

ANARCHISM

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WHAT IS ANARCHISM?

Contrary to popular belief, anarchy \neq chaos. The reason that people think it means chaos is because of its rejection of *government from above* (namely, by politicians and officials) in favor of a government by the people.

The reason anarchism is against government from above is because it is a political thought and movement that focuses on the *elimination of domination* (control over another) and *hierarchy* (a dynamic of domination and subordination), which they believe to be the root causes of all injustice, inequality and oppression.

In one sentence, anarchism is best explained as "*striving toward a 'free society of free individuals'*" (Milstein, 2010). This means that anarchism abandons the false binary of the collective vs. the individual in favor of seeing the two as necessary aspects to be balanced in society.

WHAT DO ANARCHISTS BELIEVE IN AND DO?

PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS

Anarchists believe that means and ends should be aligned: we have to already be working on and living the values, relationships, and practices we want to see in the future *now*. We as radicals can't want an equal society and not have equal relationships and practices at present.

SELF-ORGANIZATION

Anarchists believe in direct action—many efforts to change things do not need to wait for the government or some other "higher" entity to move; the people themselves do it, and they do it through their communities and affinity groups. Anarchists believe that we all have the capacity to organize ourselves because *we already organize ourselves on a daily basis*, from lines and carpools to fandoms and hobby groups.

WHAT DO ANARCHISTS BELIEVE IN AND DO?

VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION

Anarchists do not believe in coercion and obedience: everything has to be consensual. This can be an arduous process, one definitely not free from conflict, but intentionality and mindfulness in doing together allows us to practice *being free together*. This means that as we choose to be together, we also hold ourselves accountable to the promises we make to each other.

MUTUAL AID

Mutual aid is just a fancy word for *cooperation*. In Milstein's words: "It expresses an openhanded spirit of abundance, in which kindness is never in short supply. ... Mutual aid communalizes compassion, thereby translating into greater "social security" for everyone—without need for top-down institutions" (p.56-67).

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WHAT IS A MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANARCHISM AND MARXISM?

There are many overlaps between anarchism and Marxism especially when it comes to their critique of capitalism. There are also overlaps when it comes to their actions because tactics are not exactly the ownership of any one kind of thinking.

However, the way anarchists and Marxists look at *the state* is different. For many Marxists, state takeover is not just ideal but even necessary in being able to change society. For anarchists, the state will always be a tool of domination and hierarchy because it takes away the ability of the people to directly decide and act. Rather than a tool, anarchists see the state as a relation hinged on domination and hierarchy, and thus inherently oppressive.

Who are some historical figures who shaped anarchism?



WILLIAM GODWIN

Founder of philosophical anarchism. Also the husband of Mary Wollstonecraft (founding feminist philosopher) and dad of Mary Shelley (author of *Frankenstein*).



PIERRE-JOSEPH PROUDHON

Founder of modern anarchism. Had good ideas but was anti-Semitic and sexist. Probably deserved to be punched in the face by a Jewish woman.



MIKHAIL BAKUNIN

Founder of collectivist anarchism. Fought with Marx and his followers a lot. Like, a lot. Was kicked out because Marx didn't like that he had a different faction inside the International.

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What has anarchism ever done?



**LABOR DAY AND THE
8-HOUR WORK DAY**
SEARCH: Haymarket Affair,
Haymarket Martyrs, Chicago
Anarchists

Hand-in-hand with
Marxist workers,
unions and
organizations,
anarchists are a large
part of why we
celebrate Labor Day.



SPANISH REVOLUTION

SEARCH: Spanish

Revolution, Living Utopia
(documentary).

Years-long practice of
anarchist principles
and organizational
tactics towards the
eradication of State
and Church power and
more communal, worker-
controlled industries
and affairs.

What has anarchism ever done?

SEATTLE PROTESTS AND THE ANTI- GLOBALIZATION MOVEMENT

SEARCH: Battle of Seattle,
anti-globalization movement

Loose coalition of different groups and organizations, with different but related goals and stances like anti-WTO policies, pro-labor, anticapitalism, and environment.



ARAB SPRING

SEARCH: Arab Spring,
Egyptian Revolution of 2011
North African-Middle Eastern series of anti-government protests and rebellions responding to authoritarianism, corruption, and state brutality in different countries in the early 2010s. Some areas, such as Tahrir Square, developed well-functioning communes during this time.



ANARCHISM FAQ

ISN'T ANARCHISM TOO IDEALISTIC AND UNREALISTIC?

It can sound idealistic, but anarchism is not only achievable, *it is already being done*. Because anarchists believe in prefigurative politics, they always already work towards making the future they want to see a reality.

Some examples to search: the Zapatistas and Cherán of Mexico, Rojava of Syria, the documentary *The Take* (2004)

AREN'T ANARCHISTS VIOLENT?

Just as there are different kinds of Marxists, there are also different kinds of anarchists. Some use more extreme methods, but the very core of anarchism is organizing with communities and groups for things ranging from caring for each other's kids to nationwide protests, such as the BLM and anti-cop movements.

Anarchists can prefer one strategy over the other; at the end of the day, there are different ways to achieve different but related goals. Again, *diversity of tactics is a core principle of anarchism*.

ANARCHISM FAQ

WON'T THINGS FALL TO CHAOS WITHOUT AUTHORITY?

On the contrary, anarchists believe that we have disorder *because* of authority.

Authorities enforce policies without nuance, even if the people under these policies live very different lives and contexts.

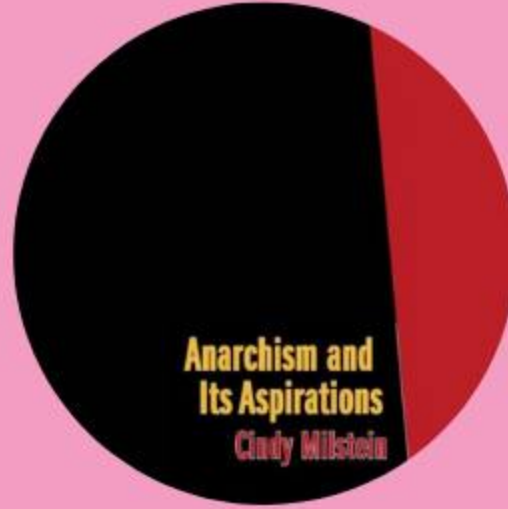
Anarchism believes that the people know best what they need because *they live those realities themselves*. Without rulers, the people can respond to the situations they find themselves in without others pretending they know better.



***GOT QUESTIONS THAT WEREN'T
TACKLED? COMMENT THEM OR
REACH OUT VIA DIRECT MESSAGE!***

LET'S FIND ANSWERS TOGETHER.

References and resources you can start with



Anarchism and Its Aspirations by Cindy Milstein

Available on theanarchistlibrary.org

This is the book I used as a guide in creating this presentation! It's very easy to understand. It's like a pocketbook in size and length.



To Change Everything by CrimethInc.

Available on crimethinc.com/tce

A small booklet that serves as a guide on what first step to take. CrimethInc. is a rebel alliance that publishes, translates, and circulates written works focused on informing the people of the situation of different countries and regions under Empire. They have everything from situation briefers to historical pieces and reviews to on-the-ground reports.