

Anarchist Philosophy

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

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The Philosophy Club

<https://www.meetup.com/the-philosophy-club/events/275021136/>

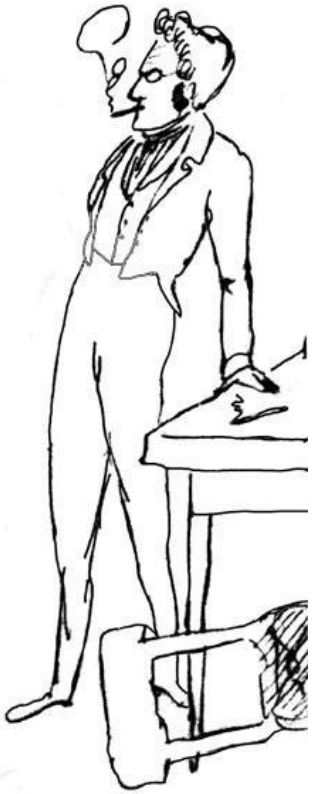
Sign from Chiapas,
Mexico:

"You are in
Zapatista rebel
territory.
Here, the people
rule, government
obeys."



Photo: Paolo Massa ('phauly') https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Zapatista_sign.jpg

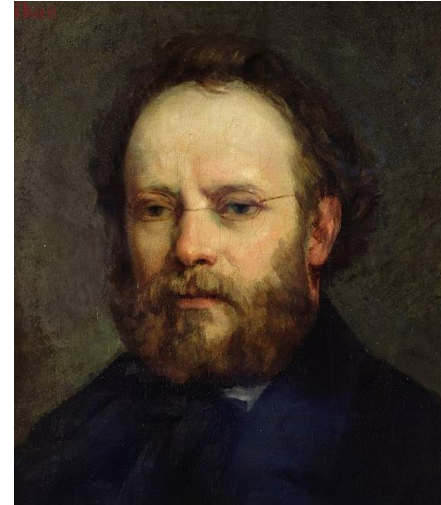
Many anarchist philosophers ...



Max Stirner 1806-1856 -

often seen as one of the forerunners of nihilism, existentialism, psychoanalytic theory, postmodernism and individualist anarchism

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Stirner#/media/File:Stirner02.jpg



Pierre-Joseph Proudhon 1809-1865 - first person to declare himself an anarchist, using that term

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre-Joseph_Proudhon#/media/File:Portrait_of_Pierre_Joseph_Proudhon_1865.jpg

Mikhail Bakunin 1814-1876 - Russian revolutionary anarchist, socialist and founder of collectivist anarchism. Marx argued for the use of the state to bring about socialism. Bakunin argued for the replacement of the state by federations of self-governing workplaces and communes

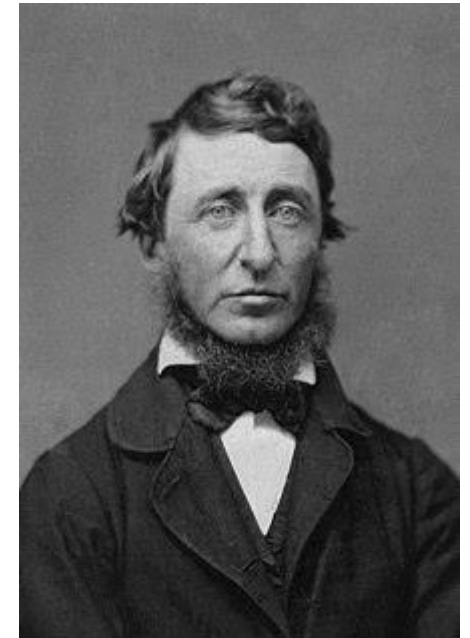
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Bakunin#/media/File:Bakunin_Nadar.jpg



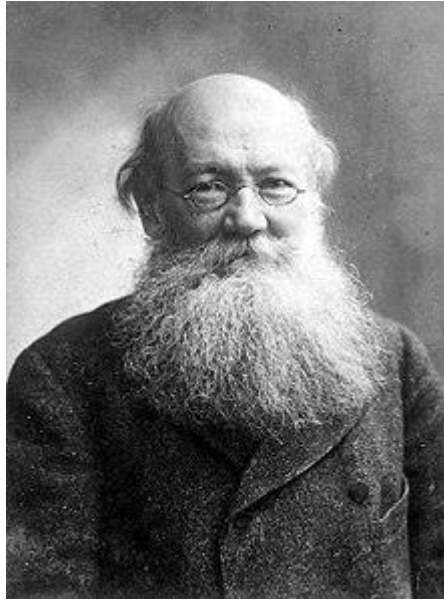
Henry Thoreau 1817-1862 - philosophy of civil disobedience
“government is best which governs not at all”.

