

# **A New Anarchist FAQ**

**An Introduction to Anarchy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Raddle Collective

July 2025

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# What is Anarchy?

Anarchy is the rejection of all institutions and doctrines that seek to impose rule. It is a life of autonomy and self-determination. Anarchy is not theoretical, nor hypothetical. It is not a hope for an imagined future, it is here and now. It is a living and breathing praxis. It is a path of defiance we create for ourselves in spite of constant subjugation.

Anarchy is an endeavor to carve out pockets of life free from exploitation and suffering. It is actively working to end authoritarian relations wherever they exist, and building non-authoritarian alternatives. There is no end-goal to anarchy. It is not a prescribed way of life for an imagined people in an imagined place and time, but the experiments of countless generations of disparate people who aren't happy being forced to submit to their supposed superiors, people who aren't willing to accept that a life spent toiling to enrich others represents any kind of "freedom".

"Anarchy is the thing we want. It is the Beautiful Idea. It is the entirely impractical idea that we can be, and must insist on being, totally free. From domination, of course, but also from mundanity and morality. It is the id to the super-ego of society and its shaming, fear-instilling humiliations and self-inflicted limitations.

Anarchy is an act of faith—a leap into the unknown—and a totally sober proposition. It is an explosion and the simple things we do unconsciously. It is something that predates civilization and cannot be tamed by cities, governments, exchange, or politics.

Anarchy is anarchy, it is both organization (along completely different lines than the ones that currently exist on a broad level), and chaos. It is each of us having the ability to determine our own lives and the ways that we relate to others, from our most intimate relationships to the more far-flung. Anarchy is impossible and it is that very impossibility that makes it desirable. As desirable as the eventual lover or the water at the end of a long hike. As impossible as independence, autonomy, and collaboration among equals.

Long Live Anarchy!" — anonymous

# What is Archy?

The dictionary definition of 'archy' is any body of authoritative officials organized in nested ranks. Be it monarchy, an oligarchy, a republic, a feudal state or any other hierarchical society.

While anarchy is the opposition to social hierarchy and domination, archy is the full embodiment of those things. While anarchy calls for the absence of rulers, archy depends on the majority of a population serving and obeying a minority of rulers. Sometimes a few rulers (e.g. monarchies), and sometimes many (e.g. social democracies).

Hierarchies exist for rulers to maintain their social control & power over the population. This control is maintained with violent force by authorities appointed by the rulers: the army, national guard, police, courts, prisons, social workers, media, tax collectors, etc.

Not all guidance given by one person to another constitutes hierarchy. Choosing to accept a specialist's expertise in their craft needn't create a hierarchy or make them your ruler. A roofer laying your roof or a chef cooking your meal needn't be your superior on a hierarchy simply because they are providing you with a valued service.

Similarly, an individual using force to strike a blow at the system of authority that oppresses them does not turn the individual into an authority.

Authority is not simply an isolated instance of the use of force, but an ongoing social relationship between two parties. It is a relationship where one party has the socially legitimized right to command, and the other party has the corresponding obligation to obey.

Destroying archy where you see it does not create archy, it creates anarchy.

# What is Autonomy?

Autonomy, in the anarchist sense, is the freedom to make your own decisions and act on them—without needing permission from any higher authority like governments, bosses, or institutions. It's about self-governance, not just as individuals but also as communities.

In some respects, autonomy resembles the concept of liberty—an idea that gained prominence during Europe's so-called “Age of Enlightenment” in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the time, liberty was seen as a bold and radical challenge to the unchecked authority of the monarchs who ruled society at the time. Its advocates argued that all people were born with inherent rights, supposedly granted by God, which no ruler had the right to violate. The idea of inalienable rights, or liberties quickly spread, becoming a central slogan of the French and American Revolutions. These uprisings played a key role in dismantling monarchy and feudal rule and laying the foundation for what would become modern liberal democracy.

While liberty is often seen as a “right” granted by the state (like freedom of speech or the right to vote), autonomy doesn't depend on the state at all. It's not something given to you—it's something you claim and practice yourself, anarchically.

From Sub.Media:

“Over the centuries, countless astute, and not-so-astute political thinkers, from Voltaire and Thomas Jefferson, to Alex Jones and Glenn Beck have claimed liberty as a universal human right. But to say that this principle hasn't been universally applied would be a gross understatement. This is because from its very beginnings, the concept of liberty has existed within a framework of European global conquest, a process facilitated by colonialism, slavery and genocide. Even today, the language of liberty is still used to mobilize people's support for imperialist wars. Remember when the United States government claimed they were bringing freedom to Iraq?”

Liberty comes with conditions: you're allowed certain rights as long as you obey laws and accept the authority of the state. Autonomy rejects that setup entirely. It says: you don't need rulers to tell you what rights you have—you already have the power to decide things for yourself and with others.

Autonomy is both individual and collective. In the individual sense, it means you can make choices about your life without external control or having to obey the will of authority figures who always put their interests before yours. In the collective sense, autonomy means groups of people make decisions together on matters that affect them collectively.

With anarchism, you can't really have one without the other. Autonomous communities are made up of individuals who freely choose to work together. In anarchist thought, individual and collective autonomy are inseparable—you can't truly have one without the other. Autonomous collectives are formed by autonomous individuals who choose to collaborate in pursuit of shared goals. Outside of such collective structures, practicing real individual autonomy is incredibly

difficult—not only because those in power actively work to suppress it, but also because humans are fundamentally social beings. Unless you’re completely isolated from society, like living alone in a remote cabin, your freedom depends on the freedom of those around you.

Some examples of Autonomy:

- A feminist collective organizing its own campaigns without relying on NGOs or politicians to give them their marching orders.
- A neighborhood assembly of residents resisting gentrification by making decisions about housing and land use themselves, rather than obeying the will of property developers and landlords.
- A tribe in the Amazon that refuses to receive missionaries, conform to European social mores or accept the laws of the state that claims ownership over their land.

These are all examples of people creating systems of power and decision-making that belong to them, and work for them, not imposed from above in order to benefit capitalists and their enforcers.

Autonomy challenges the idea that we need to be ruled by people who supposedly are more qualified than us to determine our needs. It’s about reclaiming control over our lives—not through asking for rights from powerful entities, but by organizing ourselves and taking direct responsibility for how we live, play, relate, and co-exist.

Or put more simply: Do you really need someone sitting in a palace or parliament in a faraway city telling you what you can or can’t do, what your goals are, and how to achieve those goals?

# What is Mutual Aid?

Mutual aid is the principle of people working together to solve problems for the benefit of everyone involved. It's about cooperation, not competition—helping each other out because we all do better when we support one another.

While mutual aid has existed for as long as human society—and is found throughout nature—anarchists emphasize it as a core principle for how society should be organized. The Russian anarchist and biologist Pyotr Kropotkin made this argument in 1902, in his book *Mutual Aid: A Factor in Evolution*, when he challenged the dominant view of evolution among his peers in the scientific community as a brutal competition among people for power (“survival of the fittest”).

Instead, he showed that cooperation within and between species actually offers a major evolutionary advantage and is a more sustainable form of social organization than the winner-takes-all competition envisioned by capitalism. Using the scientific method, Kropotkin demonstrated that species that were able to work together, or who formed symbiotic arrangements with other species based on mutual benefit, were able to better adapt to their environment, and were granted a competitive edge over those species who didn't, or couldn't.

Capitalism organizes human activity around profit, often through coercion—like forcing people to work or go hungry. Mutual aid, by contrast, organizes activity around human need and collective care. It is a wholesale rejection of capitalism's competitive, profit-driven systems. Capitalism can't or won't solve problems like global poverty, exploitation of workers and environmental collapse. Mutual aid offers a different path where people come together without expecting profit and hierarchical power, simply to support each other and improve life for all.

In modern civilization, we're taught to see ourselves as independent and self-reliant—living in our own apartments, managing personal bank accounts, signing a smartphone contract, and carefully curating individual identities on social media. But this idea of personal independence is largely an illusion. It's a narrative promoted by governments and corporations to shape us into isolated, manageable and commodified consumers focused on short-term gratification.

In reality, human beings are deeply interdependent—and that interdependence has always been central to our survival and progress as a species.

Take a moment to consider: where does your food come from? Your clothing? The materials that make up your home or your car? Most of us rely on vast, complex systems of labor, infrastructure, and global supply chains to meet even our basic needs. Without these systems, very few people today could last a week, let alone manufacture the commodities we depend on daily.

Some examples of Mutual Aid in the World Today:

- People organizing relief efforts after disasters like Hurricane Katrina
- Community-run child care co-ops
- The global Food Not Bombs volunteer organization that feeds the hungry using food that would otherwise be discarded

- Open-source software communities
- Volunteers risking their lives to help others in war zones (like the White Helmets in Syria or Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders)

Mutual aid is the basic foundation for building social relations based on solidarity, not control or coercion. Mutual aid is the belief—and the practice—that we survive and thrive through cooperation, not competition. It's a practical, ethical, and political alternative to systems based on hierarchy, profit, and control.

# What is Direct Action?

Direct action is the choice people make to take political action themselves, directly addressing an issue without waiting for higher authorities like politicians, courts, police, social workers or bureaucrats to act. Direct action can be taken either by an individual or a group of people who share the same immediate goal.

Instead of asking for permission, voting for a representative, protesting or lobbying for change, people undertake the action themselves—whether that’s blocking a harmful development project such as a pipeline, squatting a building to counter private property relations, using graffiti to stave off gentrification, sabotaging a hostile workplace, neutralizing a rapist or dismantling a private health insurance company. It’s one of the main ways anarchists put our values of autonomy, self-organization and mutual aid into practice.

Direct action encompasses a wide range of activities: everything from minor graffiti and wheatpasting, to prison breaks and assassination. Direct actions are tactics, meaning that they are a specific type of action that can be used to implement a wide variety of strategies, so it doesn’t necessarily tell us much about the politics of those carrying out the action itself. The long-term goals of a group undertaking a direct action together could diverge greatly, but the immediate goal can be mutually beneficial. For this reason, anarchists often work with non-anarchists they feel they can trust on direct actions.

The German philosopher Max Weber famously described the state as holding a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. In practical terms, this means that acts of state violence—whether delivered through a politician’s laws, a court’s ruling, a prison guard’s chains, a psychiatrist’s involuntary hold order or a police officer’s gun—are considered lawful and justified. It serves as a stark reminder that the state always positions itself as the one and only legitimate authority in managing social conflict. The government uses its monopoly on violence to reinforce the structural cruelty inherent to capitalism, colonialism, white supremacy, ableism and hetero-patriarchy.

At its core, direct action isn’t about pleading with those in power to end their cruelty or exploitation. Instead, it’s about asserting the power of the people taking action—standing apart from, and in direct opposition to, the systems of structural oppression enforced by the various authorities who insist on our obedience.

By engaging in direct action, people reject the idea that a government or state has the exclusive right to make decisions for communities and instead assert their own autonomy and freedom to determine their own fate—often setting a powerful example for others to follow.

For instance, instead of lobbying a politician to oppose a pipeline or trusting regulatory agencies to intervene, supporters of direct action may choose to physically obstruct construction of the pipeline themselves, seeing it as a more immediate, effective and empowering way to create social change.

