



# Anarchism

Our insatiable desire for a world without rule

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# Anarchism? What's all that about?

Surely you have come across many stereotypes about anarchists. E.g. it is a common belief about anarchists that we are violent radicals and want to do nothing else than to set the entire world on fire. Spoiler: Of course that's not true, even though anarchists share the fundamental agreement that the existing social system has to be abolished, of which more later, though!

First of all, anarchism means nothing else than the abolishment of all power relations there are. We as anarchists believe that no human being should ever rule other human beings. Of course that is a rather abstract idea, that's why it makes sense to explain this notion by the means of some examples:

Maybe you work for a company to make your living and you have to follow the orders of your boss or you might go to school and have to obey the rules of your teachers. It might be that you have come across authority during your childhood. When your parents told you what to do. All these examples have one thing in common: There is always one person, being in a privileged position, who tells another person, who is lower on a certain hierarchy, what to do. There after, this person has to follow commands, otherwise she has to take certain consequences: In the case of the boss, she might be fired, in the case of the teacher she might earn herself detention, in case of the parents most of the time a useless punishment might follow, e.g. she might be grounded, or sometimes even beaten.

Power relations of these kinds are obvious. Everybody knows them, most people experience them day after day. However, there are more subtle forms of power relations as well that are by far less obvious. Often this is because they are deeply inscribed into our society. Examples for such power mechanisms include racism, sexism, antisemitism, antiziganism, ableism,<sup>1</sup> ageism,<sup>2</sup> classism,<sup>3</sup> and some more words ending in -ism.

Many of these mechanisms we reproduce on a daily basis without even noticing it.

As anarchists, we take a stand for overcoming all these power relations. We desire a society in which all people can live together, have equal rights and are being self-determined. We desire a society in which no human being tells another human being what to do or should not to do. We desire a society in which the needs of every single person count and in which it is possible for every single person to realize her own beliefs of a good life in a self-determined way.

That is what we call anarchism.

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<sup>1</sup> Ableism means the discrimination of people because of their (supposedly) disabled body. E.g. calling somebody else "disabled" is an established insult in our society which shows just how deeply rooted ableism is in our society.

<sup>2</sup> Ageism means the discrimination of people because of their (supposed) age. So e.g. children and teenagers are often not taken seriously because of their age, but older people are often discriminated because of their age as well.

<sup>3</sup> Classism means the discrimination of people because of their (supposed) belonging to a (mostly lower) social class.

# Tendencies and topic areas within anarchism

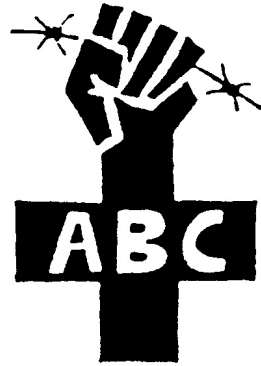
There are many different tendencies within anarchism, most of which can be differentiated by the means of their central theme. This can lead to very differentiated ways of looking at the society and results in many different opinions about the very same topic. However, most of the time the multifacetedness of the tendencies within anarchism is viewed as something good, because the many different perspectives complement each other, resulting in a clearer picture of the power relations within our society.

However, from time to time there are tendencies whose supporters think themselves as anarchists but who hold opinions that lack any deep critique of domination. One example for such a tendency is the so called "anarcho-capitalism". Supporters of these theory do not acknowledge capitalism as a form of governing and claim that a free market will cause maximal liberty for all individuals. Anarcho-capitalists deny the fact that exactly these capitalist conditions cause many mechanisms of power.

In the following we will present some tendencies and topic areas within anarchism in more detail which, in our view, are important.

# Abolitionism

Modern abolitionism<sup>4</sup> is the demand to abolish prisons and the entire criminal justice. Even when only taking a cursory glance at what groups of people are mostly represented in prisons, it becomes evident that marginalized groups are overrepresented in prisons, e.g. People of Color, homeless people and - the more authoritarian the state, the more - oppositionists. The widely spread narrative of prisons being necessary to protect the society against violent criminals is unsustainable as most persons are in prisons because they were not able to pay a fine for certain property crimes - e.g for travelling without a valid ticket or for theft. Due to that, prisons represent institutions that serve to repress minorities of a society.



In addition, prisons cannot keep their promise of, on the one hand, discouraging people from committing crimes, and on the other hand of reeducating and "rehabilitating" those who have already committed crimes. The opposite is true: Especially in countries in which offenders are punished particularly severely, the number of violent crimes is often many times higher than in countries with more liberal criminal justice systems. Furthermore, the claim that harsh penalties (e.g. imprisonment) will bring people up to be better

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<sup>4</sup> Classical abolitionism was a movement that called for the abolishment of slavery in the states of America, having been colonized by European nations, and eventually in Europe as well.