Green anarchist

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Benjamin_D._Maxham_-_Henry_David_Thoreau_-_Restored_-_greyscale_-_straightened.jpg



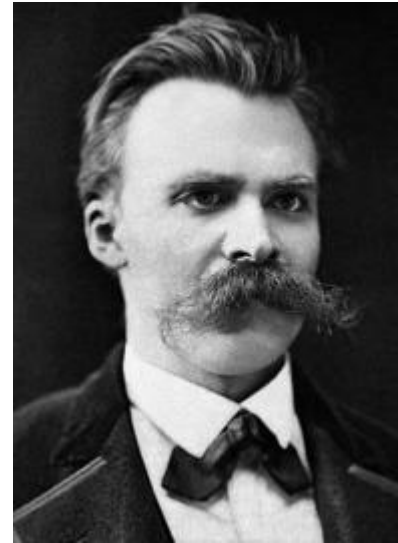
...anarchist philosophers



Peter Kropotkin 1842-1921 -

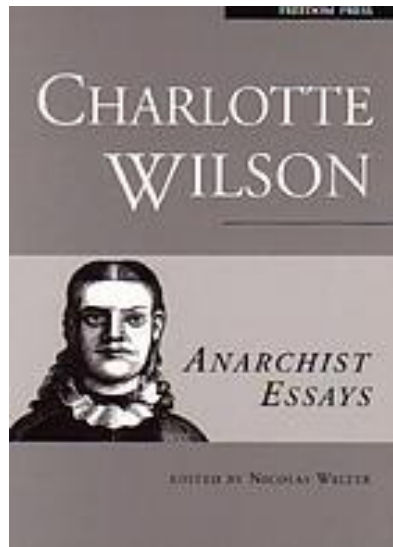
Philosopher who advocated anarcho-communism. Decentralised communist society free from central government and based on voluntary associations of self-governing communities and worker-run enterprises

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kropotkin#/media/File:Peter_Kropotkin_circa_1900.jpg



Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900 - influential for anarchist movement: hatred of the state; his disgust for mindless social 'herds'; desire for an 'übermensch'—a new human who was neither master nor slave

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Nietzsche187a.jpg>



Charlotte Wilson 1854-1944 -

Writer and speaker advocating anarchism in socialist organisations and publications from 1884.

Founded Freedom Press.

<https://freedompress.org.uk/product/charlotte-wilson-anarchists-essays/>

Gilles Deleuze 1925-1995, French philosopher – parallels with anarchism

Photos not shown where copyright in place and photos are not free-to-use

In their own words



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Bakunin#/media/File:Bakunin_Nadar.jpg

Bakunin

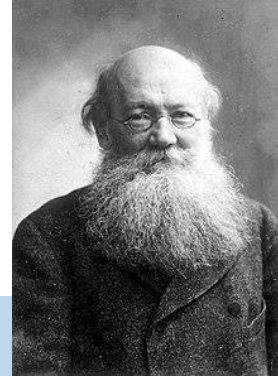
On freedom, equality and justice:

“Freedom is the absolute right of every adult man and woman to seek no other sanction for their acts than their own conscience and their own reason, being responsible first to themselves and then to the society which they have *voluntarily* accepted...Man is truly free only among equally free men; the slavery of even one human being violates humanity and negates the freedom of all.

... The *freedom* of each is therefore realizable only in the equality of all. The realization of freedom through equality, in principle and in fact, is *justice*.”

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/1866/catechism.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kropotkin#/media/File:Peter_Kropotkin_circa_1900.jpg



Kropotkin

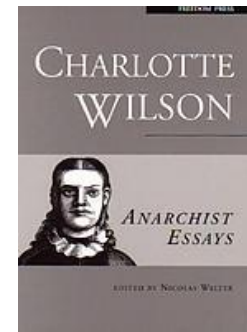
On insurrection and revolution:

“If the Revolution is ever to be feasible, local insurrections are called for. Indeed, huge numbers of them...

When bourgeois and labour politicians denounce popular insurrections under another pretext, that they are mindless [inconscient]—let us be clear about this once and for all: it is because they find nothing so repugnant as the people armed and in the streets.

Monarchies and their comical coronation rites, the ignorance perpetuated by the clergy and the exploitation upheld by the capitalist, the famine in the countryside, the shootings, the mass hangings, the rampages of the White Terror—the politicians have no problems stomaching any of that!”

<https://revolutionbythebook.akpress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Insurrections-and-Revolution.pdf>



<https://freedompress.org.uk/product/charlotte-wilson-anarchists-essays/>

Wilson

On education:

“The one end and aim of education is to fit children for freedom...

it teaches firstly, that intellectual training should be scientific... in place of the arbitrary enactments of men; and secondly, ...inculcation of personal dignity and responsibility, respect for others, and the worship of truth and justice for their own sake.”