As pointed out by Sub.Media in their direct action explainer, direct action is also instrumental in creating the conditions to enable mutual aid. The following summarizes their article.

A good example of direct action being symbiotic with mutual aid comes from the 1960s, when the Black Panther Party in the USA confronted the harsh realities of poverty and systemic neglect in their communities. Instead of waiting for government support or appealing to the conscience of white-dominated America, they took matters into their own hands—creating free health clinics and launching breakfast programs to feed impoverished schoolchildren.

These initiatives weren't just charity; they were part of a broader effort to build grassroots community power. So effective were these programs that FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover labeled the Black Panthers a major threat to national security—by which he really meant, a threat to the state's legitimacy and the cruel white supremacist structures it protects. In order to continue their social programs, the Panthers armed themselves to protect the programs from government agents, who worked to assassinate their leaders and dismantle their organization.

Because direct action often steps outside official political channels—and sometimes outside the law—it is frequently met with efforts to suppress or control it. These range from subtle tactics like co-option by government and corporate-aligned nonprofits, to more extreme forms of repression, including surveillance, mass arrests, and targeted violence by government or paramilitary forces.

The men and women who have declared they hold exclusive control over social organization have demonstrated they will do whatever it takes to suppress movements that threaten this status quo. They will maim and kill anyone in order to ensure full control over society is maintained by the collection of governments and corporations that rule us.

While the idea of direct action likely predates written history—emerging wherever people have resisted hierarchy—the term itself originates in the early labor movement. It was used to describe militant tactics including industrial sabotage and wildcat strikes.

By directly halting production and standing together in the face of repression, workers were able to extract real concessions from their employers. Over time, the widespread use of these tactics pressured governments to legalize trade unions and implement labour reforms—moves largely intended to pacify the more radical elements of the labor struggle and bring them back under state regulation.

One of the most powerful chapters in the history of direct action unfolded in 1970s Italy. Amid a housing crisis triggered by capitalist restructuring, thousands of southern migrants occupied abandoned buildings and organized collective resistance to evictions. This forced the state to secure affordable housing for the poor in order to manage the growing crisis that was presenting a big threat to their power.

When the state then attempted to raise transit fares and utility bills, massive groups engaged in auto-reductions—refusing to pay the increased rates as a form of collective defiance, again forcing the state to re-examine its policies in order to maintain its power.

Italian society at the time remained a deeply religious, conservative, and patriarchal society, where both abortion and divorce were outlawed. In response, a bold women's liberation movement emerged, establishing a covert network of clinics to directly defy the state. Doctors, nurses, and trained volunteers provided safe abortions in defiance of the government's laws. These acts of direct care were accompanied by persistent public demonstrations, which ultimately led to the legalization of abortion as the ruling parties feared losing even more ground to the grassroots.

Today, as we face rising inequality, social fragmentation, and ecological crisis, direct action continues to serve as a vital tool for communities seeking to reclaim power. It offers a means not only to resist injustice, but to begin shaping the kind of world we want to live in—together in our

own communities, without ceding control to the brutal authorities who would sooner murder us than see their monopoly on power threatened.

# What is Praxis?

A question you'll often get when you attempt to discuss anarchism with people new to these ideas is how practical is anarchy? How can anarchy be demonstrated to me in a way that I can appreciate its effectiveness? Nothing is more effective in demonstrating the value of anarchy than praxis.

Praxis is when anarchists apply theory to practice through direct action, collective effort, and grassroots initiatives. It emphasizes the importance of lived experience, immediate action, and the continuous interplay between reflection and practice to challenge and dismantle oppressive structures. For anarchists, praxis is not merely about theoretical discussions, but about embodying principles such as autonomy, mutual aid, and self-organization in everyday life, aiming to create a liberated life through participatory and decentralized methods.

Praxis is any action that embodies and realizes anarchist theory. It's a valuable method for creating awareness of anarchist causes and building solidarity in your community.

Examples of praxis:

- Setting up a “Food Not Bombs” chapter in your community.
- Squatting an unused building to provide a safe space for homeless people.
- Guerilla gardening.
- Setting up a free shop that people can freely take what they need from.
- Building community gardens to feed and engage the community.
- Preparing free meals for homeless people.
- Helping people install a free and open source operating system and the Tor browser for privacy and security.
- Converting old combustion-engine cars to electric.
- Make a zine/informational about an important topic.
- Creating memes from an Anarchist perspective.
- Assassinating dictators.
- Creating an autonomous zone.
- Horizontal community public safety organizing to replace the police.
- Teaching people how to steal from the rich effectively.

- Creating a space online where Anarchists can share their ideas with each other.
- Aiding in defending indigenous sovereignty.
- Being support for people suffering from addictions, and helping them be on a healthy path they want to be on.
- Stopping pipelines from being built.
- Investigating history, and appreciating the context for how you have come to be.
- Identifying privileges caused by being a part of a white-supremacist, hetero-normative, patriarchal, trans-phobic, classist, state controlled labor farm.
- Calling out problematic behaviour in comrades, no matter their status in the group.
- Teaching people to be self sufficient by gardening, foraging and upcycling.
- Starting an anarchist bike collective to fix people's bikes.
- Making anarchist music that shines a light on injustices in the world.
- Setting up a community mesh-net to share data with people in a decentralized manner.

# What is Leftism and How Does it Relate to Anarchy?

The left vs right divide comes from which side of the French king members of the états généraux parliament were sitting before the French revolution — those on the right were monarchist, those on the left were in favour of the republic. In other words, both were in favour of the state. Obviously all this was a long time ago, and most people aren't really aware of it, but that doesn't mean it's not relevant, because the underlying assumption still persists that the whole spectrum of conceivable politics need to be enacted through the state. That's still true, whether it's social-democrats, liberals, Leninists, greens, whatever.

One of the most important things anarchists need to get across is that worthwhile transformation can only be achieved through direct action outside of and against the state, parliamentary democracy and the various structures of class collaboration, and that means questioning the left vs right thing, which only serves to cement the state's dominance over our lives.

Anarchists are not leftists, we side with neither monarchy nor republic, dictatorship nor democracy, free market capitalism nor state capitalism. We stand for anarchy. The absolute negation of all authority, including both wings of government: Left and right.

According to every contemporary definition, the left wing is part and parcel of the state, of government, of authority, and anarchists who identify with that left wing are buying into the coercive notion that they need to box themselves in with liberals, social democrats, Marxists and other authoritarians for no logical reason at all.

A far more useful distinction than left vs. right is authority vs. anti-authority. Anarchy has nothing of substance in common with authoritarians, with governmentalists, with those who desire to dominate and rule us, because anarchy is a completely different animal than anything envisioned by the left (or the right) wing of the state. We speak an entirely different language.

While the left attempts to organize people in order to cement left-wing state power, in order to reform the state to better suit the interests of the left, anarchists attempt to escape all domination and control, to abolish the government, political parties, the state, its borders and military and all kinds of power hierarchy.

Anarchy isn't simply another cog in the politics machine, it's the *anti-politics*. We reject everything politics represents.

“Although anarchists differ in their ideas of the tactics to be used in achieving social change, they are united in regarding themselves as apolitical or even anti-political.”

Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements, George Woodcock (1962)

“It is not true then to say that we treat politics abstractly. We make no abstraction of it, since we wish positively to kill it. And here is the essential point upon which we separate ourselves absolutely from politicians and radical bourgeois Socialists (now

functioning as social or radical democracy which is only a facade for capitalistic democracy,). Their policy consists in the transformation of State politics, their use and reform. Our policy, the only policy we admit, consists in the total abolition of the State, and of politics, which is its necessary manifestation..”

Politics and the State, Mikhail Bakunin (1871)

“I have always considered my inclination to anarchy to be irreducible to a politics. Anarchist commitments run deeper. They are more intimate, concerning supposedly personal or private matters; but they also overflow the instrumental realm of getting things done. Over time, I have shifted from thinking that anarchist commitments are *more than* a politics to thinking that they are *something other than* a politics. I continue to return to this latter formulation. It requires thinking things through, not just picking a team; it is more difficult to articulate and it is more troubling to our inherited common sense. I do not think I am alone in this. It has occurred to some of us to register this feeling of otherness by calling our anarchist commitments an *ethics*. It has also occurred to some of us to call these commitments *anti-political*. I think these formulations are, for many of us, implicitly interlinked, though hardly interchangeable.”

Its core is the negation, Alejandro de Acosta (2013)

Classical anarchists rarely, if ever identified with the left wing, and after waging deadly warfare on anarchists for a century, it was only recently that the left began to lay claim to anarchy, typically to co-opt successful grassroots anarchist movements to further their coercive political program and ultimately prolong capitalism and our growing dependence on the state.

This being said, a lot of anarchists today, the majority in fact, strongly identify with the left, typically by defining “left” to mean “anti-hierarchy”, despite this definition being incongruous to what the left actually represents in both modern times and historically. These anarchists closely affiliate themselves with a wider left-wing movement, including Marxists, social democrats, and even centrist political parties, and they’re perhaps unwilling to sacrifice the social capital they’ve accrued in their friendship circles by swearing off the left.

A lifetime of daily propaganda by the state and its media apparatus separating people into 2 opposing factions: left Vs. right, has a way of become ingrained in the collective consciousness. Parting psychologically with this meticulously manufactured tribalism is no easy feat. The advertised left wing identity of social responsibility, ethics, diversity, inclusion and a dedication to equality is not something that’s easy to part with, despite it being a largely fictional construct: which is constantly proven when the left wing parties get their turn to be in power and quickly increase austerity, imperialism, war, surveillance, mass-incarceration and corruption.

The state wants us to view the world in left/right binary terms in order to uphold the representative democracy system that sustains the state and keeps us separated into haves and have-nots, rulers and obeyers, while allowing the wealthy to loot our resources and steadily criminalize our very existence.

As long as the left is in service to state power, it’s of no use to anarchists.

# Do Anarchists Support Free Speech?

From Wikipedia.org:

“Doublespeak is language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms (e.g. “down-sizing” for layoffs, “servicing the target” for bombing, in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning. In such cases, doublespeak disguises the nature of the truth.”

The concept of “free speech” is fundamentally flawed, and has historically been used to convince citizens of states that they have “rights” that are gifted to them by the supposedly benevolent and generous state.

In actuality, the state doesn’t give you rights; it controls them, limits them, denies you them. It uses its monopoly on violence to censor, stalk, spy on, imprison and terrorize anyone that would threaten to subvert its power.

When an authority grants you “free speech”, what they’ve really done is take away your freedom to speak, and then allow certain people (typically the favored social class) to say certain things under certain conditions. There’s nothing “free” about this. You’re still forbidden from speech that would threaten the state or those it empowers. You’re still legally viable for slandering powerful people that can afford as many lawyers as it takes to sue you into bankruptcy. You’re still beaten to a bloody pulp (or worse) for talking back to a cop. You’ll still be imprisoned, enslaved and murdered by the state and its enforcers for being the wrong race or the wrong gender or the wrong sexuality or the wrong religion or the wrong class and daring to resist your oppressors.

Free speech is a lie told to us by our rulers to convince us we need to be ruled by them.