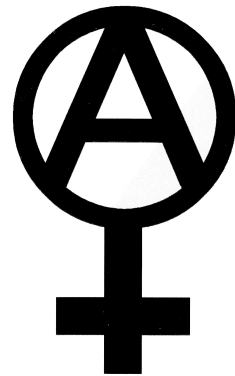
people, is anything but reasonable. Indeed: After people have been imprisoned, they will statistically commit more serious offences than those for which they were sentenced for in the first place. ("More serious offences" meaning in this context that those crimes are punished more severely according to the criminal law).

From an anarchist perspective, however, this is not the only reason to fight for an abolishment of prisons. We think that no person deserves to be imprisoned by another person, no matter what she might have done.

Worldwide many so called Anarchist Black Cross groups are part of the abolitionist movement and take a look at this topic from an anarchistic perspective. It is part of their work to support anarchist prisoners and they fight for an abolishment of prisons.

## Anarcha-feminism

Anarcha-feminism deals with (queer)-feminist topics while challenging power relations. In the center of anarcha-feminist criticism there often is the binary gender-identity which is propagated by mainstream society and the resulting patriarchal structures that oppress FLINT-persons in a structural way, be it by physical violence or by a structural exclusion from the life of society due to gender roles that consign mostly women to the fireside or by continuous verbal discriminations or by financial disadvantages like lower wages. In contrast to feminisms



demanding a better integration of women or FLINT-persons into the labor market, anarcho-feminism claims that it is not worth striving for having FLINT-persons and women exploited in the same way as men but that the overall objective must be to overcome all power relations.

## Anarcho-syndicalism

Anarcho-syndicalists counterpose the capitalist system by self-organized economical approaches. They want to create companies in which the laborers have producing goods at their one's disposal and in which nobody but them profits from their labor. Based on such a organization of the laboreres, which often bears similarities to labor unions, anarcho-syndicalists want to bring a revolution about by means of industrial actions, like e.g. a general strike or sabotage. They believe that only (and exclusively) such an economical act of sabotaging capitalism will lead to the fall of the system.



## Anti-authoritarianism

In the fight against authoritarian regimines and dictatorships anarchists play a vital role worldwide. Be it in Afghanistan, in Iran, in Brazil, in Turkey, China or Russia. Wherever authoritarian forces exercise power over other people, there is anarchist resistance. The goal of anarchists while doing so is nothing less than the abolishment of the state, without which



many forms of rule would hardly be possible. For anarchists it does not matter whether a nation is being governed by communists, fascists or democrats. Thus, anarchists are in radical opposition to the particular nation worldwide, which, especially in the case of authoritarian regimes, might lead to them being politically persecuted, tortured, murdered, and imprisoned.

## Anti-facism and anti-racism

Unfortunately, the fight against facism is still one of the central topics for anarchists as well. Worldwide there are extreme right and facist organisations that stir up hatred and turn rhetoric into action. That often has mortal consequences for the victims of their hatred. During the last years, parties ranging from being right-wing populist to acting in an openly facist manner, have succeeded in gaining worldwide influence. In some countries, they already participate in government (e.g. in Brazil, Italy, Austria, Poland, Hungary, Turkey, the USA, and so on). In other countries, including Germany, a government participation in the near future is foreseeable. Anarchists worldwide are part of an anti-facist movement that fights against the inhumane ideologies of the facists.

However, even ruling systems in which democrats often participate in governments is a real danger for members of marginalized groups. Many people are discriminated in a structural way because of their looks, due to that they have considerably lower chances to rent an apartment, to find a job or to have good education. People who are currently

fleeing from war-torn countries and conflict areas to Germany and Europe are treated inhumanly here. They are rejected at the European border, every year thousands of people drown in the Mediterranean. Those who manage to reach Europe are squeezed in camps by the EU-nations. There, they fall victim to the police and private security forces. Many people are deported back to their (supposed) countries of origin, regardless of what awaits them there and especially regardless of they want to or not. The fight against these forms of national and institutional racism on the side of the affected is part of anarchist engagement as well.

## Anti-gentrification

Gentrification means the extrusion of people from certain neighborhoods that gained popularity as a result of city development, often because of their amenities of place in combination with an economic infrastructure that has changed during the centuries. Normally, this leads to rising investments in these neighborhoods, associated with an appreciation in value of the living quarters for solvent renters. Normally, it is about a thorough renovation of buildings, reconstruction projects but also about the establishment of green spaces and art projects in public space as well. Subsequently, in these neighborhoods the rents are rising such that many former inhabitants cannot afford the rents in their neighborhoods anymore. By that they are extruded from the neighborhood. The opening of hip cafes, restaurants,



fashion boutiques, and - especially in Munich - art galleries is often closely related to this process, which determines a rise of other living costs apart from the rising rents as well.