On marriage:

“...removal of the social stigma unjustly attached to free unions ... and the transfer of social contempt to property marriages which are mere legalised prostitution.”

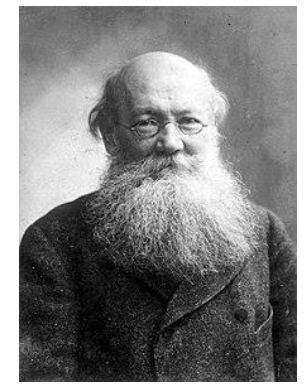
On child trafficking:

“One of the principle objects of the Criminal Law Amendment Act is to put a stop to the sale of children under 16, but it ignores altogether the economic conditions which produce such sales...They are well advised not to attempt the absurdity of trying to alter economic relations by Act of Parliament”

<https://freedompress.org.uk/product/charlotte-wilson-anarchists-essays/>

Peter Kropotkin. 1897. Anarchist Morality

An anarchist shopkeeper in England found that his comrades kept taking his goods without paying for them. "To each according to his need" seemed to them to justify letting those who were best able foot the bills. Kropotkin was appealed to, with the result that he condemned this and wrote a pamphlet on anarchist morality.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kropotkin#/media/File:Peter_Kropotkin_circa_1900.jpg

"We have seen that **men's actions ... all have the same origin**. Those that are called virtuous and those that are designated as vicious, great devotions and petty knaveries, acts that attract and acts that repel, all spring from a common source. **All are performed in answer to some need of the individual's nature. all have for their end the quest of pleasure, the desire to avoid pain....**

The morality which emerges from the observation of the whole animal kingdom may be summed up in the words: "**Do to others what you would have them do to you in the same circumstances**" without this no society could exist...

Man, whatever degree of intellectual development he may have attained, however his ideas may be obscured by prejudices and personal interest in general, **considers as good that which is useful to the society wherein he lives, and as evil that which is hurtful to it....**

Perhaps it may be said - it has been said sometimes "But if you think that you must always treat others as you would be treated yourself, **what right have you to use force under any circumstances whatever?** ...

By proclaiming ourselves anarchists, we proclaim beforehand that we disavow any way of treating others in which we should not like them to treat us; ... Equality in all things, the synonym of equity, this is anarchism in very deed. ...

Because we ourselves should ask to be killed like venomous beasts if we went to invade Burmese or Zulus who have done us no harm. We should say to our son or our friend: "Kill me, if I ever take part in the invasion!"

Formerly the church threatened men with hell to moralize them, and she succeeded in demoralizing them instead. The judge threatens with imprisonment, flogging, the gallows, in the name of those social principles he has filched from society; and he demoralizes them.

But we are not afraid to forego judges and their sentences. We forego sanctions of all kinds, even obligations to morality.... because we are persuaded that **the great majority of mankind, ... will behave and act always in a direction useful to society...**

if you feel within you the strength of youth, if you wish to live, if you wish to enjoy a perfect, full and overflowing life - that is, know the highest pleasure which a living being can desire - be strong, be great, be vigorous in all you do... Struggle so that all may live this rich, overflowing life. And **be sure that in this struggle you will find a joy greater than anything else can give.** This is all that the science of morality can tell you. Yours is the choice".

<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1897/morality.htm>

Peter Kropotkin. 1897. Anarchist Morality

“Today when we see a **Jack the Ripper murder one after another some of the poorest and most miserable of women**, our first feeling is one of hatred.

If we had met him the day when he murdered that woman who asked him to pay her for her slum lodging, we should have **put a bullet through his head**, without reflecting that the bullet might have been better bestowed in the brain of the owner of that wretched den.

But when we recall to mind all the infamies which have brought him to this; ... And if some day we hear that Jack is **in the hands of some judge who has slain in cold blood a far greater number of men, women and children than all the Jacks together; if we see him in the hands of one of those deliberate maniacs** then all our hatred of Jack the Ripper will vanish. It will be transformed into hatred of **a cowardly and hypocritical society and its recognized representatives.**”