Anarchists are aware enough to realize the state does not grant us any kind of freedom. The entire existence of the state is predicated on taking freedom away from us to empower the rich and powerful minority that the state exists to serve. So as anarchists; as people who don’t want to be ruled, people who see the blatant lies our rulers tell us for what they are, it would make little sense for us to support an inherently Orwellian concept as “free speech”. Much more honest words for this concept would be “controlled speech” or “state-approved speech”.

Really, when the state talks about freedom of speech, they’re most often talking about the freedom to be a hateful bigot — since bigotry is really the only type of speech the state will go out of its way to protect. Bigotry allows the state to scapegoat undesirable groups and thus create gaping social divisions. If everyone is villainizing migrants or gays, those groups will serve as a fine distraction. Ensuring our rulers and their benefactors can live to exploit us for another day as we focus our rage at anyone but them.

According to the state, white supremacists are free to incite hatred against non-whites (which has often led to mass murder), but if someone were to say they think the president of the nation

deserves to be stabbed for his crimes... Well, that person would promptly be carted off to prison for voicing such a dangerous idea.

Unfortunately, some people insist on using bigoted or otherwise oppressive language in anarchist spaces, claiming that free speech allows them to do so. Since we've established that free speech is nothing more than an insipid lie our rulers tell us in order to control us, it's important that we reject the dishonest language of the state when talking about anarchy, and take a long hard look at the reasons someone would have for clinging to the state's shrewd promises of "rights" and "freedoms" that simply don't exist.

"Free speech" is not an anarchist principle in any way. Actual anarchist principles of course include direct action, mutual aid, taking a strong stance against authority in all its guises, as well as freedom of association. This means we are free to associate with whoever we want and free to avoid associating with people that would build authoritarian structures to oppress us.

So let's talk about the people who enter anarchist spaces, direct slurs and hateful bigoted rhetoric at us, and then insist we accept their abuse because they have the sacred right to freedom of speech... These people simply have no understanding of anarchy. Their "right to free speech" that they insist we respect could only be granted to them by a state with a monopoly on violence. If someone comes into your space and calls you a racial slur, no institution should have the power to stop you from showing that person the door.

It takes an incredibly sheltered person to believe there should be no consequences for abuse. When someone is abusing you or people you care about, you should absolutely be free to take a stand and remove them from your space, no matter how many times the person cries "free speech" as they're telling you you're a worthless (slur).

The "freedom" to scapegoat, demonize and demean people who are different from you really stands in direct contradiction with anarchy. Discriminating against people based on ability, race, gender or sexuality creates authority. It makes you an authoritarian. Your rhetoric directly alienates the people who belong to the groups you're choosing to look down on in disgust and present as less-than human. By using demeaning language to chastise marginalized people for their perceived inadequacies, you're upholding normative social roles, creating classes and subclasses and strengthening the authoritarian power structures that directly oppress any people that belong to minority groups.

For example, by using the word "f\*ggot" as an insult, you effectively cast gay people as being worthy of scorn and derision. You assert authority over everyone who isn't heterosexual and make life incredibly difficult for people that don't meet the normative standards you've helped construct to maintain the social dominance of heterosexuals.

Anarchists can and will choose to not associate with people that claim they have a right to oppress others. Anarchists are anti-authoritarian to our core, and this means we don't have to put up with hateful bigots in our spaces.

# Are Libertarian Socialists the Same as Anarchists?

An anarchist by definition stands against all authority without exception, while a socialist by definition is simply someone who feels the means of production should be collectively owned. So socialism is narrowly focused on economic issues, while anarchy is explicitly concerned with any and all social issues.

When a socialist also identifies as a libertarian, they're indicating that they're critical of the traditional authoritarian socialist states that have been so prominent in the world (the USSR, China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Yugoslavia, Zimbabwe, etc.)

But while libertarian socialists might reject one-party states, that doesn't mean they reject states entirely. A lot of them will support democratic states or other democratic forms of government. Anarchists, on the other hand, reject all forms of government.

Generally someone who chooses to identify as a libertarian socialist rather than an anarchist is making a deliberate choice to use non-committal language that implies they're willing to accept certain forms of authority. If they opposed all authority as anarchists do, they'd likely call themselves an anarchist.

There are various forms of libertarian socialism that promote a supposedly 'libertarian' state, while there are other libertarian socialists who reject the state form, but embrace other forms of authority.

Communalists are a famous example of libertarian socialists who embrace various forms of authority including majoritarianism but stop short of supporting a full-blown state. But the form of government they do support greatly resembles states on a smaller, more localized scale.

While a few anarchists might also choose to identify as libertarian socialists in polite company, the majority of libertarian socialists aren't anarchists, so anarchists would be better off avoiding the 'libertarian socialist' moniker since all it really says about a person's politics is they like socialist economics but have an aversion to vanguard parties. Anarchy is a whole lot more than economics.

# Can Capitalism Be Anarchist?

“Doublespeak is language that deliberately obscures, disguises, distorts, or reverses the meaning of words. Doublespeak may take the form of euphemisms (e.g. “downsizing” for layoffs, “servicing the target” for bombing, in which case it is primarily meant to make the truth sound more palatable. It may also refer to intentional ambiguity in language or to actual inversions of meaning. In such cases, doublespeak disguises the nature of the truth.” (From Wikipedia.org:)

The phrase “anarcho-capitalism” was coined by far-right white-nationalist Murray Rothbard as a way to demean anarchists by appropriating anarchist terminology and diluting anarchy’s meaning by associating it with all the things anarchists struggle against.

In one of his unpublished pieces, Rothbard even admitted “we are not anarchists, and those who call us anarchists are not on firm etymological ground, and are being completely unhistorical” because “all” anarchists have “socialistic elements in their doctrines” and “possess socialistic economic doctrines in common.”

Capitalism is just as brutal a hierarchy as statism and anyone claiming capitalists are capable of being anarchists is using malicious doublespeak to attack the anarchist movement by confusing the definitions of ‘hierarchy’ and ‘authority’. Capitalism is a perverse authority that creates a multitude of oppressive totalitarian hierarchies. There is no way to make it compatible with anarchy.

These “anarcho” capitalist pretenders would have us believe that capitalism is “voluntary” when in reality private property rights can only be enforced violently; by an authority that is powerful enough to rule a society.

Rothbard’s followers claim to oppose the state but not capital. In reality, they wish to replace the state with wholly unregulated corporations; effectively making the corporations into totalitarian states that don’t have to answer to anyone.

For all intents and purposes, these so called “anarcho-capitalists”, “propertarians” or “voluntaryists” wish to revert to feudalism and fully enslave workers, without the annoyance of human rights, labor and environmental laws or any other controls on their business activities.

They wish to replace the state’s police forces and military with private police and military that would work directly for the corporations, with no accountability to the public and with the sole purpose of safeguarding the profits and personal safety of the owners of capital.

They have similarly hijacked the word ‘libertarian’ which was historically synonymous with “anarchist” (Kropotkin used both words interchangeably) and maintains its original meaning outside the USA.

Within the USA, “libertarian”, “voluntaryist”, “propertarian”, “deontological liberal”, “autarchist”, “paleocon”, “minarchist”, “neocon”, “rights-theorist”, “libertarian moralist” and “social conservative” are all words that just mean “capitalist that doesn’t like public accountability or paying taxes” with very minor differences; usually relating to how private property “rights” will be enforced.

By creating far-right capitalist perversions of every anti-capitalist movement, the wealthy largely succeed in erasing the original revolutionary goals of a movement and replace them with more of the same capitalism, imperialism, poverty, genocide and environmental destruction.

“Anarcho”-capitalism is an oxymoron and has nothing to do with Anarchy.

# Do Anarchists Practice Democracy?

Democracy is derived from the Greek *demokratia*.

*demos* – “the people” + *kratia* – “power, rule”.

It means “To be ruled by the people”.

Contrast this with the etymology of the word Anarchy. From the Greek anarchos meaning “To have no ruler”.

If the definition of the word ‘democracy’ is “Rule by the People”, and the definition of the word ‘Anarchy’ is “To have no ruler”, then the answer to the question “Do Anarchists Support Democracy?” would logically be no. Anarchists are against all authority, even authority imposed by a majority of voters.

Of course, it’s not always that simple. Some anarchists do choose to engage with electoral voting, believing that a “lesser of two evils” approach is worth the trip to the ballot box. But, this is not the same as believing that democracy works or that it’s a form of anarchy.

Others (social anarchists) might claim that what we have now isn’t “real” democracy. Most working systems of democracy in the world today are ‘representative’, where the people elect an individual to represent them in government. Some people instead advocate for a return to the ‘direct democracy’ of ancient Greece, where the intermediary is removed and power is given directly to civilians to make decisions by voting directly on each government policy.

In short, these two forms of democracy are a difference between rule by political proxies or rule by the majority group of voters. However you window dress it, all democratic systems are ways to rule people – something all anarchists oppose by definition.

But, more than this, democracy separates us; pitting the majority against the minority. Many of us – including you – might live in a democracy, and might find that those outside of the ruling class continue to be exploited, living in perpetual servitude. We have never been granted the freedom and liberty that our rulers promise democracy will grant us.

Yet, because we are given the opportunity to take part in the political process by way of democracy, we are lead to believe we have a say in the governing of our lives. As long as we believe that the ballot box is the solution to our problems, we remain passive and alienated, never taking control of our own fates.

Anarchy rejects this authority of the majority over the minority. Anarchy rejects the authority of any group over any other group. Anarchy is about upholding each individual’s autonomy and dismantling the authority forced on us by oppressive actors.

Democracy is a hierarchy of coercive power. What happens when the minority disagrees with the majority? They are either forced to conform, or forced to leave. Democracy either promotes or enables the marginalization of minority groups while putting the onus on them to ‘speak up, be heard, and vote for change’. “Power to the people”, means “Power to the most powerful group of people”. The more power the majority group has, the less power the marginalized minority groups have.

Finally, democracy has proven endlessly throughout history that it enables the authority of brutal power hierarchies starting from its inception in ancient Greece; where only free land-owning men were allowed to participate in the direct democracy system. Democracy is responsible for some of the worst atrocities in history. More than we could list here. But, to scratch the surface:

- Funneling wealth to the ruling class leaving billions in poverty
- The Armenian genocide
- US Oil wars
- South African Apartheid
- Palestinian Apartheid
- Prison states
- The democratically empowered Nazi genocide
- The US carpet bombing of Vietnam
- Guatemalan death squads
- Slavery in the USA (representative democracy) and in ancient Greece (direct democracy)
- and more

Democracy is a tool that maintains the tyrannical capitalist status quo.  
So do anarchists support democracy?

Anarchy is the opposition to authority. It is taking a stand against every form of oppression. It is the quest to limit the suffering inflicted on people by those who rule them. Anarchy is against all rulers, including democratic ones. Anarchy and democracy are incompatible.

# Does Anarchy Have Rules?

*This is a highly-condensed segment from the essay No Rules, No Rulers by ziq*

The often-repeated cliche that anarchy represents a society with rules but no rulers is deeply flawed. This notion fails to recognize that the very nature of rules and laws implies an expectation of obedience, which in turn necessitates a mechanism for enforcement, making the presence of a ruling body, in other words, a government, wholly inevitable. There is an intrinsic relationship between rules and rulers.

