Portland Anarchists Begin Fixing Roads & Potholes (Because the Government Won't)

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Created 03/16/2017 - 20:35

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Mar 16, 2017 8:35 PM

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“Who will build the roads?” The question is a common response to the proposition that human beings can coexist peacefully in the absence of a government or even the concept of a State altogether. Anarchists often claim that in the absence of an institutionalized State, people will voluntarily organize and discover solutions to the problems they face, including the construction and maintenance of roads. One such group of anarchists decided to put their beliefs into action by repairing potholes in Portland, Oregon.

A Facebook page called “Portland Anarchist Road Care [5]” claims PARC is an anarchist organization dedicated to putting “the state of the roads of PDX into the hands of the people.” The group’s page says they “believe in building community solutions to the issues we face, outside of the state.” They say they are working to change the stereotype of anarchists as road blockers and window smashers. PARC also accuses the city of Portland of failing to repair roads in a timely manner and failing to provide adequate preventative care for winter storms.

“Portland Anarchist Road Care aims to mobilize crews throughout our city, in our neighborhoods, to patch our streets, build community, and continue to find solutions to community problems outside of the state,” their Facebook page reads.
Dylan Rivera, a spokesman for the Portland Bureau of Transportation, told Anti-Media he can empathize with those who are frustrated. “*We have a backlog of more than 1000 pothole requests,*” Rivera said over the phone. “*That work has been frustrated by a wet spring, with very few dry days for potholes.*”

Rivera says the city has held a “Patch-a-thon” where they quadruple their staff working on potholes. He stated that during a recent “Patch-a-thon,” the city had 29 crews fix more than 900 potholes. In contrast, The *Portland Mercury* reports [7] that PARC has patched five potholes in Portland. While those differences may seem stark, it is worth mentioning that the anarchists fixed the potholes via voluntary direct action while the city of Portland is using money stolen from the local community via taxation.
Rivera warned that Portlanders who choose to privately maintain the city streets without the approval of the government are doing so at their own risk. “Portlanders maintaining city streets is not safe and it’s not allowed,” Rivera stated. “It’s not safe for the people doing the fixes because they are working in traffic and they are not trained to have the right procedures, barricades, and that sort of thing, to have a safe work zone.” Rivera also warned that individuals who choose to fix the roads could face potential civil liability if someone’s car is damaged. The irony is that, currently, if an individual’s vehicle is damaged due to government inaction on potholes, the government is rarely held accountable.

Whether Portland Anarchist Road Care will continue to fix potholes and eventually outcompete the City of Portland remains to be seen, but one thing is certain: the community is a shining example of what a determined group of individuals can do when working together on a common goal.
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Even more so, they are a powerful example of how the people can accomplish both mundane tasks like building and maintaining roads, and more complex issues like how to organize our lives in the absence of the State. The beauty is that we each have the power to be an example of what a world without theft, institutionalized violence, and force can look like. **We can choose to live lives that do not rely on the force of government and instead use our individual power to work towards collective liberation.**


Links:
- [3] [http://www.zerohedge.com/print/590582](http://www.zerohedge.com/print/590582)
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[5] https://www.facebook.com/pg/PortlandAnarchistRoadCare/about/?ref=page_internal