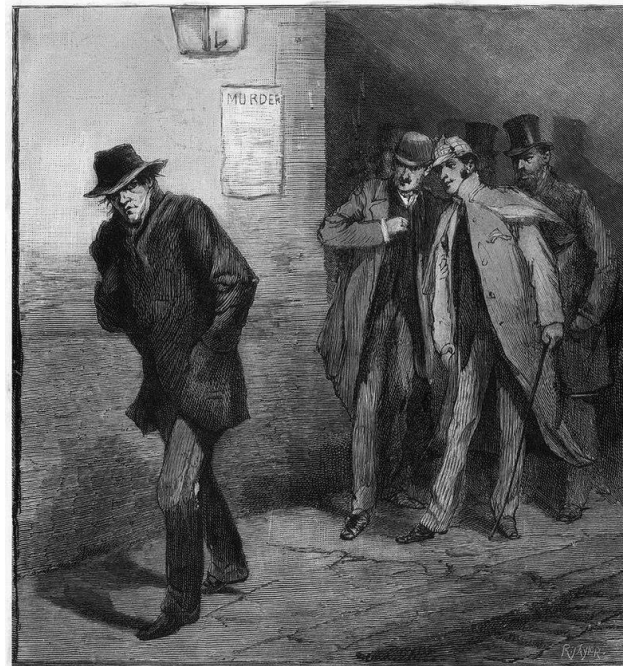
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/kropotkin-peter/1897/morality.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_the_Ripper

<https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofEngland/Jack-the-Ripper/>

Jack the Ripper, Victorian Serial Killer 1888

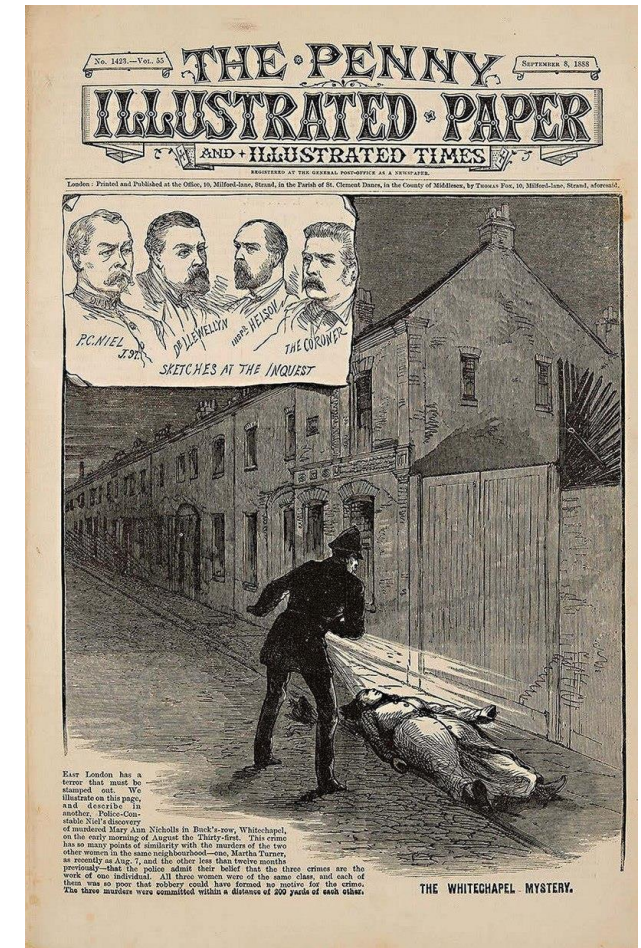
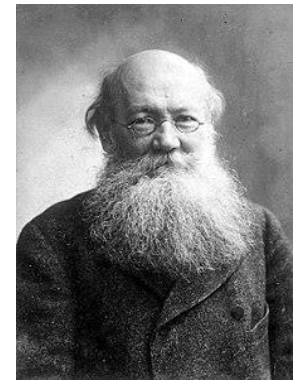
For three months in 1888, fear and panic stalked Whitechapel in London's East End when 5 women were murdered and horribly mutilated by a man who became known as 'Jack the Ripper'. Whitechapel's overcrowded population lived in hovels, the streets stank of filth and refuse and the only way to earn a living was by criminal means, and for many women, prostitution.



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_the_Ripper#/media/File:JacktheRipper1888.jpg

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_the_Ripper#/media/File:The Penny Illustrated Paper - September 8, 1888 - Jack the Ripper.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jack_the_Ripper#/media/File:The_Penny_Illustrated_Paper_-_September_8,_1888_-_Jack_the_Ripper.jpg)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Kropotkin#/media/File:Peter_Kropotkin_circa_1900.jpg



FREEDOM

A JOURNAL OF ANARCHIST SOCIALISM.

VOL. 1.—No. 3.

DECEMBER, 1886.

MONTHLY PRICE, ONE PENNY.

THINGS OF TO-DAY.

GOVERNMENTS exist, we are told, as a terror to evil doers, the presumption of course being that they themselves are amongst such as do well. From this point of view it is interesting to glance now and again at the doings of our rulers. One may always profit by observing the conduct of the virtuous.

