

# **A Critical Analysis of Action and Goals in Activism from an Anarchist Perspective**

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Many political events today in OC are regulated to one function, bringing attention to an issue. We have all seen and been at such events: A march that catches the attention of the passers, a flyer campaign to pass out and post literature to an area. They set out in their purpose to spread information in support of a particular cause or issue. Their only function though is that, to disseminate information to a greater number of individuals.

That is not to say such events don't accomplish to degrees of success what they set out to achieve. They disseminate information but once that is complete the event ends. People go back to their lives, and prepare for the next event or resuming the status quo. As time passes though serious questions of tactics need to be asked. A critical analysis needs to be made about the effectiveness of these goals we set and if we need to change our approach. The state is not passive in its oppression, so neither can we as anarchists sit around and have hopes the future will be different.

Escalating pacifist events would be an unfortunate mistake. Anarchists seek effective insurrection, not storms in a teacup. State reactions and crackdowns will result in mass arrests. While anarchists seek to avoid state imprisonment and would resist if possible, peaceful protesters seeking only to disseminate information are sooner to sit down and simply protest their own arrest. Sometimes the peaceful protestors will even turn to police those they view as being out of line. This can be seen recently in the Ice occupation in Portland, where a self elected "Safety committee" regulated and silenced dissent in the camp long enough for the State to clear it out and slander the movement. Unless a sudden and surprised burst of insurrectionary attitude from the crowd arises, they will be afflicted by the police and demonized by the Media. Discussion will be had true, and this is vital, but direct change will not take place at that time.

I should note there is hope that such actions by the State at demonstrations will rally the Media into covering the injustice. The addition of mass arrests to this coverage is believed to make the spotlight even brighter, meaning peaceful protestors have incentive to be arrested. The Media does not care for spreading revolutionary knowledge though, only covering a story that can give ratings. Media coverage of Standing Rock did not stop bulldozers, free minds and hands did that. Relying on the infrastructure of the State and Market to get our messages across will only muddy our message and force people to rely on that infrastructure for future events, plans, or signals.

Of course anarchists also disavow the vanguardism of the crowd, to take on the idea that we should lead a mob to open revolt. Individual freedom must come from the individual. The goal is not to simply persuade the mob to act on our behalf but to rip individuals from the mob who will act on their own will. While our actions may light the fuel of insurrection in individuals, that is far different from telling them how to feel and act. The distinction most readily becomes apparent with what we are aiming for in the long term. Vanguardism will result in a revolutionary "class" leading the masses onward into whatever they

deem the new future is. Insurrectionary anarchism though hopes to liberate the mind of individuals from the hierarchies that oppress and limit freedom. First we must free individuals of the chains on their own mind, and then we can focus on the chains enforced by the police and the State.

With these two pitfalls in mind, it would be wiser to not simply attend these types of events but to forge our own objectives. The end goal of all actions should be insurrection, and this must be kept at the forefront of planning. The injustices of our system surround us; we must simply strike out against them. Insurrection can be carried out by a single individual standing in the way of tanks, but is more effective in overthrowing the State with every additional dissident. With this in mind, while scattered and cathartic lashing out at the state does carry benefit, actions should also further fuel revolutionary knowledge and insurrectionary fervor in communities.

The question of spreading revolutionary information has been debated for centuries now. While books and thesis help develop a revolutionary consciousness in those who seek it; it is regulated to that, those who seek it. People are more easily reached when the contradictions of society are placed on a singular spotlight in the moment. A flash of graffiti, a yell from a loudspeaker, or the destruction of a symbol of oppression will get the initial point across far more thoroughly than suggesting a reading list. This is a reason why it is essential we combine our actions with the function of fuelling insurrection in those we encounter.

With all that in mind we must now plan out what new type of “politics” we wish to carry out. The first step must be highlighting an injustice or contradiction of the State. From there insurrection must grow in individuals, fueling a radical desire for change and a better world. After that solidarity must be formed and discussion has to be had. New systems of mutual aid and cooperation must be established separate of the State and Market. The third step then must be the follow-through of a minority planning in cooperation for insurrectionary actions. The event either stops here or snowballs into the ultimate goal of revolt. The final step is not one that can be carried out solely by the minority of step three. It must come organically from individuals. This step is for an insurrectionary mindset to spread into a full on revolt against established authority and peace. This is the final goal we hope to achieve with Insurrectionary anarchism, individuals leading themselves against oppression and hierarchies.

Ideas of peace, capitalism, and oppression must be forced into the light for everyone to see, in forms that they are undeniable, that it cannot be allowed to continue. If this step fails then everything must be rethought though. Many are willing to stay ignorant to injustices when they benefit from them, lying to themselves that everyone earns their place in society’s hierarchies. If this is true then a new community or injustice should be attempted. Revolt will not come about by a small band of anarchists but requires great social change, which cannot be achieved if the society is contempt in their ways. If successful though a fuel of insurrection can take hold in the hearts of the witnesses, a desire for change which cannot be given or taught but must come from the individual themselves.

Following this change in individuals, solidarity must be established. Solidarity is the willingness to cooperate to achieve our goals and nothing more. It does not require orders to be given or positions to be delegated. It is entirely up to the individuals what they build their solidarity from and how they choose to go forward with that connection. It may not bud fruit initially at this same event, but it may foster cooperation and mutual understanding in the future. Social change will not be understood the same way for everyone, and even if in the end there is not an agreement it would be backwards to cast aside the opinions of those wanting change as well.

At the same time as all of this though, we cannot forget what differentiates this new type of politics from what we see at cookie-cutter gatherings meaning to only spread information. We must strike out at the symbols of injustice and oppression wherever they present themselves. The threat of police is very real, and as such this step should be taken in caution to avoid arrest or discovery. This action should be planned in advance by the minority taking part. The destruction of symbols or the apparatus' of the Market and State further our goals towards insurrection. The visibility of these actions also serves as a match for the revolutionary fervor in the crowd. They should not only be functional in fighting oppression but also inspire insurrection in others.

Finally the culmination of the event can lead to two distinct conditions. If the insurrectionary mindset is not held by the crowd then they will not join the actions of the minority of anarchists. This does not mean failure but simply that the conditions and time was not right for full on revolt. There is still benefit to be gained in everything up to this step. It lets people know that the systems of capital and police are not the invincible monsters they are often portrayed as. It also still thrusts horrid injustices and contradictions of society into the forefront of discussion.

The alternative condition is a different beast entirely though. If revolutionary change flows through the crowd then a spontaneous outburst can happen. This will push individuals further towards destroying the symbols and tools of oppression. There is no tool more powerful than individuals bursting for change by any means necessary, awakened from the docile slumber of consumerism our society now raises them in.

This will be remembered and have an effect on everyone involved. Police will realize the population will not passively accept oppression. Landlords will realize their property will no longer be allowed to exist "peacefully" while they starve and exploit individuals. Bosses will realize their workers do not really need them; that the labor exploited from them will no longer fuel their pursuits of business but will better the world around them without an expectation of money. Even more powerfully the participants will realize the possibilities of freedom, and that the Gods in our head can be killed.

Like the divine right of kings before us, the preconceptions of the social classes, gender, race, the State, capitalism, and peace will come crashing down in a glorious fire. The freedom from hierarchies, exploitation, and discrimination will usher in a new world that we live to fight for. There will still be challenges and ultimately the work might be more for some of us with this new path. Every step we will meet resistance and we will lose many battles on our road to victory. This is the path we must set out on though, or else we choose the complicity of allowing the sins of the old world to be on our hands.