

FUNDAMENTALS OF ANARCHISM

WHAT IS FREE ASSOCIATION?

Free Association is the idea that we cannot be free as individuals without having free relationships with others, that no one person can be free unless we are all free and that for each of us to be free we must work together to insure that everyone else is free. In an Anarchist society people would cooperate with each other to achieve the following:

Complete Social Freedom Including Sexual Freedom and Reproductive Freedom: People associate because all participants want to.

Freedom of Speech, Press and Information to include all forms of communication and education.

Complete Cultural Freedom including the freedom of individual tastes, lifestyle, entertainment and other preferences.

Freedom of Movement: All people must be allowed to live where they chose, travel where they chose, shop where they chose (*e.g.* do business where you chose), recreate where you chose, *etc.*. This includes the freedom to migrate and immigrate without being restricted or discriminated upon because of your place of birth or the place of birth of your ancestors.

Complete Economic Freedom Which can only exist if all persons retain control of their labor power, enter productive relationships voluntarily, and are compensated for the full value of their productive activity: All forms of economic exploitation must be destroyed including capitalism, debt slavery, and theft. Full compensation for child rearing as a job.

Freedom to Assemble Peacefully With Other Persons for Common Purposes, Collective Organization and Joint Petition for Redress: All people must be allowed to associate freely with the groups they chose and to disassociate themselves when they chose. All people must be allowed to organize in their place of work and in their community. All people must be entitled to work together for the purpose of rendering Mutual Aid and to receive Mutual Aid when they need it.

Completely Cooperative Relationships for Production, Companionship, Reproduction, Exchange, Recreation, etc.: The elimination of all authoritarianism and coercion, non-violent conflict resolution, and intolerance of predatory, parasitic or obstructionist behavior through Mutual Aid.

Direct Democracy and Majority Rule for All Political, Economic, and Military Collective Activities (e.g. "New England Town Hall Meeting", "Syndicalist Unions/Free Soviets", "Popular Militias"), Individual Self-determination, and Community Self-Determination: No Government, No Political Parties, No Leaders, No Corporations, No Police and No Church. Personal responsibility and accountability rather than coercion.

The Destruction of all Forms of Bigotry: Bigotry is intended to limit individual freedom by excluding persons or groups of persons, by creating unnatural divisions and conflicts between groups of persons and by distracting persons from the exploitations of the ruling class, their political system, and their social control mechanisms. This means that gender bias, ethnic bias, heterosexist/homosexist bias, class bias/privilege, *etc.* must never be tolerated. This also means the rejection of any cultural or religious values which advocate bigotry.

Personal Privacy including freedom from unreasonable search and seizure, surveillance or intrusion into your domestic or personal affairs, relationships, and activities.

A Minimum Quality of Life For Everyone including food, clothing, shelter, health care, sanitation and a healthy environment necessary for everyone to be free to live for reasons other than just survival. Education, job training, child care, transportation and work for everybody. Mutual Aid for workers who are sick or injured. Mutual Aid for those who are to young, old or infirmed to work. Everyone should be able to chose when to end their life.

ANARCHISM AND FREEDOM

Anarchism is the philosophy of freedom. We believe in a society where the freedom of each person is limited only by the freedom of everyone. We are born free yet everywhere we are enslaved. This is because the idea of “freedom” in a capitalist society is confused with “Social Darwinism”; the idea that a few people should be allowed to dominate, terrorize and exploit everyone else. While this may be the fantasy of the rich, it is not *true freedom*. Freedom cannot be achieved by taking over the government or becoming a new ruling elite because, so long as one group of people try to place themselves above everyone else, then everyone else will still not be free.

True freedom is also not defined by ‘Civil Rights.’ “Rights” are a perversion of *true freedom* invented to trick us into believing that we owe our freedom to governments. In truth, we are born free and the purpose of governments is to take that freedom away in order to protect the money, property and privileges of the rich; the Ruling Class. All “Civil Rights” are a system by which the government rations a portion of our freedom back to us (after they have stolen it in the first place) in order to create the illusion of freedom or convince us that we are freer than others who are also enslaved by the coercion of legislatures, cops, armies, courts and prisons which await those who ask why some are more free than others. The truth is that if we allow ourselves to be dependent upon coercive institutions (like courts) created by the rich and coercive authorities appointed by the rich for a measure of freedom defined by THEIR interpretation of our “rights” then we are no more free than animals in a zoo whose zookeepers decide how large our cages are or how long our chains should be so that we can believe we are free, but still be under their control.

True freedom is not measured by the power or authority the rich allow us to have, but by the ability to govern ourselves. If we allow ourselves to believe that THEY give us freedom then we are giving up our freedom any time they chose to take it away or anytime they threaten to take it if we don’t do what they say.

True freedom is not measured by the money, property or consumer goods the rich allow us to have, but by controlling the wealth created by our own labor ourselves. The ability to have a credit card, a car or a big screen television is no more a measure of freedom than the ability to have a full stomach and a place to live on welfare. It does not change the fact that the rich steal the value of what we produce with our labor and only allow us a portion of it. It does not change the fact that whether we work or are on welfare we are in a coercive relationship where our ability to eat and have a home is tied to our obedience to a boss or the government.

True freedom begins when we take responsibility for our own actions. This means that we are not willing to let other people tell us what to think or how to live. We question what we have been taught by parents and social institutions. We question the motives and agenda of politicians, bosses and the capitalist news media. We question the injustice we see in the World around us and reject the excuses for it given by people with wealth and social privilege. **PERSONAL freedom** is a lifelong pursuit of understanding yourself and the World around you through self-education, personal experiences and introspection (thinking about what you have read and experienced, comparing it to things you learned before and trying to understand more).

Anarchists believe that to have **PERSONAL freedom** we must also have **SOCIAL freedom**. Most people do not live alone. We are one person in a community of people. We are one worker in a group of workers at a workplace. Our ability to have **PERSONAL freedom** is dependent upon our ability to cooperate with others in our community and our workplace in order to make collective decisions about things which affect everyone in the group so that we can live in ways where everyone benefits from their labor and has their interests taken into consideration and injustices are weeded out by the group. **SOCIAL freedom** begins when we recognize that no individual, clique or social class can have power over us or take advantage of us if everyone else refuses to obey them. We recognize that our refusal (our “Free Will”) is more powerful than their coercion if we exercise it as a group. This means that instead of letting the rich trick us into competing with each other over a small portion of the freedom or wealth *they* steal from us, we get together and decide not to let *them* steal it in the first place and we all end up with more than any individual who plays *their* game.

SOCIAL freedom also means that we reject the ideas the rich invent to trick us into competing, so we don’t work together. Anarchists believe that to be free we must replace the idea of “survival of the fittest” with the practice of **Mutual Aid**: “All for one and one for all” and “An injury to one is an injury to all.” People have a natural feeling of compassion every time they see someone wronged because they know it could happen to them. We believe that this idea of “**Solidarity**” and the willingness of people to cooperate in groups for the benefit of everyone are the keys to enabling the greatest **PERSONAL freedom** for everyone.