At the present moment, for example, the English Government are employing a number of men to murder the people and ravage the country of Burmah. The reason? The greed of English traders demands that portion of the earth's surface as a base of operations. France is to monopolise Tonquin. In other words, if Louis steels, John must be allowed to steal too. In excuse it is alleged there were native tyrants in Burmah. Perhaps; but is that a reason why alien tyrants should take their place? If one man sets upon another in the street, is that a reason why a third should kick the number one, that he himself may have the pleasure of turning number two's pockets? The vocabulary of private life would furnish us with some energetic expressions to qualify such conduct, but of course the public action of governments is always respectable. Mistaken policy is the strongest term we must apply to the conduct of those sacred persons to whom we allow the privilege of plunging hundreds of thousands of our fellow men into needless misery.

Perhaps, however, Burmah may be an unfortunate exception; let us turn to the relations of our Government with other weak nations.

English money-lenders, in their greed for exorbitant interest, supplied the rulers of Egypt with money to keep the wretched inhabitants thereof in subjection. These rulers used the money to set the Egypt

Mayorality of New York, and the temperature rises at once. Why? George is a Social Socialist, a thorough-going enemy of land monopoly, and a man who opposes not only government by bribery, but the interference of rulers in the labour war. Away with such a fellow from the earth then. It is not fit that he should live in middle-classdom.

If middle-class opinion was warm about George, it is hot about the S.D.F. and the unemployed. This agitation of the workers for the right of every man to labour that he may eat, is extremely embarrassing to property-owners. It is abundantly evident that as long as the means of production are monopolised by certain individuals for their own profit, there is not work and not bread for all the population; and if the surplus people will not starve peaceably, it is very awkward for the appropriators of this world's goods. Therefore, we see learned divines, and zealous philanthropists, as eager as our friends the Social Democrats in suggesting relief works. Now, as a correspondent lately pointed out in one of the evening papers, Henry VIII. began relief works over 300 years ago, when he had just finished stealing a large slice of the soil of England from the English people. He hanged some thousands of the unemployed, whom he deprived of the land they had tilled; but he could not hang them all, and so he set the rest to fortify the southern sea-ports. There have been relief works, and proposals for relief works, on and off from that day to this, but they have not relieved the people much. Nevertheless, tested by the thermometer of bourgeois fears, relief works are hot. They mean, We cannot, we dare not leave our fellow-citizens to starve. We must do something.

It is not the proposal for troops and mounted policemen to "spectacle" Society into a pair

December 1886:

"Governments exist, we are told, as a terror to evil doers, the presumption of course being that they themselves are amongst such that do well ...

At the present moment ... the English Government are employing a number of people to murder the people and ravage the country of Burmah.

The reason? The greed of English traders ...

In excuse it is alleged there were native tyrants in Burmah.

Perhaps; but is that a reason, why alien tyrants should take their place?"

Echos of Iraq 2003 ...

Oil, war and a growing sense of panic in the US



Don't tell me that America would have invaded Iraq if its chief export was beetroot

Robert Fisk | @indyvoices | Monday 21 October 2013 02:42



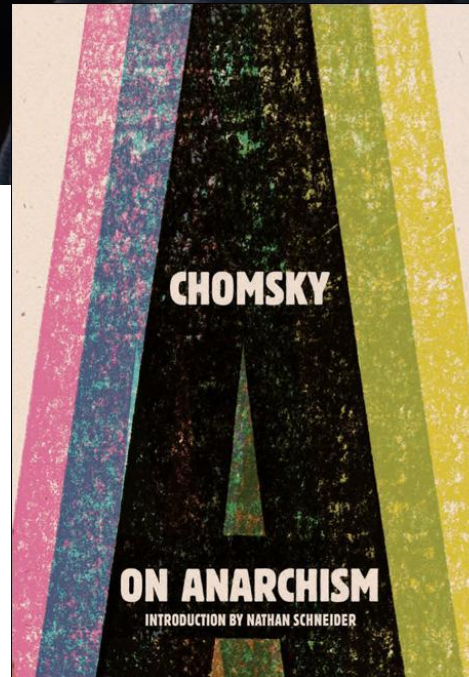
<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/fisk/oil-war-and-a-growing-sense-of-panic-in-the-us-102724.html>
<https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/2020/02/24/24-february-2020-new-titles/>
<https://blog.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2020/02/Freedom.jpg>

Noam Chomsky

Aligns with anarcho-syndicalism and libertarian socialism

Anarcho-syndicalism:

- Anarchist school of thought that views revolutionary industrial unionism or syndicalism as a method for workers in capitalist society to gain control of an economy. The end goal of syndicalism is to abolish the wage system, regarding it as wage slavery.
- Anarcho-syndicalists view the primary purpose of the state as being the defence of private property in the forms of capital goods and therefore of economic, social and political privilege.



Noam Chomsky: “Expanding the Floor of the Cage”

“The cage is the state. It’s repressive.

“But outside that cage is a sabre tooth tiger, namely private capital, which wants to get in there and tear you to shreds.