Anti-gentrification activism is often shaped by anarchism. Anarchists and other radical lefties try with different strategies to work against this development. One typical strategy is squatting, another an increased number of occurring graffities which are to belittle the gloss of gentrification and yet another is to set cars on fire or to attack estate agencies and other institutions which are perceived as a manifestation of gentrification by means of paint bombs.

## Anticapitalism

Almost every form of anarchism is anticapitalistic. That means that anarchists of almost all topic areas within anarchism oppose capitalism as an economic system and social system.

Often, the concepts of property and exchange are to the fore of anarchistic criticism of capitalism. The fact that even when certain objects are not needed by the owner anymore these are still considered to be her property is criticized. Objects are exchanged only for other objects and/or for certain other services. As a result, almost everyone accumulates objects that one does not need (anymore) which nevertheless have a value due to the concept of exchange.<sup>5</sup> To be very precise,

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<sup>5</sup> In Marx' wide spread terminology this is the so called merchandise value. The respective antonym, the practical/utility value, however, is the value an object has for a person while using this object.

humans actually only accumulate the values themselves, in form of money. This accumulation of not needed objects (sometimes called accumulation of capital) results in great inequity of distribution of objects in our society: Few rich people have exactly those capacities available which are so much needed by many poor people worldwide. Many absurdities evolve from that, like the fact that humanity worldwide produces much more than the needed amount of food, however, at the same time annually around 8.8 million people die from starvation and around 11% of the global population go severely hungry. One can look at it from a more local perspective as well: In central Europe supermarkets trash a big part of the offered food, still edible, while at the same time people have to beg for money in order to buy food right at the front doors of these supermarkets.

At the same time this system determines an ideology of constant growth. When one wants to accumulate more and more objects (and therefore value), one has to generate this doing in one way or another. That's why humans still (have to) spend the majority of their time with work; even though there is an ongoing technological advance, which actually should reduce the amount of work needed to fulfill basic human needs. At the same time, this ongoing growth results in the destruction of many living spaces and in a gigantic wasting of resources. Many ecological catastrophes originate in this ideology.

# Insurrectionalism

Insurrectionalism or insurrectionary anarchism focuses on the rebellious act. Insurrectionalists oppose concrete coalitions, e.g. anarchist federations, that pursue certain policies. They act in loose groups which form more or less spontaneously and for certain purpose only, e.g. for the execution of a certain action, after which the group dissolves again. And they attack! The prevalent conditions are

unbearable for insurrectionalists, that's why they get down to action. It is not only about to finally transform many distributed and uncontrollable attacks into a revolution but also and mainly about the development of the persons themselves who get empowered by the revolutionary act and are able to find themselves by it.



Speech bubble: "This was self-defense!"  
This picture is from a comic about "left-wing extremism" from the North Rhine-Westphalia intelligence service. Nevertheless, we think it fitting and so we replicate it here.

Thus, it is not about the realization of certain theories by a revolutionary experience but insurrectionalism is the attempt to develop a theory about one's own fruition and about the liberation of the individual by a revolutionary act.

## Eco-anarchism and anarcho-primitivism

Eco-anarchism, sometimes called green anarchism as well, is dealing with the relationship between humans and their environment, meaning other, non-human living beings, from a perspective criticizing domination. In difference to other, common ethical concepts, eco-anarchists view non-human living beings as moral entities as well. They generalize the principle of anarchism, which is that no human should rule other humans, in the sense that no other living being (unfortunately often this only includes animals) should have the right to rule another living being. Such an ethical change has major societal consequences (how should the equital coexistence with living beings of different species look like?) with which eco-anarchists deal.

Anarcho-primitivism can be viewed as a part of eco-anarchism. Anarcho-primitivists, depending on their focus, consider different civilizing developemts of human kind as the origin of a system which made it possible to extensively oppress living beings. Optional this could be the development of language, the domestication of other living beings or the sedentarism. Depending on their focus, anarcho-primitivists oppose many lifeforms in terms of civilization. Thus, especially radical forms of anarcho-primitivism often get accused of glorifying pre-civilizing lifeforms.

# Disturb the order!

It is obvious that we as anarchists - for good reasons- radically oppose the existing circumstances. But what does that mean in terms of our doings? Even though we long for a world in which there is no rule anymore, we are nevertheless forced to live in this world of today, here and now. We can explain even so often that we disagree with the system, as long as we haven't been able to overcome the existing circumstances we all continue to be part of the problem. This presents us with a problem concerning the execution of our ideals: Are we going to make compromises in our daily lives regarding the existing circumstances, e.g. by accepting a job, paying our rent or even by paying for our food? What is the alternative? Surely there are possibilities to organize in a way opposed to the existing circumstances, e.g. by founding self-administered companies and by trying to organize all aspects of our lives in a collaborative way in general. However, while doing that there will always be interfaces with the existing circumstances that threaten our freedom and the freedom of others.