Rules, by their very definition, are guidelines for behavior that carry an expectation of compliance. Whether these are codified laws or more informal social norms, their efficacy depends on the consequences of non-compliance and the fear it generates. In a society, these consequences can be catastrophic to freedom. The presence of a rule, no matter how it's created, implies a system that ensures adherence. It creates a system of coercive social control.

This system, whether it's a courtroom, a body of bureaucrats, a home owner's association or a council of elders in a village, is, in essence, an expression of government. The size of the body doesn't alter its function. A small council that creates and enforces rules over a neighborhood is just as much a governing body as a large parliament representing a nation-state and passing laws on all its citizens. They both rely on coercion and hierarchy.

The argument that rules can exist without rulers is as nonsensical as the idea of a court existing without a justice system. In the absence of a governing body, rules become mere suggestions, lacking any true power or authority, and thus cease to be rules. The practical reality is that any attempt to establish and maintain a system of rules will naturally lead to the formation of a body responsible for their creation and enforcement, thereby establishing a form of government.

The mischaracterization of anarchy as "rules without rulers" blurs the line between voluntary interaction, or anarchy, and coercive law, or archy. When people freely interact and consent to certain behaviors, they are not creating a system of rules in the governmental sense. They are establishing personal relationships and social agreements. This is a fundamental distinction: one is based on voluntary consent, while the other is based on enforced compliance. To confuse the two is to misunderstand the very foundation of anarchic principles, paving the way for authoritarian creep.

The rules we live under today are not simply suggestions; they are authoritative mandates from above. They comprise a set of rigid principles, often created by individuals we do not know, and are enforced by the state and its various institutions, including the police, courts, and military, as well as smaller-scale versions of these entities established by non-state groups. These rules are indifferent to your personal feelings or your willingness to comply. If you violate them, you will face consequences, regardless of whether you consented to them. This reality sharply contrasts with the idea of anarchy.

Anarchy requires freedom of association absent of coercion, requires mutual consent and the right to secede. It envisions a radically different existence where relationships and agreements

are based on voluntary participation and mutual respect, not on a set of externally imposed mandates that are held up with punitive penalties.

The rules-based order is completely dependant on coercion. Anarchy asserts that all relationships should be based on mutual consent. This means that if you choose to associate with others in a community, you do so because you agree to the terms of that association, and you have the right to leave if those terms no longer work for you. Anarchistic agreements between people are not dictatorial; they are the result of ongoing, fluid agreements between people. They are optional and can be renegotiated and withdrawn from at any moment.

Some attempt to trivialize this issue by drawing parallels between the rules of board games and sports, claiming that this somehow validates the existence of rules in sociopolitical contexts. However, instructions for gameplay mechanics have no relation to the rules enforced on a society. The existence of entertainment products does not exempt us from applying a consistent anarchist critique to the systems of rules and authority. Choosing to voluntarily follow instructions in a game is not the same as imposing rules on how people should live their lives.

The distinction between rules and personal boundaries is frequently obscured by those attempting to justify the necessity of rules, ultimately reinforcing authority and undermining personal autonomy. Rules, imposed by external authorities, serve to regulate behavior collectively, while personal boundaries assert how an individual wants to be treated and the nature of the relationships they wish to engage in. When these concepts are conflated, compliance with external mandates takes precedence over personal autonomy, fostering coercive dynamics that can compromise emotional well-being and erode trust in relationships. This misrepresentation can lead to feelings of invalidation, especially in anarchist spaces, where asserting personal boundaries may be mischaracterized as attempts to control others. Moreover, normalizing this conflation enables authority to intrude into personal lives, rationalizing intrusive behaviors as essential for maintaining order. Understanding the difference between rules and personal boundaries is vital for nurturing healthy relationships and promoting individual autonomy.

Some may argue that rules are necessary to combat bigotry. However, given the difficulties of engaging with bigots in inclusive spaces without causing harm to those targeted by their views, disassociating from individuals who hold bigoted beliefs is often a more pragmatic approach than attempting to create rules to control their toxic views. Such rules typically lead to bigots finding ways to circumvent them, allowing them to express their hate more covertly and thus do more sustained, ongoing harm. Instead, individuals should be encouraged to assert their personal boundaries and distance themselves from bigots, rather than engaging in often futile negotiations over rules. This prevents bigots from dominating discussions and undermining the integrity of the space as they quickly learn to navigate around the increasingly long list of rules written to counter their tactics.

In an anarchy, the interactions between individuals are not governed by a set of external rules but by a continuous process of negotiation and consent. Interactions are fluid, and agreements are a product of mutual consent that can be withdrawn at any time. This is a stark contrast to a rule-based society, where rules are imposed on individuals, often without their direct, ongoing consent.

Rules are for authoritarians. Anarchists opt for relationships built on trust and consensus rather than imposed regulations for living. Anarchists believe in creating environments where people can freely collaborate, share resources, and resolve conflicts without the need for hierarchical structures or coercive rules.

# Are Anarchists Allies With Other Anti-Capitalists?

Anarchists oppose authority. Temporary alliances can make sense when two groups share common or at least compatible goals, but when one of the groups aims to create the conditions that will oppress the other group, an alliance wouldn't be in the oppressed group's interests.

Since most Marxist and democratic socialist groups aim to wield the power of the government and more broadly, the state form, and have shown countless times that they will use that power against anarchists as soon as they get it, there's simply no way for anarchists and authoritarian socialists to find common ground. Anarchists would be shooting themselves in the foot by helping authoritarians grasp for power.

To be an anarchist is to abhor rulership, government and the coercive machinations of politicians. There's no way for an anarchist who allies themselves with an authoritarian to be anything other than a patsy who is arming their own oppressor.

There are countless examples of Marxists betraying and mass-murdering anarchists in history: during the Spanish civil war, during the Russian Revolution and its aftermath in Ukraine (including the Kronstadt rebellion, the Bolshevik–Makhnovist conflict), in Korea when Marxists assassinated the leaders of KPAM, and in modern times every time the members of a communist party join forces with the police to violently beat and imprison anarchists, from Greece to China to Vietnam.

Democratic socialists have the same history of violently killing anti-capitalists from outside their party, including in Germany during 1919, when the ruling democratic socialists violently put down the Spartacist uprising, with one of the most famous casualties being orthodox Marxist Rosa Luxemburg, as well as scores of anarchists.

Anarchists are only allies with those who seek to dismantle systems of domination, not simply change the strongman who gets to crack the whip.

# What About Healthcare?

There have been numerous alternatives to both state-run and capitalist models of healthcare throughout history. Revolutionary Catalonia (1936–1939) was a pioneer in universal public health care. Managed by worker collectives, these revolutionaries showed medical care could be organized without government oversight or profiteering private companies.

Similarly, the Welsh Tredegar Workmen's Medical Aid Society in the UK directly demonstrated for 50 years how communities could establish their own thriving healthcare systems through mutual aid. The society, run by iron and coal workers, catered to the specific needs of its members, offering a variety of medical and health benefits. Services across several hospitals and clinics included convalescent and maternity homes, ultraviolet treatments, glasses, dentures, prosthetic limbs, dietary supplements, injections, health foods, medications, X-rays, and even wigs were supplied.

These pioneering systems greatly inspired the formation of the Spanish SNS and British NHS, although their non-hierarchical features were naturally abolished as part of the shift to state control.

To dismantle the state and capital's grip on healthcare and restore the medical system to anarchy, it's important to implement collective decision-making that involves all stakeholders, particularly those most affected by the medical policies that affect them. Prioritizing the integration of medical knowledge and expertise without bestowing special political power on the administrators and practitioners is crucial: a horizontal organization where medical professionals share their knowledge as equals within the community instead of dominating and ruling over those who lack their expertise. It is important to acknowledge that medical care is intertwined with wider social issues that impact the entire community, and these issues must be addressed in a holistic manner.

# Do Anarchists Support Money?

There are several conflicting proposals for anarchist economic systems, including Mutualism and Anarcho-Communism.

Mutualists promote decentralized, community-based monetary systems that facilitate equitable exchange without the accumulation of interest or profit. It emphasizes mutual credit, local currencies, and labor-backed tokens, aiming to create a monetary environment aligned with co-operative values and social equity.

Anarcho-communists, on the other hand, seek to abolish or drastically reduce the role of money in society altogether, replacing it with direct distribution of goods and services based on need, and communal cooperation to freely share resources. Anarcho-communists see money as an oppressive tool that fosters inequality and alienation, and advocate for minimizing or eliminating its use entirely.

All anarchists oppose extracting rent or profit—such as interest or usury. Mutualists aim for an economic future where money functions as a facilitator of exchange rather than a source of wealth. The goal is to prevent capital accumulation through monetary means and promote equitable access to resources.

Using mutualist economics, money would be decentralized, locally issued, and tied to specific communities or cooperatives. These local currencies would be designed to circulate within the community, maintaining local economic autonomy and reducing dependence on national or global monetary systems.

In practice, mutualist communities might use a combination of mutual credit, local currencies, and barter arrangements. The focus would be on facilitating equitable exchange, avoiding interest payments, and promoting producers' self-sufficiency.

Anarcho-communists especially emphasize mutual support, sharing surplus resources freely with those in need, fostering social bonds and collective well-being. Goods can be distributed through systems like gift economy exchanges or managed as common resources (the “commons”) accessible to all members of the community.

With both anarcho-communism and mutualism, distribution often considers what individuals contribute to the community. Those who work or contribute more may receive more, but the focus is on meeting needs rather than profit or hierarchical privileges.

Regardless of the economic school of thought, anarchy aims to replace capitalist markets with voluntary cooperation and mutual aid. Replacing money within such a framework involves fundamental shifts in how resources are allocated, produced, and shared. Here are some ways anarchists can work to replace capitalism:

- **A Resource-Based Economy:** Instead of using money as a medium of exchange, communities could directly share resources and services based on needs and availability. This would involve communal ownership of the means of production and a focus on fulfilling everyone's needs rather than generating profit for a few capitalists.

- Mutual Aid and Voluntary Cooperation: Social relationships would be based on mutual aid—people helping each other voluntarily—reducing the need for transactional currency. Goods and services would be exchanged through direct barter or community-based sharing systems.
- Decentralized Autonomous Communities: Localized, self-managed communities could coordinate through consensus or participatory decision-making. Resources would be allocated based on community agreements, and labor contributions would be recognized as fulfilling individual and collective needs.
- Labor Credits or Time Banks: Some proposals suggest replacing money with systems like time banking, where people earn credits for their work, which can then be used to access services. While still a form of exchange, it emphasizes social value rather than monetary profit. Historically, mutualist ideas have favored commodity money or labor notes—tokens representing actual labor or value contributed—rather than fiat money issued by governments. This approach aligns with the principle of valuing labor directly and avoiding the distortion caused by fiat currency creation and inflation.
- Communal Planning and Allocation: Resource distribution could be managed through decentralized planning, where communities collectively decide what to produce and how to share it, removing the need for monetary transactions.
- Mutual Credit Systems: Mutualism often advocates for the use of mutual credit systems—local currencies or credit exchanges—that facilitate exchange between individuals and cooperatives without relying on centralized money issued by a state or banking system. These systems are based on trust and reciprocal obligations, allowing communities to trade goods and services directly or through credit notes that are mutually recognized.

