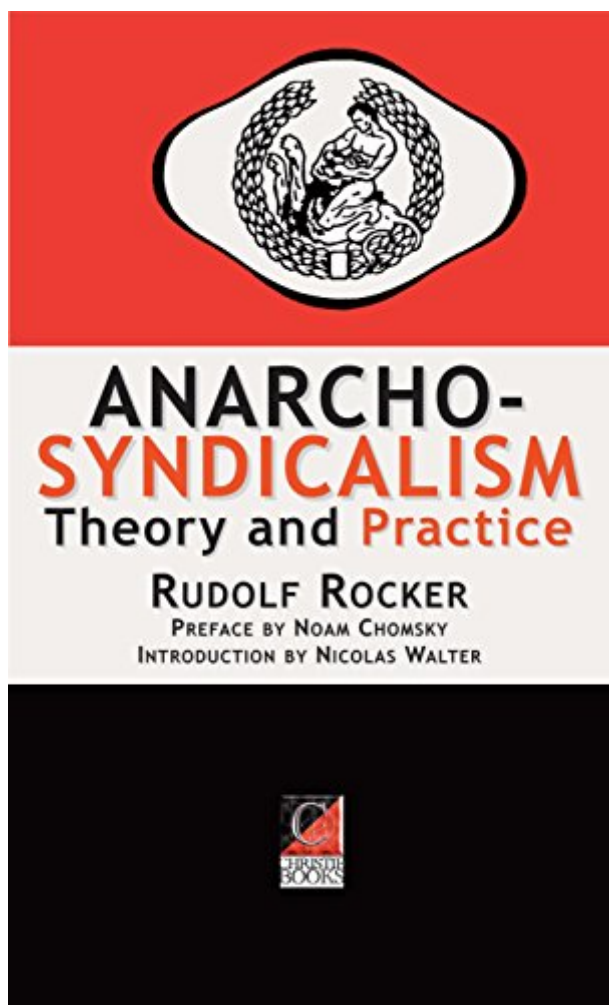


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# ANARCHO-SYNDICALISM : Theory And Practice



## Synopsis

Rocker surveys the development of these [anarcho-syndicalist] ideas and the struggle to achieve them, and illuminates their fundamental significance. His approach is far from 'Utopian'; this is not an abstract discourse, but a guide to action, drawing from the lessons of past failures and successes. Like other serious anarchists, Rocker 'rejects all absolute schemes and concepts' and appreciates that we can set no 'definite final goals for human development', but can only contemplate 'an unlimited perfectibility of social arrangements and human living conditions, which are always straining after higher forms of expression', based on new understanding, new insight. The lessons of history teach us a good deal, but nothing more clearly than the fact that we often remain quite unaware of the forms of oppression of which we are victims, or sometimes agents, until social struggle liberates our consciousness and understanding.

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## Customer Reviews

Anarchism isn't simply bomb-throwing brutes - it is more properly called Libertarian Socialism. Its premises are cooperation, mutual assistance and freedom from force and authority. Rocker does a fairly comprehensive job of explaining what is involved. I think it is impossibly utopian, but a lot of people don't, judging from the demonstrators one sees these days. We are not accustomed to condemnation of republican democracy - but it too is a form of domination, the majority over the minority and frequently the rich over the poor. The saving grace of a constitutional form of government is that, by choosing to live under one, citizens delegate certain decision-making rights to their representatives, and those representatives are supposed to honorably represent them in government. This book is fairly short and clearly written - a good read to learn what freedom could be and what seriously interferes with freedom.

Chomsky quotes Rocker as an influence a lot. I'm ultimately not an anarcho-syndicalist, but I really appreciated learning more about it and understand the appeal.

Great overview of the history of socialism and the debates within socialism that led to the various schools within it. A great guide for anyone interested in learning more about the history of socialism and anarchism.

How can a society progress to a level of legitimate egalitarian communization without the creation of a hierarchical structure of leadership or vanguard? For anarchists, the answer often lies in anarcho-communism or anarcho-syndacism. This text by Rudolph Rocker, is perhaps the definitive work on the latter theory. Anarcho-syndacism eliminates the apparatus of the state as a means to socialism, whereas classical Marxist theory insists that the state will wither away once the proletariat has seized control of the means of production. Anarcho-syndacism values the use of direct action as a means to control the forces of production, and the utility of unions and defederated workers councils as the proper structures for social planning. Rocker points to the syndacism of the Spanish Revolution as the primary example of the theory in action, though there seem to be few cases in history of such socialization without centralized planning. Perhaps this mode of revolution is more legitimate and effective than classical Marxism or Marxist-Leninism, though I suspect that anarchism will always suffer from the fact of its inefficiency and inability to mobilize populations democratically. Nevertheless, Rocker's analysis and background history (aside from several cavalier uses of 'human nature') is provocative alternative to state capitalism and state socialism.

delivers. I was pleased to find this book readily available. I will not comment on the subject matter as I am at the start of reading about this political position.

By far one of the most essential essays on this extremely important and pressing topic. True democracy and republicanism finds its expression in this ethic which, for all you ancaps out there, does not necessarily exclude the existence of a market but does allow for people to have an access to resources with which they can actualize their humanity by providing for themselves and perfecting a given craft which is not allowed for in wage slavery which reduces humans to machines and the natural and cultural environment into a wasteland.

Rocker writes lucidly and forcefully. He presents a clear alternative to political socialism, including Marxism. Anarcho-syndicalism seems well-grounded ethically and as if it would avoid the problems of concentrating power inherent in both capitalism and socialism. But can it work? The biggest argument that it can seems to be CNT in Spain in the 1930's. As Rocker described it, they were highly effective and fully anarcho-syndicalist. They were defeated largely due to the involvement of powerful foreign powers. In the U.S. before World War I, the IWW (similar to the anarcho-syndicalists in Europe) grew in influence but were suppressed by the government. Today in the U.S. the only sizable organized anarcho-syndicalist activity appears to be a much smaller IWW. They continue to support unionization efforts and refrain from political activity. If people can organize around trade unions, as Rocker describes and as the IWW does on a small scale, with sufficient involvement as to be able to run industries themselves, then anarcho-syndicalism as Rocker describes it seems wonderful. There would, however, be many practical issues to work out. Rocker says that the CNT in Spain did that. However, if people prefer to be led, then anarcho-syndicalism won't work, as someone will undoubtedly step in to lead and, in doing so, enforce preferences for themselves. For over 70 years, anarcho-syndicalism seems not to have been won over by many people. Will conditions change so that people embrace it? Would educational efforts help revive it? Or has capitalism adapted and won? Is self-government just too much effort for most people? This work by Rocker seems about the best place to start in exploring such questions.

While the fall of the Soviet Union was seen by some as proof that socialism is untenable, Rocker shows in this text how the revolution was doomed from the start, and offers an attractive alternative to the party-led style of statist socialism attempted there. Syndicalism seems to me to be a slightly more "realistic" way in which to achieve socialism, that doesn't depend on the benevolence of a

centralized authority. Rocker also relates some of the history of the labor movement in general in Europe, and of syndicalism in particular. I would like to have seen a bit more detail regarding syndicalist government structure and economics, the practical aspects, but he gives a very good overview of the movement in not many pages.

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