“So you need the cage and you can expand the floor of it. You can get more reforms. Such as safety and health reforms, inspectors for mines where horrible accidents take place, social benefits like pensions, and so on.

If you look at the old serious anarchist journals, like say Freedom in London, a large part of each issue is devoted to expanding the floor of the cage.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pSDiILWSpXI>

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/noam-chomsky-on-anarchism>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarcho-syndicalism>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noam_Chomsky

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Noam_Chomsky_portrait_2017_retouched.png

Anarchists and violence



Leon Frank Czolgosz (1873-1901) an American steelworker and anarchist who assassinated US President William McKinley.

Some American anarchists condemned his actions, arguing that he hindered the movement's goals by damaging its public perception.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Czolgosz#/media/File:Leon_Czolgosz_ca_1900.jpg

Wall Street Bombing 1920 – thought (but not proven) to be Italian anarchists

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wall_Street_bombing#/media/File:Wallstreetbmb.jpg



Revolutionary Catalonia

Spain's Civil War, (1936 to 1939)

The governance of Catalonia was deeply rooted in the ideas of anarcho-syndicalism and anarcho-communism, making Catalonia the largest territory in history to have been so governed.

“We are setting an example to the German and Italian working class on how to deal with Fascism”

The roots of the revolution go back to at least 1868, with the beginning of the Anarchist movement in Spain.

Between July and November 1938 the Republican forces launched offensive to reconnect their divided territory with Catalonia.

Several thousand individuals were executed by anarchist and socialist militants based on their assumed political allegiance and social class.

The FAI (Iberian Anarchist Federation) was strong in Catalonia and Aragón and members made several unsuccessful attempts to assassinate Alfonso XIII (King of Spain 1886-1931)

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federaci%C3%B3n_Anarquista_Ib%C3%A9rica#/media/File:Logo_of_Federaci%C3%B3n_Anarquista_Ib%C3%A9rica.png



<https://libcom.org/history/1936-1939-the-spanish-civil-war-and-revolution>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Czolgosz

<https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/wall-street-bombing-1920>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_anarchism

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revolutionary_Catalonia

<https://freedomnews.org.uk/anarcho-syndicalist-workers-revolution-in-catalonia/>

<https://spartacus-educational.com/SPcnt.htm>

Anarchist principles

Various anarchist groups, tendencies and schools of thought exist today, making it difficult to describe the contemporary anarchist movement. Commentators describe multiple "anarchisms" (rather than a singular "anarchism") in which common principles are shared

Here are some basic principles most anarchists agree on:

- **Autonomy and Horizontality:** Decision-making structures should be horizontal rather than vertical, so no one dominates anyone else.
- **Mutual Aid:** People should help one another voluntarily; bonds of solidarity and generosity form a stronger social glue than the fear inspired by laws, borders, prisons, and armies.
- **Voluntary Association:** People should be free to cooperate with whomever they want, however they see fit; likewise, they should be free to refuse any relationship or arrangement they do not judge to be in their interest. Everyone should be able to move freely, both physically and socially.
- **Direct Action:** Free people do not request the changes they want to see in the world; they make those changes.
- **Revolution:** Those who hold power in a hierarchical system are the ones who institute reforms, and they generally do so in ways that preserve or even amplify their power. Anarchist revolution means fighting to overthrow elites in order to create a free society.
- **Self-Liberation:** People must be at the forefront of their own liberation. Freedom cannot be given; it must be taken.

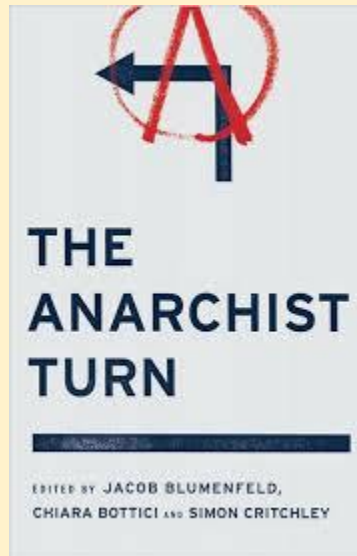
Anarchism today (examples)

- **US “Libertarians” a once- or twice-removed cousin of anarchism:** Capitalists in favour of minimal government, including John Stuart Mill, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and Herbert Spencer.
- **Anarchic online hacktivist collective Anonymous**
- Since the last third of the 20th century, anarchists have been involved in **anti-globalisation, peace, squatter and student protest** movements
- **‘Eco’ or ‘green’ anarchism:** the view that all hierarchy (not just social hierarchy) should be abolished. i.e. all dismantle all hierarchies that are a consequence of human activity as they relate to humans and non-humans

Friendship as anarchistic (Todd May in the Anarchist Turn 2013):

“We think of ourselves and our friends as more or less equals, we would never seriously consider exploiting our friends, and we do not generally see our friendships as subject to the economy of credit and debit...”

why then is it thought we can not take the form of the most significant of our relationships and extend the into the political and economic arenas?”