# What About Security?

Anarchist strategies for security focus on building resilient, self-sufficient communities rooted in mutual aid, non-hierarchical organization, and voluntary cooperation to maintain safety and social order. Emphasis is placed on non-violent conflict resolution, mediation, and restorative justice practices to address disputes and prevent escalation, aiming to build trust and cohesion within communities.

Anarchists believe in self-defense. Communities and individuals are empowered to defend themselves if necessary, emphasizing the importance of preparedness without reliance on state-controlled forces.

Instead of centralized police or military forces, anarchists favor mutual aid networks where community members support and protect each other. This can include neighborhood watch groups, community patrols, collective emergency response teams or even the temporary formation of militias to face external threats.

Security efforts are organized locally and autonomously, allowing communities to tailor their methods to their specific needs and values. This reduces reliance on a centralized authority and fosters direct accountability.

Education about bodily autonomy, social responsibilities, and conflict de-escalation is prioritized to reduce the likelihood of violence or theft, fostering a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

Militias need to be organized without leaders or ranks, ensuring that all members have equal say and responsibility, preventing authoritarian tendencies from taking root. Participation in security is voluntary, respecting individual autonomy and avoiding coercion.

Anarchists understand that the state functions to protect and defend serious forms of harm and abuse, particularly those that serve the interests of those in power—be they economic, political, or social. For example, the state's criminal justice systems tend to prioritize maintaining social order and property rights over addressing the root causes of violence or supporting survivors. In many cases, state responses to harm can be limited, punitive, and disempowering, ultimately taking away individuals' agency and control over their own lives and not doing anything to solve the underlying problems at play.

Furthermore, anarchists see how the state's systems criminalize and stigmatize victims and survivors, rather than providing genuine support or justice. By doing so, the state can perpetuate cycles of silence, shame, and disempowerment, making it harder for people to resist or challenge harmful structures. It can also suppress grassroots community efforts for accountability and healing, preferring instead to enforce top-down control.

Anarchists believe that real justice arises from communities taking responsibility into their own hands, rather than relying on state institutions that simply reinforce oppression. They emphasize the importance of empowering individuals and communities to define their own responses to harm, ensuring that agency remains with those directly affected and not with an apathetic bureaucracy. It's important to reject the state's attempts to co-opt or suppress genuine

efforts at accountability and social change and advocate instead for decentralized, community-led approaches that respect and uphold personal agency and build collective responsibility.

# What About Prisons?

Anarchists advocate for the complete abolition of prisons because they view these institutions as inherently oppressive and unjust. Prisons are seen as expressions of state power that serve to uphold existing social hierarchies—particularly those related to race, class, and gender—by disproportionately targeting marginalized communities. From an anarchist perspective, incarceration perpetuates systemic inequalities and fails to address the root causes of social harm.

Instead of punitive measures to control the population, anarchists support the development and expansion of community-based, non-coercive forms of justice. This means restorative justice, transformative justice, and community accountability practices that aim to repair harm, foster understanding among people, and rebuild relationships in communities torn apart by the state's cruel divide and conquer policies.

Anarchists reject the legitimacy of the state and law enforcement to deny people freedom. Prison abolitionists focus on addressing the underlying social, economic, and psychological factors that contribute to harmful behaviors, emphasizing healing and reconciliation rather than punishment and confinement.

Anarchists view prisons as a component of the broader state machinery that consolidates power through its monopoly on violence. They recognize that law enforcement agencies, which operate within a rigid framework of hierarchy, violence and coercion, are inherently joined to the prison system, feeding it mostly impoverished people and minorities for using drugs, stealing from capitalists or struggling with mental illness. Therefore, advocating for prison abolition also involves challenging the legitimacy of law enforcement institutions altogether, seeing them as tools of social control that perpetuate inequality and repression.

The prison abolition movement, rooted in anarchist principles, envisions a society where community members collectively take responsibility for addressing social harms without relying on coercive hierarchical institutions. It seeks to dismantle the entire carceral system and replace it with networks of support, dialogue, and mutual aid—building communities based on solidarity rather than punishment.

# How Do Anarchists Handle Sexual Violence?

Anarchists approach sexual violence with an emphasis on community-based, autonomous responses that prioritize survivor empowerment, accountability, and transformative justice. They reject reliance on state institutions like police or courts, which are often perpetuate harm, disempower survivors, and maintain systemic inequalities. Instead, anarchists advocate for alternative models rooted in mutual aid, consensus, and collective responsibility.

Anarchists also fully support utilizing direct action when dealing with violent actors if necessary. Self-defense, whether by the victim or the broader community, is always supported. Anarchists always advocate for communities to take responsibility for their own protection. In situations of violence, they view direct intervention—such as confronting or removing the violent individual—as essential for ensuring immediate safety and preventing additional harm.

Many anarchists emphasize that any direct action should be rooted in principles of accountability, non-coercion, and safety. The goal is often to address harm without perpetuating cycles of violence or creating new forms of domination. The approach should ideally be decided by the survivor. Some may favor community-based conflict resolution, while others may prefer more direct interventions.

Anarchists recognize that social inequalities, patriarchy, misogyny, trauma, and lack of support systems greatly contribute to sexual violence. Therefore, a significant part of a strategy for anarchist justice involves transforming these social conditions—promoting gender equity, mental health support, education, and community solidarity—to reduce the likelihood of harm occurring.

Preventing sexual violence involves community education about consent, power dynamics, and healthy relationships. Building a culture of respect and mutual care is seen as essential to reducing the harm of the patriarchy. Anarchists believe survivors of sexual violence should always be empowered to lead their own healing processes, participate actively in community-based accountability efforts, and have their safety, autonomy, and well-being prioritized in any response to violent individuals.

Anarchists believe that communities should take responsibility for addressing harm directly. This involves creating safe spaces where survivors can share their experiences, seek support, and participate in decisions about how to respond to the harm. Anarchist groups ensure survivors have agency and control over their healing process. This involves listening to their needs, respecting their choices, and providing resources that support their autonomy.

# How Do Anarchists Approach Ecology?

As always, anarchists call for communities to have direct control over their ecosystems, emphasizing sustainable lifeways and ecological justice without hierarchical or corporate interference.

Anarchists favor local, community-based decision-making to ensure ecological concerns are addressed directly by those most affected, rather than through state authorities or corporations that are always completely displaced from the ecosystems they exploit for profit.

Anarchists promote collective efforts to restore and protect ecosystems, emphasizing solidarity and shared responsibility among communities and individuals as well as direct action to protect ecosystems from attack by vested interests.

Anarchists advocate for reducing consumption and living in harmony with nature to mitigate environmental degradation. The current system of concrete and tar covered industrial population centers needs to be dismantled so that people live *with* their ecosystem rather than attempting to erase it. This is the only way people will respect the land that gives them life and correlate its suffering with their own. People who are displaced from the ecosystem rarely learn to treasure it.

Anarchists repudiate capitalism and state policies that prioritize profit over ecological health. Anarchists put their lives on the line to challenge exploitative practices like deforestation, pollution, and resource extraction.

Anarchists envision a world where ecological considerations are integrated into all aspects of life, fostering a culture of respect for the environment and recognizing the intrinsic value of all living beings.

Overall, anarchists seek to create a society rooted in ecological sustainability, ecological justice, and autonomy, believing that true environmental stewardship can only be achieved without the use of oppressive hierarchies, which always end up being used to protect the industries that despoil the wilds for profit.

# Are Anarchists Vegan?

Anarchists are opposed to all forms of oppressive and exploitative systems. Therefore, it is logical for anarchists to adopt diets that do not rely on the exploitation and suffering of other beings.

Many anarchists make the ethical decision to follow a vegan way of life as part of their opposition to animal exploitation, industrial food production, and the associated environmental degradation that accompanies it. They frequently promote veganism as a means of resisting systemic violence and exploitation perpetuated by the meat industrial complex, which enslaves, tortures, and kills animals for profit, while also taking advantage of the largely impoverished migrant workforce forced to work in this sector.

Nevertheless, as can be expected in all diverse groups, not every anarchist adheres to a vegan diet. Some anarchists prefer to concentrate primarily on issues related to anti-capitalism, class, union membership, or other causes, and their dietary choices may be influenced by a mix of religious beliefs, cultural habits, gluttony and apathy. For various reasons, these anarchists opt not to extend their ethical opposition against domination to non-human animals.

There are possibly a few anarchists who have significant health concerns that preclude a vegan diet, and potentially some indigenous anarchists who live off of the land in remote Northern regions where vegetation is sparse. But generally anarchists who enjoy consuming the flesh of others are considered hypocrites and frauds by vegan anarchists. This rank hypocrisy also extends to individuals who identify as anarchists yet seek to excuse other oppressive systems they partake in, such as the patriarchy. Many anarchists possess ideological shortcomings that they are not prepared to confront. It is important to recognize that people are not perfect, and it would be naive to assume that anarchists are exceptional.

In conclusion, while veganism is a prevalent practice among anarchists, particularly those who emphasize animal rights and environmental issues, it is not a universal or defining trait of anarchism as a whole, as there remain many individuals who identify with anarchist principles but are unwilling to undertake the challenging work of dismantling all their authoritarian attachments.

# How Do Anarchists View Global Trade?

Anarchists generally don't advocate for global trade and instead promote a perspective that emphasizes local markets, cottage industries, decentralization and mutual aid.

Rather than supporting centralized, hierarchical systems of international commerce, where labor exploitation and ecosystem destruction can be hidden out of sight, anarchists advocate for alternative, local models rooted in sustainable resource-management, voluntary cooperation among skilled artisans and strong autonomy.

Decentralized and local economies are integral to anarchist economics. Promoting both local production and consumption to reduce reliance on global supply chains is important to counter the immeasurable harm of globalized industry. This can involve community-based markets, co-operatives, free stores and the formation of local currencies.

Alternative trade networks need to be built which prioritize mutual aid, fair trade initiatives, and decentralized barter systems that bypass conventional global trade institutions.

Anarchists have long been involved in anti-Globalization initiatives. Anarchists oppose large multinational corporations and inter-state trade agreements that invariably form the backbone of the exploitative and oppressive capitalist system, undermining both individual autonomy and collective labor bargaining.

In challenging capitalist markets, anarchists utilize direct action and solidarity efforts, engaging in protests, strikes, sabotage and campaigns to challenge corporate influence and push for local, direct control over economic practices.

Anarchists often work to build autonomous zones and cooperative networks within their communities. Creating these self-managed zones that operate outside state and corporate control is a good way to demonstrate to curious onlookers that there are other ways to organize economic activity and trade: Promoting mutual aid, bartering, gift economies and emphasizing local production by skilled artisans rather than outsourcing labor to a faraway land where ethical standards and practices may be lacking.

Alienating consumers from the production process and disenfranchising local artisans does untold damage to communities and their ability to sustain themselves without capitalism and the state.

Emphasizing voluntary exchanges based on mutual benefit rather than profit, often through cooperative organizations and networks is how anarchists aim to replace global trade. Certain integral goods that can't be produced locally would need to be sourced by sending trade delegations to negotiate with producers in other localities and ideally to directly inspect their supply chains for ethical breaches.