Neither we will be able to overcome the existing circumstances on our own, nor we will be able to drop out from the existing, authoritarian system. It is necessary to spread anarchist liberties to all humans and at the same time to call out and to attack the forms of dominion that are at work in our society. The sheer idea of a freed society, functioning according to anarchistic principles will not be able to abolish especially internalized power relations like racism,

sexism, ableism, antisemitism, anti-ziganism, ageism and many more. That's what not only our gut feeling tells us but which was proven by the many revolutions that had been taking part during the course of the history of human kind as well and that were not able to abolish these power relations - not even for a short time.

Even though we think it doesn't make sense to call for revolution every single day anew, hoping that one day enough people will follow our call for action, it is still no option for us to just wait until the existing system might eliminate itself at some point in time. By critical interventions we not only want to bring attention to the existing power relations but at the same time we want to make suggestions how these can be overcome.

Even though we can only be rather hazy about the measures by which we can achieve a society without rule, we are very certain that the existing order prevents us and other human beings from living a life in freedom and beyond any order!

Against any order!

**For anarchy!**





# Additional literature

In the following we list additional literature in German and English about anarchism. We try to give such a broad overview as possible about a worldwide movement, about which we are only able to overlook a small fraction. Accordingly, this selection is rather incomplete. Further suggestions you can find on the websites listed below.

Sam Mbah & I. E. Igariwey. *African Anarchism: The history of a movement*. 2001

Emma Goldman. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. 1910

*An Anarchist FAQ*. 2009

Horst Stowasser. *Anarchie! Idee – Geschichte – Perspektive*. 2007

Colin Ward. *Anarchism. A Very Short Introduction*. 2004

Hans Jürgen Degen, Jochen Knoblauch (Hg.). *Anarchismus 2.0. Bestandsaufnahmen. Perspektiven*. 2009

Achim von Borries, Ingeborg Weber-Brandies (Hg.). *Anarchismus. Theorie, Kritik, Utopie*. 2013

ARTE Documentation. *Kein Gott, Kein Herr! Eine kleine Geschichte der Anarchie*. 2016

Dipl.-Ing. A. Narcho. *Stell dir vor es gibt Arbeit für alle und keiner geht hin. Die postindustrielle Anarchie*. 1993

Margarete Stokowski. *Untenrum frei*. 2016

Sebastian Kalicha. *Von Jakarta bis Johannesburg – Anarchismus weltweit*. 2010

CrimethInk. *Work*. 2017

# Anarchist Zines and Newspapers

*Fernweh.* Anarchistische  
Straßenzeitung aus  
München  
[fernweh.noblogs.org](http://fernweh.noblogs.org)

*Gai Dao.* Anarchistische  
Zeitschrift der FdA  
[fda-ifa.org/gaidao](http://fda-ifa.org/gaidao)

*Die Lifestyleanarchist\*in.*  
Anarchistisches Magazin aus  
München  
[lifestyleanarchistin.noblogs.org](http://lifestyleanarchistin.noblogs.org)

*Nebenwidersprüche.*  
Anarchafeministisches  
Fanzine  
[nebenwidersprueche.noblogs.org](http://nebenwidersprueche.noblogs.org)

## Weblinks

### German speaking

[anarchismus.at](http://anarchismus.at)  
[anarchistischebibliothek.org](http://anarchistischebibliothek.org)  
[deu.anarchopedia.org](http://deu.anarchopedia.org)  
[aradio.blogspot.de](http://aradio.blogspot.de)  
[a-radio.net](http://a-radio.net)  
[de-contrainfo.espiv.net](http://de-contrainfo.espiv.net)  
[fda-ifa.org](http://fda-ifa.org)  
[dadaweb.de](http://dadaweb.de)

### English speaking

[anarchistnews.org](http://anarchistnews.org)  
[crimethink.com](http://crimethink.com)  
[theanarchistlibrary.org](http://theanarchistlibrary.org)  
[thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org](http://thefinalstrawradio.noblogs.org)  
[325.nostate.net](http://325.nostate.net)

Would you like to get to know more about anarchism or are you keen on anarchistic engagement in Munich and the surroundings?

Just drop by at one of our meetings. We are an open anarchist structure and meet every two weeks to discuss certain topics, to plan actions together or to just chill out, enjoying good food and cool drinks. Check our website to find when we will meet for the next time ([ka-os-muc.net](http://ka-os-muc.net)). We are looking forward to meeting you.

[ka-os-muc.net](http://ka-os-muc.net)

5E19 E063 B48C E52A 2136 62BA A024 7AE4 F52C 3E79