Anonymous
@LatestAnonNews



FCC chairman @AjitPaiFCC along with @BrendanCarrFCC, and @mikeofcc failed the people and voted for big corporations.

Anonymous will do everything it can to make these men realize what a terrible mistake they made. We will come after you.

Expect us. #NetNeutrality

6:34 PM · Dec 14, 2017



4.6K 2.1K people are Tweeting about this

FCC: US Federal Communications Commission
“the removal of Net Neutrality rules would prohibit non mainstream news outlets from surviving in the media marketplace”

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/noam-chomsky-on-anarchism>
<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/08/hacker-group-anonymous-returns/615058/>
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183p4zx>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_anarchism
<https://limacharlieneews.com/cyber/hacktivist-group-anonymous-threatens-fcc-net-neutrality/>
<https://freedomnews.org.uk/green-anarchism-towards-the-abolition-of-hierarchy/>
<https://www.plutobooks.com/9781849648554/the-anarchist-turn/>

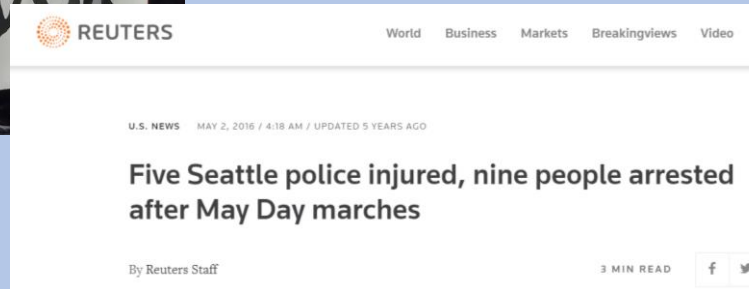
Anarchism today (examples) Seattle and Portland, USA

Battle in Seattle: In 1999, a horizontal “spokes council” organized protests that helped shut down the World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle



Photo: Mike Archbold

Annual **May Day** march for workers' and immigration rights



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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, September 21, 2020

Department Of Justice Identifies New York City, Portland And Seattle As Jurisdictions Permitting Violence And Destruction Of Property

Identification is response to Presidential Memorandum reviewing Federal Funding to State and Local Governments that are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities

The U.S. Department of Justice today identified the following three jurisdictions that have permitted violence and destruction of property to persist and have refused to undertake reasonable measures to counteract criminal activities: New York City; Portland, Oregon; and Seattle, Washington. The Department of Justice is continuing to work to identify jurisdictions that meet the criteria set out in the President's Memorandum and will periodically update the list of selected jurisdictions as required therein.

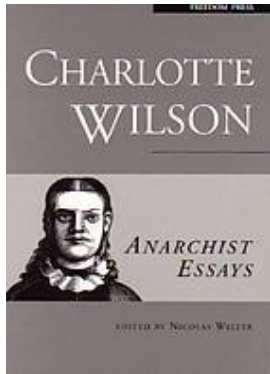
The list was published on DOJ's website today in response to President Trump's memorandum of September 2, 2020, entitled "Memorandum on Reviewing Funding to State and Local Government Recipients That Are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities."

Portland identified Sept 2020 by US Gov as “State and Local Governments that are Permitting Anarchy, Violence, and Destruction in American Cities”

<https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/noam-chomsky-on-anarchism>
<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2020/08/hacker-group-anonymous-returns/615058/>
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt183p4zx>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contemporary_anarchism
<https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/departments-justice-identifies-new-york-city-portland-and-seattle-jurisdictions-permitting>

What would an anarchist state look like?

- Innumerable stateless societies have thrived for millennia.
- **Laws?** In an empowered society, people do not need written laws; they have the power to determine whether someone is preventing them from fulfilling their needs, and can call on their peers for help resolving conflicts. In this view, the problem is not crime, but social harm — actions such as assault and drunk driving that actually hurt other people.



Charlotte Wilson writing in 1886: “The aroused sense of responsibility which follows the absence of coercion, tends to make opposition to social claims a matter of conscience ... in abnormal cases, the want of social feeling can be most humanely and more effectually met by an active display of brotherly care and attention.”

- **Crime?** A context of solidarity, free food, and empowerment of the common person plays a role in drying up crime at its source.
- **Police?** Organize volunteer patrols to help people in need and discourage aggressions. Focus on protecting people rather than property or privilege, respond to people’s needs rather than inflexible protocol. Or utilize diffuse sanctions — ... If somebody breaks these common standards, everyone is accustomed to reacting.