Anarchists critique the current global trade system for fostering inequality, environmental degradation, and exploitation, and seek to replace it with decentralized, equitable, and sustainable alternatives rooted in community self-determination.

# What Do Anarchists Think About Religion?

Anarchists' perspectives on religion can vary widely, reflecting the broad diversity within anarchist thought. Most often, anarchists will critique organized religion for its role in maintaining social hierarchies, authority structures, and systems of oppression. Most anarchists see religious institutions as tools used to legitimize and perpetuate power dynamics that anarchists oppose, such as capitalism, patriarchy, law, punishment and state authority.

Religious doctrines and dogmas are often used by authoritarians as tools for social control, limiting individual freedom and critical thinking which would endanger the rule of law. Anarchists typically oppose the indoctrination and conformity promoted by religious institutions.

That being said, a lot of anarchists hold a personal spirituality. Not all anarchists are atheists. Some advocate for personal, non-institutionalized spiritual practices that emphasize individual freedom, direct experience, and community without the need for hierarchical structures.

While there are some anarchists who support hierarchical organized religions, including some of the most oppressive religious institutions in the world, they generally convince themselves their sect's interpretation of the institution and its dogma is non-oppressive. Atheist anarchists would argue these religious anarchists are unable to break from the lifetime of indoctrination they've ingested, and by convincing themselves their religion is misunderstood by 99.9% of its adherents and they have the true (non-oppressive) interpretation, they are able to overlook the apparent contradiction between a faith with a past and present steeped in fire and brimstone, and their anarchist attachments.

Christianity specifically has only embraced a stance of tolerance and peace in times when it hasn't had real power over society, yet even then, it has acted to defend the powerful and to instruct the powerless to "turn the other cheek". Even when the Christian church is not actively participating in the oppression waged by the state, it has played a crucial role in justifying and sustaining it. For centuries, the church has kept the working class in bondage by sanctifying the rule of earthly authorities, teaching the oppressed that resistance to power is inherently sinful or immoral and that we will be punished by God for resisting the authority of slavers and tyrants. It has worked for two centuries to reinforce the social order, instructing the downtrodden to accept their fate and be rewarded for their docility in the afterlife.

Our rulers have historically drawn their legitimacy from divine approval granted by the church—whether by claiming they govern by God's will or asserting that wealth is a sign of divine favor. The Bible has been wielded as a tool to elevate obedience as a cardinal virtue, urging submission to authority and deflecting resistance. Passages that exalt the role of rulers and call for the submission of subjects have been used as justification for injustice, maintaining hierarchies and class divisions and even enforcing slavery.

More recent theological innovations, like the Protestant work ethic, have further entrenched this oppressive system. It frames poverty as a moral failing, while wealth is seen as evidence of divine blessing. This narrative not only rationalizes social inequality but compels the working class to see their suffering as a moral duty, subtly reinforcing the status quo. In these ways, the

church has not just been complicit in the oppression wrought by state and capital, but often acts as its chief defender, embedding it deeply within both spiritual and social structures.

Through these lenses, Christianity, when aligned with political and economic power, has most often served as a tool of control rather than liberation—a force that has maintained the status quo of inequality and subjugation, even under the guise of moral or spiritual authority.

Since anarchy readily embraces diversity, it should be expected for anarchists to also embrace healthy contradiction. While it's true that the vast majority of anarchists reject the governing religious institutions, especially Christianity, there is a subset of anarchists who choose to base their entire politics on that religion. This next section of the FAQ is for Christians.

# I'm a Christian, Can I Be An Anarchist?

Christian anarchism is a blended political and theological philosophy that combines Christianity—particularly the teachings of Jesus—with anarchist principles. It holds that the only true authority is God, and that earthly governments and hierarchies are fundamentally in conflict with the teachings of Christ.

Christian anarchists point to Jesus' life and teachings—especially the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7)—as advocating for a radical form of nonviolence, love of enemies, and rejection of worldly power. To describe their embrace of a pacifistic strain of anarchism, they cite select passages from the Bible, including:

- “Turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39)
- “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44)
- “My kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36)
- “We must obey God rather than men.” (Acts 5:29)

Christian anarchists believe that the state, with its reliance on violence, war, law enforcement, and coercion, is fundamentally at odds with Jesus' message of love and compassion. They often argue that governments demand allegiance that should be reserved for God alone, that laws enforced by the threat of state violence contradict the gospel and that participation in the state's wars or in capital punishment is incompatible with Christian ethics.

Most Christian anarchists are inspired by Leo Tolstoy – The Russian author and pacifist whose book *The Kingdom of God is Within You* is their foundational text. He saw the state as incompatible with Christianity. He believed that the fundamental teachings of Jesus, particularly his calls for nonviolence, love, and forgiveness, directly contradicted the coercive and violent nature of the state. Tolstoy's understanding of Christianity was deeply rooted in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus emphasized peace, loving one's enemies, and renouncing the use of force. For Tolstoy, the state, by its very nature, relies on violence, authority, and coercion, all of which he saw as antithetical to these core teachings of Christ.

Jesus' own life was marked by a rejection of material wealth. He chose a life of simplicity and poverty, often traveling with little more than the clothes on his back. In passages like Matthew 8:20, where Jesus says, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head,” the Gospel underscores his renunciation of worldly possessions. This voluntary poverty is seen not only as a personal choice but as a deliberate act of solidarity with the poor and marginalized. For many radical Christian thinkers, Jesus' rejection of wealth was a direct critique of the accumulation of riches and the inequality that it breeds.

Jesus' teachings consistently warned of the dangers of wealth. In passages like Matthew 19:24, where he states, “It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God,” Jesus highlighted the moral and spiritual peril of material wealth. His admonitions to the rich young ruler in Luke 18:22, “Sell everything you have and give to the poor,” further underscore his belief that the pursuit of riches was incompatible with the pursuit of spiritual integrity. These teachings were often read by later Christian radicals as a direct cri-

tique of not just personal greed but the very systems—such as capitalism—that perpetuate wealth inequality and the concentration of power in the hands of a few.

# How Do Anarchists Approach Parenting?

Anarchists parent children in diverse ways, but always emphasizing principles such as non-coercion, mutual respect, honesty, autonomy, and egalitarian relationships. Since anarchy rejects hierarchical structures and systems of authority and domination, anarchist parents work to foster environments where children are encouraged to think independently, express themselves freely, and participate actively in any decision-making processes that affect them.

Some common characteristics of anarchist approaches to parenting include:

- Respect for Autonomy: Recognizing children as individuals with their own thoughts and emotions, and encouraging their independence and self-expression.
- Non-Coercive Discipline: Avoiding punitive or authoritarian discipline methods, opting instead for open communication, understanding, education and guidance.
- Collaborative Decision-Making: Involving children in family decisions to impart a sense of responsibility and encourage respect for individual perspectives.
- Modeling Values: Demonstrating principles like equality, kindness, mutual aid, self-determination, self-defense and anti-authoritarianism through everyday interactions.
- Flexible Boundaries: Establishing household rules that are negotiated rather than imposed, fostering trust and mutual understanding between child and parent.
- Educational Philosophy: Supporting experiential, child-led learning rather than strict adherence to traditional schooling models, sometimes incorporating alternative education philosophies like unschooling or having the child engage in independent study before teaching you what they learned.

It's important to note that there isn't a single "anarchist parenting" model; approaches vary widely based on individual beliefs and circumstances. Overall, anarchist parenting seeks to empower children as autonomous individuals within a supportive, non-hierarchical, safe and stable environment.

# Are Anarchists Violent?

The monopoly on violence is when the state (or a central authority) is the only entity legally permitted to use or authorize the use of physical force within the lands it claims as its territory. This concept was most notably articulated by sociologist Max Weber, who argued that the state's legitimacy derives from its exclusive right to wield violence, either through the police or the military. Anarchists strongly reject the state's monopoly on violence. From an anarchist perspective, the state's monopoly on violence is seen as a tool used to maintain hierarchical structures, suppress dissent, and enforce laws that serve the interests of ruling elites rather than the common people.

When anarchists advocate for the use of violence, they're clear it must be decentralized and accountable to the community rather than centralized in heavily-insulated state institutions. Anarchists opt for direct action and self-defense practiced by communities or affinity groups, rather than state-led violence or militarized law enforcement.

Anarchists engage in direct action as a means of expressing their principles and advocating for social change outside traditional political channels. This approach emphasizes immediate, voluntary, and decentralized actions aimed at challenging authority, disrupting oppressive systems, or raising awareness about injustice. Direct action can involve violence when it is needed, for example to disrupt fascist organizing, to prevent pipeline building through water bodies or to defend migrants who are being targeted by the police for deportation.

While some anarchists are happy to engage in violent actions, others explicitly oppose violence and advocate for non-violent methods of social change. The diversity within anarchist movements means that violence is neither inherent nor universally endorsed, but most anarchists see no problem with using force when necessary, either as self defense, or to defend marginalized members of their community, so long as the force isn't backed by a central authority such as a state or private security firm.

Anarcho-pacifists practice nonviolence and peaceful methods to promote social change and oppose hierarchical authority. They advocate for a stateless society where conflicts are resolved entirely through dialogue, mutual aid, and non-violent resistance rather than through the use of force. While they still employ methods of direct action, they opt for peaceful methods such as marches, sit-ins, civil disobedience, community-building activities, and promoting principles of compassion, cooperation, and respect for all individuals.

Illegalists are anarchists who advocate for or engage in illegal activities as political praxis. The term is historically associated with certain anarchist movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that employed illegal acts, such as theft or sabotage, as a means of resistance against the state and capitalism.

Illegalist actions have sometimes involved violent acts, but not all illegalists are necessarily violent. Their methods and philosophies vary; some may emphasize property crime or sabotage that doesn't involve violence against persons, while others have embraced violent tactics up to and including assassination of robber barons and presidents. It's important to recognize that

the term encompasses a diverse range of individuals and strategies, and their actions depend on specific contexts and motivations.

In conclusion, anarchists can be violent or they can be non-violent depending on the anarchist, but no anarchist would confuse the isolated use of force by an individual to defend themselves or their community with the hierarchical authority that is the state's monopoly on violence, which is more often than not employed to protect the class of robber barons from the downtrodden peasants they exploit.

# Who Were the Haymarket Martyrs?

The Haymarket Affair was a pivotal event in the history of labor activism and radical politics. It is widely regarded as a turning point that galvanized the international labor movement and highlighted the tensions between workers seeking better conditions and the brutal authorities who would go to any length to prevent change.

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, industrialization had led to harsh working conditions, low wages, and long hours for the majority of workers in the industrial world. The movement for an eight-hour workday gained momentum, with protests and strikes occurring across the United States and internationally. On May Day in 1886, thousands of workers participated in a nationwide strike for the eight-hour work day.

In Chicago, USA, organizers held a rally in Haymarket Square to support the strike and advocate for workers' rights. Anarchists were largely the architects of the union movement in Chicago, using the issue of the day to galvanize workers towards a greater class war that could result in a social revolution and the creation of a free society.

As the rally was winding down, police attempted to disperse the crowd. Suddenly, an unknown individual threw a bomb into the police line, resulting in the deaths of several police officers and civilians, and multiple injuries. The police then opened fire indiscriminately into the crowd, causing more death and injury, and then reloaded their guns and did it again.

