

ANARCHISM



Anarchy is a scary word. It is associated with chaos, violence, and disorder. However, the word anarchy simply means without (an) rulers (archy). Anarchism, as a political theory, is the idea that humanity can and should organise without rulership, and doing so will lead to less chaos, violence, and disorder than we suffer today. This is because rulership has always allowed those who rule to exploit, oppress, and neglect those they rule. This is a simple fact of how rulership works; to rule is to have the ability to ignore the wants and needs of those under you, and to be ruled is to be expected to put aside your own desires, reason, and sense of right and wrong to obey orders.

This allows rulers to get away with actions that we would resist if done by anyone else. We condemn extortion, but the economy is built on threats of unemployment and poverty to keep us in line and making profits for capitalists. We despise those who let other people die for their own gain, but this is seen as good economic sense when done by corporations raising the prices of necessities and states slashing services that people need to live. We fear murderers and thieves, but politicians start wars that kill millions and plunder entire countries. Rulers demand the right to be chaotic and violent without restraint, and we all pay the price.

Anarchists believe that whatever problems society faces, we can not trust our rulers to solve them. We have to cooperate and organise together to solve them ourselves, and this will involve coming into conflict with our rulers, as their position ultimately rests on our oppression and exploitation, reducing us to tools to be used and abused instead of human beings with hopes and desires that are worthy of dignity and respect. We are disempowered so that the state can be powerful, and we are impoverished so that capitalists can be rich.

However, while we must organise and resist, we must not create new structures of rulership to do so. Many times people have empowered new rulers who promised a better world, only for those rulers to use that power to commit the same abuse and neglect as those they replaced. If we want to live as free equals, without making some people objects to be used by others, we must learn to cooperate without rulership. We must learn to organise on the basis of consensus and free association for the fulfilment of the desires of everyone involved.

Anarchists want to build egalitarian organisations to fight for peoples' desires in the here and now, and ultimately we want to create a society entirely without rulership by growing and spreading such organisations until they can replace the current system of state and capital with a new system built on mutual cooperation instead of rulership. How this can be done is presented on the other side of this flyer, which briefly describes the strategy of syndicalism.



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SYNDICALISM



Syndicalism is a word that most people are not familiar with today, which comes from the French word for a workers' union: Syndicat. Syndicalism offers an alternative to relying on political parties to implement change from the top down. Such party politics is inherently corrupting, and those who enter into politics are always sucked into the power games of government and end up detached from the needs of normal people. Radical parties become like any other party, more concerned with opportunistic political manoeuvring and serving the interests of capitalists than the desires of those they claim to represent.

Instead, syndicalism is based on workers directly seizing economic power. Politicians are always telling us that we can not have what we want or need because it will upset the capitalists who control the economy. However, the working class, if we unite and organise, are the ones who really control the economy, and we can use that control to impose our interests on politicians and capitalists through direct action like general strikes and mass boycotts. Syndicalists want to build radical workers' unions from the bottom up and use direct action in the workplace and the community to achieve real social change.

This kind of strategy also allows workers to fight for our desires even when we are not strong enough to influence national politics. A political party that is not in government has no power to help us, but strong workplace unions allow us to fight for higher wages, better conditions, and contest bad management decisions, while strong community unions allow us to fight for lower rents and better services, no matter who runs the government.

Ultimately, the aim of syndicalism is to replace both the state and capitalism with a form of popular control that is rooted in individual workplaces and communities. Syndicalists want to build councils of workers and neighbours to run our workplaces and neighbourhoods directly, and federate together from the bottom up to manage the economy as a whole. This will free us from abuse and exploitation by bosses and politicians, and put the wealth of society in the hands of those who have created it. The ruling class will try to stop us, but if we take control of the economy away from them, we also take away their power over us.

However, many attempts at such radical social change in the past have failed because they have been hijacked by their leadership and diverted away from their original aims. Trade unions created to serve members now serve the bosses who run the unions. Socialist parties have always ended up betraying workers in favour of party leaders. Syndicalism must be combined with a political theory that can explain why radical leaders and organisations have often failed us. That theory is anarchism, as is briefly explained on the other side of this flyer.



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