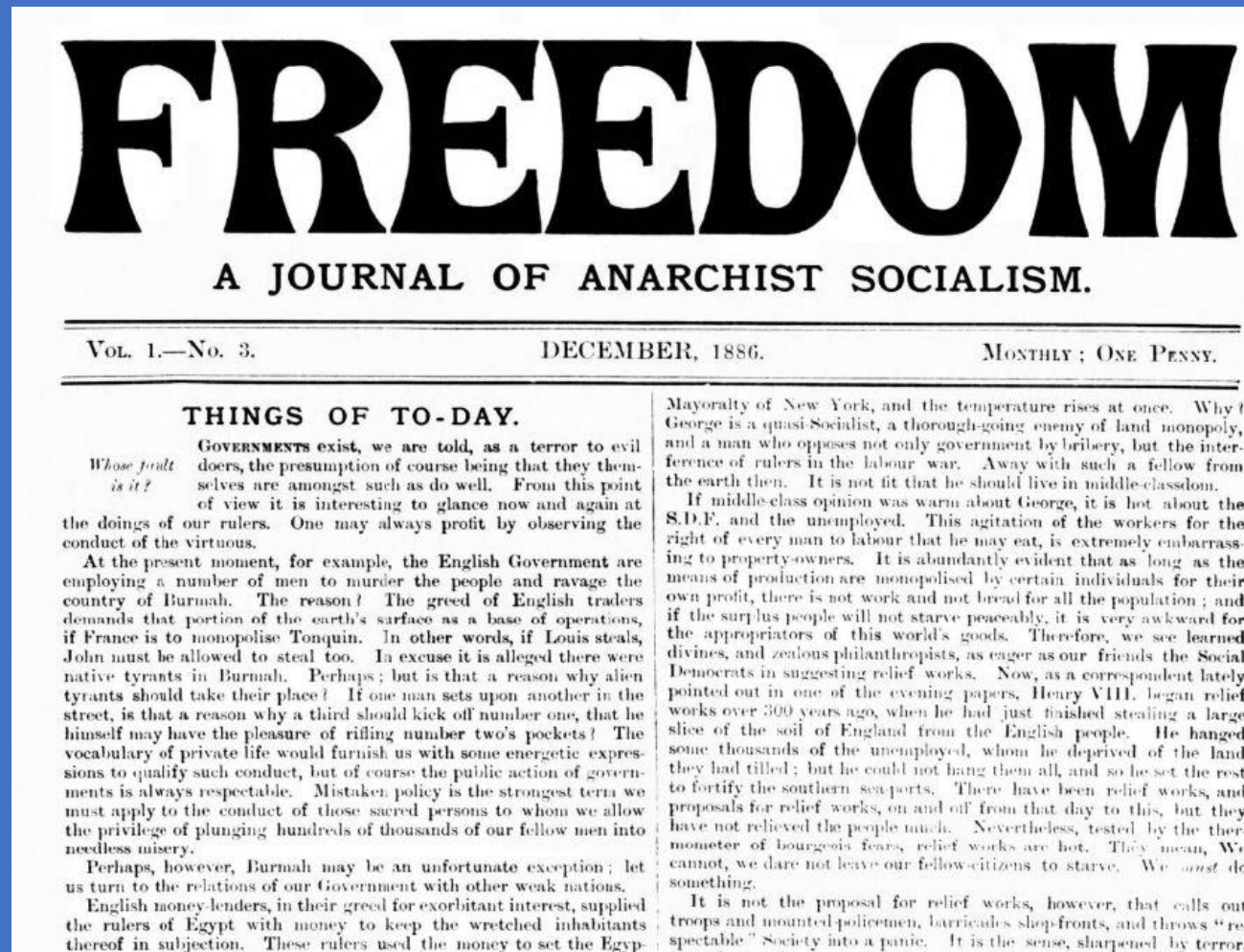
- **Social pressure?** Pressures to conform also exist in anarchist groups, but without restrictions on human movement, it is easier for people to leave and join other groups or to act or live on their own.
- **Healthcare?** After Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, activist street medics joined a former Black Panther in setting up the Common Ground clinic in one of the neediest neighborhoods. Funded by donations and run by volunteers, the Common Ground clinic provided treatment to tens of thousands of people.
- **Emergencies?** Whereas in a capitalist context catastrophe is an occasion for politically motivated forms of aid, if not outright opportunism, anarchists give assistance freely with the assurance that it will be reciprocated when the time comes.
- **Cities?** Anarchists have some experience maintaining large cities; the solution seems to lie in maintenance workers taking over the organization of the infrastructure for which they are responsible, and neighborhoods forming assemblies so that nearly all other decisions can be made at a local level. It is probable that an anarchist revolution will be accompanied by a process of deurbanization as cities shrink to more manageable sizes. Permaculture can support a higher population density in rural areas.

Anarchist Philosophy

Wednesday, 20 January 2021

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