The incident was exploited by authorities and capitalists to crack down on labor organizers, especially anarchists. In the aftermath, eight anarchists were arrested and tried, accused of conspiracy related to the bombing. Despite there being no evidence linking them to the bombing, seven were convicted; four were executed by hanging, one committed suicide in prison, and others received long prison sentences.

The Haymarket Martyrs are commemorated in anarchist history for paying the ultimate price for advocating for anarchy. Their story challenges official narratives that portray authority figures as protectors of average citizens and instead emphasizes their role in defending the systemic oppression of citizens. Their deaths galvanized support for the eight-hour work day, which was finally achieved in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They serve as a reminder of the importance of revolutionary ideals and how the ongoing fight against tyranny and exploitation can require the ultimate sacrifice.

# What is Workerism?

Workerism is any ideology or worldview that strives to structure society around work, the working class, the workplace and workers, often while failing to critique these things.

Workerism, or operaismo, was of particular significance in Italian left-wing politics, being largely embraced by Italian political groups including anarcho-communists. The workerists followed Marx's lead in seeking to base their politics on an investigation of working class life and struggle.

Some anarchists, especially egoists, nihilists and other anti-left tendencies would argue a workerist lacks the imagination to see beyond a work-based existence, to constructive-play focused ways of life that prioritize joy over sacrifice and productivity.

# What is Constructive Play?

Post-work anarchists, also known as anti-work anarchists, seek a new way of life based on constructive play rather than work. They reject the stagnant workerist ideologies put forth by capitalists and socialists alike and instead encourage parting with the work industrial complex in totality.

Alfredo M. Bonanno:

“Play is characterized by a vital impulse that is always new, always in movement. By acting as though we are playing, we charge our action with this impulse. We free ourselves from death. Play makes us feel alive. It gives us the excitement of life. In the other model of acting we do everything as though it were a duty, as though we ‘had’ to do it. It is in the ever new excitement of play, quite the opposite to the alienation and madness of capital, that we are able to identify joy.”

# Do Anarchists Not Want to Work?

Anarchists have always been critical of traditional work structures and pursued the abolition of the oppressive labor arrangements industrial society has long upheld. Anarchists challenge the idea that the system of work—which always includes exploitation to some degree—is inherently necessary or desirable for human fulfillment or societal well-being. All anarchists have strived to expose how capitalism commodifies the workforce and how the system of work creates exploitation, inequality, and alienation. A shared objective in any anarchist movement is opposing hierarchical authority in workplaces and instead advocating for voluntary cooperation and self-management. Anarchist historians and anthropologists have outlined how in societies across the world, work as we know it depends on coercion and exploitation, a system of superiors and inferiors.

When anarchists advocate for a Post-Work Society, they envision a future where work is significantly reduced or eliminated, replaced by leisure, communal activities, and autonomous living. Anarchists want to foster a world where individual and collective autonomy over one's labor and life choices is the default, a world where we aren't forced against our will to labor for others to survive.

In practice, anti-work advocates may promote ideas like voluntary labor, community-based projects, or alternative ways of life that minimize or altogether avoid conventional work. The goal is to create a society where human needs are met without the imposition of oppressive and alienating labor systems.

The anti-work movement gained visibility through anarchist literature that critiques work culture and promotes alternatives aligned with anarchist and anti-capitalist ideals. The idea was popularized on anarchist forums such as Raddle, before being co-opted by Marxists and liberals who attempt to strip it of its anarchist origins and water it down so that it doesn't actually promote abolishing work.

To abolish work is to replace it with more equitable, fulfilling, and voluntary activities. The core principle remains challenging traditional work paradigms rooted in hierarchy, exploitation, and alienation.

# How Did the Anarchist Critique of Work Originate?

Egoism is the philosophy of Max Stirner as described in his most famous work, “The Unique and Its Property” and expanded upon later in “Stirner’s Critics”. A 19<sup>th</sup> century existentialist philosopher, Stirner was one of the earliest known exponents of anarchy inside industrial Europe. Egoism stands apart from later workerist offshoots of anarchism like anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism by refraining from glorifying work, the factory and other exploitative social constructs.

Egoism emphasizes the individual and their unique will and rejects any abstractions (“phantasms”) and their influence (“haunting”) on the actions, thoughts, feelings, and desires of the individual (“The Unique”). As such, Egoism is opposed to humanism, liberalism, statism, morality, ideology, work ethic, social custom, religion, tradition and other fixed ideas that are projected onto us by external forces. Stirner posits that The Unique pursue it’s own interests, whatever they may be, free of any reservations born from phantasms.

Like most currents of post-work or anti-work anarchy, egoism rejects the idea of mass social revolution, seeing it as a time of violent and unpredictable turmoil which could very easily give rise to new hierarchies that serve new tyrants who rush in to fill the power vacuum.

Instead, egoists and other post-work anarchists favor more evolutionary methods of making anarchy: A focus on alternative experiences and social experiments, as well as education and the demonstration of radical modes of living which can easily create anarchy in the world today, in the current time and place, serving the current population.

A lot of anarchists don’t believe it’s in any way desirable for individuals to wait for a pie-in-the-sky social revolution before they can begin to experience anarchy. Post-work anarchists have no qualms about celebrating life by fully-embracing alternative experiences and lifestyles outside of what is offered within the current social system.

Workerist anarchists are quick to demean post-work anarchists such as egoists, anti-civs and green nihilists as “lifestylists” for not adhering to whatever workerist program their off-shoot of stateless socialism decrees as necessary to achieving revolution. Like all socialists, workerist anarchists would rather focus their energies on recruiting workers to their cause and growing their unions in the hopes that they (or more realistically their distant descendants) can accumulate numbers big enough to bring about their much-coveted socialist revolution.

Post-work anarchists want no part of any program designed by others to limit them, control them or curtail their individual desires in order to compel them to pursue a collective ideological agenda passed down by long-dead European philosophers who lived in a different time and place and had different ideals, customs and objectives than anyone living in the world today.

Egoists reject the idea that the individual should have to sacrifice for the benefit of the “greater good” and instead they posit that cooperation, the formation of social bonds, altruism and mutual aid are inherently desirable because these things benefit the individual as much as they benefit

the collective. For this reason, Stirner advocated for a “union of egoists”: Multiple egoists voluntarily associating with one another to fulfill a purpose, goal, or even to simply enjoy each other’s company; free of any coercion or obligation. It’s essentially the earliest form of the anarchist concept of freedom of association.

Despite common misconceptions, egoists have nothing against relying on or working with others to achieve a mutually-shared goal. Egoism posits that kindness and charity is born from empathy, not morality. People give and help each other because it feels good for most people to do so, in this sense, what we call “altruism” is simply a side-effect of egoism.

Egoism embraces any act that is done out of the individual’s desire to commit the act. If the act is born from obligation, it is not an egoist action. Egoism supports the individual doing exactly what the individual pleases — taking no notice of God, state, morality or society.

To Stirner, “rights” were merely specters in the mind, coercing us to act in a certain way in order to benefit externalities like the state. He held that society does not exist but “the individuals are its reality”.

# Why Do Anarchists Oppose Rights?

Anarchists critique the concept of rights primarily because they see it as rooted in hierarchical, state-centered, or capitalist frameworks that can reinforce authority, inequality, and coercion. The critiques of rights often focus on the limitations, assumptions, and potential harm associated with rights as traditionally conceived. Stirner was likely the originator of the rejection of rights as a concept, but modern anarchists such as Bob Black ("The Myth of Human Rights") and ziq ("But the Government Said I Have Rights") have written in length about the subject.

Rights are upheld as constructs of authority. Many anarchists argue that rights granted by authorities—states, legal systems, or institutions—can be used to legitimize power and control rather than promote the genuine freedom of the people governed by the authority.

Rights are always limited and conditional—anarchists reject the idea that rights are granted or protected by the state, as this inevitably leads to the state imposing arbitrary limitations and exclusions to certain classes and groups of people e.g. undocumented migrants, women, homosexuals. The limitations on rights undermine autonomy and restrict mutual aid efforts by criminalizing anyone who offers help to the groups who are denied rights.

Rights can reinforce hierarchies—by framing individuals as entitled to certain privileges, rights can uphold social hierarchies and inequalities, especially when rights are unevenly distributed or selectively enforced, which they invariably are. Rights are often used by the state to divide and conquer: The emphasis on individual rights can create divisions among people and groups, leading to fear and competition rather than solidarity, which is contrary to anarchist principles of mutual aid and collective liberation.

Rights tend to serve capitalist or state interests. Anarchists see rights language as a tool used by states and corporations to legitimize property rights, exploitation, and control, rather than the fostering of genuine liberation and social justice.

Rights are simply not enough for true liberation. Anarchists often argue that the granting of rights are merely legal or formal protections that do not challenge the underlying power structures in place. Instead, anarchists advocate for direct action, social transformation, and the abolition of oppressive systems rather than relying on rights-based reforms to the oppressive systems.

Instead of focusing on rights, anarchists emphasize free association, mutual aid, self-determination, and collective decision-making as the foundations for a just and free society. They seek to build relationships and institutions based on voluntary cooperation, rather than scattered legal entitlements for certain people.

# What Are Some Examples of Anarchist Societies and Communities?

## **The Free Territory (Makhnovshchina) in Ukraine (1918–1921)**

Led by Nestor Makhno, was an expansive anarchist territory during the Russian Revolution. Peasant armies and workers' councils controlled the territory through voluntary associations, with an emphasis on anti-authoritarianism. The Free Territory demonstrated the feasibility of large-scale anarchist-inspired self-management during social upheaval.

Policies were exercised through local councils (soviets) and assemblies composed of workers, peasants, and soldiers. These bodies made decisions collectively, emphasizing direct participation and discussion. Communities and military units operated based on voluntary association, rejecting hierarchical authority structures typical of state systems. Factories and land were collectivized and managed by workers and peasants themselves, without top-down control. This meant economic activities were organized democratically, with decision-making power in the hands of those directly involved.

There was no Standing Army in the Traditional Sense: The military was organized as a voluntary militia, with soldiers choosing to participate and having a say in military decisions. The Makhnovists promoted mutual aid—community members helped each other in farming, production, and defense. Their social practices prioritized cooperation over competition.

While Nestor Makhno was a prominent leader, the movement emphasized consensus and voluntary adherence rather than authoritarian command. Leadership was based on mutual respect and consensus, not coercion. The movement rejected centralized state authority, hierarchical military commands, and bureaucratic control, seeking instead to create a stateless and classless society. Their goal was to dismantle the oppressive structures of Tsarist Russia, the bourgeoisie, and the state. Instead, they aimed to establish voluntary associations, free communities, and a society based on anarchist principles. The Makhnovists sometimes allied with other revolutionary groups temporarily but maintained their independence and anti-authoritarian stance.

The Free Territory was crushed by Marxist forces led by the Bolsheviks, who declared the anarchists to be “bandits”. The Bolsheviks viewed the autonomous anarchist region as a threat to their efforts to consolidate power and suppress independent socialist movements in favor of a centralized authoritarian socialist state with Lenin as the ruler. The Red Army's superior military resources and strategic campaigns overwhelmed the smaller, guerrilla-style anarchist forces. By 1921, the Bolsheviks had effectively defeated the anarchist movement in Ukraine. Nestor Makhno was forced into exile, fleeing to Romania and later France.

## **Freetown Christiania**

Founded in 1971, remains active today, an intentional neighborhood that has managed to maintain a largely autonomous status for over five decades. The community was established by squatters in Copenhagen, Denmark, who occupied an abandoned military area and proclaimed it a free city. Due to this status, residents are not required to pay taxes and are able to sell marijuana and other drugs openly.

Freetown Christiania has always embodied an anarchist, communal ethos. The community discourages private property—residents are prohibited from owning private cars, for example—and maintains basic rules to prevent violence and crime, such as a ban on guns. Residents often live communally, with shared spaces and resources. It has a reputation for being a hub of alternative lifestyles, progressive arts, and activism. The community manages its affairs collectively, often through consensus-based decision-making.

In 2012, when the Danish government offered to sell the land occupied by Christiania to its residents, the community accepted. They formed a foundation to purchase the property, ensuring that the land would be owned collectively by the community.

## **Exarchia**

A neighborhood in Athens, Greece, known for its strong association with anarchist, anti-authoritarian, and radical political movements. It has a long-standing reputation as a hub of counterculture activity, social activism, and resistance against state authority and capitalism. Exarchia has historically been a gathering place for anarchists who oppose government policies and advocate for decentralized, self-managed communities. The neighborhood is home to numerous alternative bookstores, cafes, squats, and art spaces that promote free expression and political engagement.

Throughout Greece's modern history, especially during periods of political upheaval, Exarchia has been a center of resistance, notably during the military junta of the late 1960s and early 1970s, and in subsequent protests against austerity and government reforms. Exarchia is often targeted by the Greek state for its defiance of authority. It often sees clashes with police, especially during protests, and maintains a reputation as a safe haven for anarchists, students, and activists. It embodies a spirit of rebellion rooted in anarchist principles.

## **The Shinmin Autonomous Region.**

In 1924, the Korean Anarchist Communist Federation (KACF) began actively supporting the development of anarchist labor unions and promoting anti-imperialist sentiments in China. Five years later, the KACF declared the Shinmin province to be independent from China and declared their aim to establish a decentralized society within the region.

Like other anarchist communities, the KACF organized itself into a loose federation of councils, each governing specific areas, districts, and villages. These councils collaborated and made decisions independently on key issues such as agriculture, finance, and education, fostering local self-management. However, due to Japan's imperialist ambitions to conquer the region and Stalin's efforts to overthrow it, the federation was ultimately dismantled in 1931.

## The Strandzha Commune

The Strandzha Commune in Bulgaria was an anarchist-inspired community declared on August 18, 1903. It was led by Mihail Gerdzhikov, a guerrilla leader associated with the Internal Macedonian Adrianople Revolutionary Organization. Despite having a small force of around 2,000 fighters, Gerdzhikov's group established a provisional government in the Strandzha Mountains, challenging invading Ottoman forces that numbered approximately 10,500 soldiers. Within the commune, a communal system was implemented, with resources shared equally based on need. However, this short-lived experiment was suppressed by Ottoman troops just over a month later, on September 8, 1903.

## Zomia

A vast geographical region inhabited by approximately 100 million people. Stretching from the Vietnamese highlands and Tibetan plateau to Afghanistan, Zomia is home to multiple anarchistic communities. Some political scientists, including Yale's James Scott, view Zomia as the rejection of modern nation-states and consider it an example of anarchist society in practice.

In this region, states such as China and Vietnam lack control over many of these remote areas, leaving local communities largely autonomous in their governance. A lot of these cultures employ non-hierarchical social structures. The Wa people, for example, have social rules that limit the display of wealth and power, helping to maintain their non-hierarchical and egalitarian society.

Scott also contends that this form of society emerged as people fled from traditional nation-state systems to seek greater freedom. He further suggests that the absence of written language across Zomia is a deliberate choice by its inhabitants, aimed at avoiding the bureaucratic complexities associated with literacy and formal state administration.

## The Hadza

The Hadza are a protected hunter-gatherer Tanzanian indigenous ethnic group. They live around the Lake Eyasi basin in the central Rift Valley and in the neighboring Serengeti Plateau. Several anthropologists who have lived with them have written that they embody aspects of anarchistic social organization. Their society is characterized by a high degree of egalitarianism with a strong aversion to hierarchy and formal leadership. Decisions are typically made collectively through consensus, and there are no permanent leaders or rigid social structures that enforce authority. People who attempt to assert authority over others are rejected socially.

The Hadza's social practices emphasize sharing, cooperation, and mutual support, which reduces inequality and conflict over resources. Their mobility and subsistence diet fosters flexible social roles rather than fixed hierarchies. This decentralized and non-coercive way of organizing society aligns with principles commonly associated with anarchy.

# How Do Anarchists Who Live Together Divide Chores?

Anarchists in a shared living space handle the division of chores through the principles of mutual aid, voluntary cooperation, and consensus decision-making. Since anarchism emphasizes rejecting hierarchical authority, chores are often organized in a way that promotes equality, autonomy, and collective responsibility.

Housemates collaboratively decide on how chores are assigned using consensus, ensuring everyone's input and agreement. They may hold regular meetings to discuss responsibilities and make adjustments to the agreement as needed. They may choose to employ rotating tasks so that chores are rotated regularly so that no one housemate bears the same responsibilities indefinitely, promoting fairness and variety.

Members choose chores based on their individual preferences and skills, fostering a sense of purpose, ownership and cooperation. Instead of strict divisions along class or gender lines, chores are viewed as communal tasks that everyone contributes to according to their ability, emphasizing collective care for the living space and the betterment of the residents' living conditions.

A chore sharing system must be flexible, negotiable and adaptive, remaining open to change, allowing members to adapt chores to changing circumstances, abilities and preferences. Anarchist approaches to any communal living situation always prioritize cooperation, respect, and shared decision-making, aiming to create an egalitarian and harmonious living environment.

# How Do I Manage Interpersonal Conflicts with Other Anarchists?

Tackling interpersonal conflicts with other anarchists can require a combination of open communication, mutual respect, and a shared commitment to anarchist principles such as autonomy, anti-authoritarianism, and solidarity. It can take a lot of time and energy to resolve these conflicts, but as long as these basic values are shared, it should be doable. Here are some strategies to navigate conflicts effectively.

**Active listening**—Listen carefully to the other person's perspective without immediate judgment or defensiveness. Show that you value their experience and viewpoint. As long as they're not being abusive, don't talk over them, let them have their say before you respond.

**Express your concerns** and feelings honestly but respectfully, while identifying common values and goals. Remember that, as anarchists, you share core principles like mutual aid, freedom of association and resistance to authority. Focusing on shared ideals can help bridge differences.

**Establish boundaries**—Recognize each other's right to autonomy and differing approaches to problem solving. Respect the boundaries that have been set and always be careful not to control or dominate others in your social circle.

**Seek consensus or mutual agreement**—When possible, work toward consensus or at least mutual understanding rather than winning an argument. Emphasize cooperation over conflict.

**Address issues promptly and directly**—Don't let conflicts fester. Address issues early while emotions are manageable, aiming for resolution rather than escalation. Avoid the temptation to break off into opposing cliques, which will only further social divisions and lead to intractable conflict and potentially violent rage.

**Use mediation if needed**. If conflicts are persistent, consider involving a neutral mediator from within your community who can facilitate dialogue. Be careful not to burden the mediator or expect too much of them, remember to respect their autonomy and boundaries too.

**Always reflect on the power dynamics** at play in any group. Be aware of any power imbalances and work to ensure that all voices are heard equally and that no one is treated unfairly due to any hierarchical elements that may develop in the group.

**Prioritize solidarity and community building**. Remember that maintaining relationships and community cohesion is vital. Focus on building trust and mutual support.

**Be open to growth and change**. Conflicts can be opportunities for learning. Be willing to adapt and grow from disagreements.

By emphasizing respectful dialogue and shared values, anarchists can navigate conflicts without compromising their principles, fostering stronger, more resilient communities, but in the event that someone in the group is being oppressive, or trying to build authority, don't be afraid to exercise your freedom of association. You don't have to get along with everyone.

# How Do I Live a Freer, More Anarchistic Life?

It can be a years-long process to align your everyday actions and choices with core anarchist principles such as autonomy, mutual aid, freedom of association, anti-authoritarianism, and direct action. It's an ongoing, concentrated effort to move towards an anarchic way of life.

Always cultivate personal autonomy. Make decisions based on your values rather than external authority or societal expectations. Practice self-reliance and critical thinking.

Reduce your dependence on hierarchical systems as much as possible. Minimize reliance on institutions that concentrate power—such as large corporations, government agencies, or hierarchical workplaces—by supporting local economies, sharing resources with neighbors, and building autonomous community in any way you can.

Participate in mutual aid. Whether you organize it yourself or engage as a participant, look for ways to enact mutual support in your community—share resources, skills, and knowledge to strengthen community resilience and challenge the competitive, capitalistic mindset.

Practice direct action. Don't wait for others to solve problems for you. Take initiative to address issues directly, whether through protests, community organizing, sabotage, or a variety of tangible personal choices, rather than waiting for top-down solutions to be presented to you.

Decentralize all the systems around you: Either create or support decentralized structures—like local cooperatives, grassroots groups, or affinity networks—that empower individuals and communities rather than centralized authorities like the City or the State.

Live simply and sustainably in every way you can. Reduce your material consumption and environmental impact, aligning your lifestyle with ecological sustainability and strong anti-consumerist principles. Practice what you preach.

Question authority and social norms every day of your life. Constantly challenge authority figures, societal norms, and traditional roles including gender roles. Be critical of every system of power you're forced to interact with and refuse to accept them as natural or unchangeable.

Build community and solidarity everywhere you go. Develop relationships based on trust, mutual aid, and shared values. Collective resilience is key to living freely outside oppressive structures. You can't do everything alone.

Educate and raise consciousness among your neighbors and co-workers. Share knowledge, challenge misinformation, and promote anarchist ideas within your community to foster collective liberation. Don't let apathy and cruelty be normalized. Always speak up for the oppressed, always oppose injustice.

Continually assess your practices and beliefs and be ready to reflect on your mistakes, adapt to new surroundings and changing circumstances. Be open to change and always work on your personal growth. Achieving greater freedom means never closing yourself off to new experiences and people.

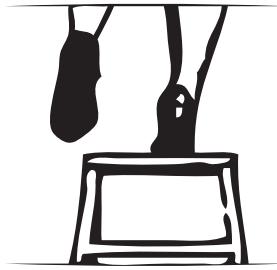
Living a freer, more anarchist life is an ongoing process of resisting oppressive systems and cultivating personal and collective autonomy. It's about making intentional choices that align with anarchist values and contribute to both individual and collective liberation.

## What Are Some Important Texts to Read?

See <https://raddle.me/wiki/reading> for a comprehensive list. Each category has the texts arranged by their significance to each subject, so you can only read the texts most related to the topic at hand if you prefer. The list blends both classical and modern texts so you get a diverse perspective and it covers various schools of anarchy as well as related principles.

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Raddle Collective

A New Anarchist FAQ

An Introduction to Anarchy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

July 2025

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