

1 Selected Quotes

“Anarchism is not a romantic fable but the hardheaded realization, based on five thousand years of experience, that we cannot entrust the management of our lives to kings, priests, politicians, generals, and county commissioners.”

—Edward Abbey

“Anarchism is founded on the observation that since few men are wise enough to rule themselves, even fewer are wise enough to rule others.”

—Edward Abbey

“Somebody once declared that the only two political theories that are completely consistent are anarchy and totalitarianism. Anarchy fully embraces the concept of self, totalitarianism fully rejects that concept.”

—Darrell Anderson

“When holy scripture speaks of following Jesus, it proclaims that people are free from all human rules.”

—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

“There are no hierarchies in nature other than those imposed by hierarchical modes of human thought, but rather differences merely in function between and within living things.”

—Murray Bookchin

“It is impossible to achieve a harmonization of man and nature without creating a human community that lives in a lasting balance with its natural environment.”

—Murray Bookchin

“The ecological principle of unity in diversity grades into a richly mediated social principle; hence my use of the term social ecology.”

—Murray Bookchin

“If we do not do the impossible, we shall be faced with the unthinkable.”

—Murray Bookchin

“Anarchists have a ‘bad name’ in the media, not because they can point to one indiscriminate massacre by anarchists—there have been none—but because the one thing holders of power fear is that they personally should be held responsible for their own actions”

—Stuart Christie

“I die, as I have lived, a free spirit, an Anarchist, owing no allegiance to rulers, heavenly or earthly.”

—Voltairine de Cleyre

“We’re not depressed; we’re on strike. For those who refuse to manage themselves, ‘depression’ is not a state but a passage, a bowing out, a sidestep towards a political disaffiliation.”

—The Invisible Committee

“The situation is like this: they hired our parents to destroy this world, and now they’d like to put us to work rebuilding it, and—to add insult to injury—at a profit.”

—The Invisible Committee

“For Christian anarchists...the goal of anarchy is ‘theonomy’—the rule, the ordering, the ark of God.”
—Vernard Eller

“Basically, if you’re not a utopianist, you’re a schmuck.”
—Jonathan Feldman

“People have only as much liberty as they have the intelligence to want and the courage to take.”
—Emma Goldman

“Anarchism: The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.”
—Emma Goldman

“No great idea in its beginning can ever be within the law. How can it be within the law? The law is stationary. The law is fixed. The law is a chariot wheel which binds us all regardless of conditions or place or time.”
—Emma Goldman

“If I can’t dance to it, it’s not my revolution.”
—Emma Goldman

“Give us what belongs to us in peace, and if you don’t give it to us in peace, we will take it by force.”
—Emma Goldman

“Unfortunately, there are still a number of people who continue in the fatal belief that government rests on natural laws, that it maintains social order and harmony, that it diminishes crime, and that it prevents the lazy man from fleecing his fellows.”

–Emma Goldman

“Women make natural anarchists and revolutionaries because they’ve always been second-class citizens, kinda having had to claw their way up.”

–Kim Gordon

“Efficiency’ has come to mean vesting more and more power to managers, supervisors, and presumed ’efficiency experts,’ so that actual producers have almost zero autonomy.”

–David Graeber

“It’s hard to imagine a surer sign that one is dealing with an irrational economic system than the fact that the prospect of eliminating drudgery is considered to be a problem.”

–David Graeber

“Shit jobs tend to be blue collar and pay by the hour, whereas bullshit jobs tend to be white collar and salaried.”

–David Graeber

“The ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently.”

–David Graeber

“We have become a civilization based on work—not even ‘productive work’ but work as an end and meaning in itself.”

—David Graeber

“Money has no essence. It’s not ‘really’ anything; therefore, its nature has always been and presumably always will be a matter of political contention.”

—David Graeber

“We live in capitalism. Its power seems inescapable. So did the divine right of kings. Any human power can be resisted and changed by human beings. Resistance and change often begin in art, and very often in our art, the art of words.”

—Ursula K. Le Guin

“You cannot buy the revolution. You cannot make the revolution. You can only be the revolution. It is in your spirit, or it is nowhere.”

—Ursula K. Le Guin

“The individual cannot bargain with the State. The State recognizes no coinage but power: and it issues the coins itself.”

—Ursula K. Le Guin

“An anarchist is someone who doesn’t need a cop to make him behave.”

—Ammon Hennacy

“All good men are Anarchists. All cultured, kindly men; all gentlemen; all just men are Anarchists. Jesus was an Anarchist.”

—Elbert Hubbard

“Jesus was an anarchist savior. That’s what the Gospels tell us.”

—Ivan Illich

“While we should mobilise to restrain offenders, we must begin to realise that only the community will effectively deal with the matter. Not the racist Capitalist system, with its repressive police, courts and prisons.”

—Lorenzo Komboa’Ervin

“Prisons are universities of crime, maintained by the state.”

—Peter Kropotkin

“Variety is life; uniformity is death.”

—Peter Kropotkin

“Don’t compete!—competition is always injurious to the species, and you have plenty of resources to avoid it!”

—Peter Kropotkin

“The coming Revolution could render no greater service to humanity than by making the wage system, in all its forms, an impossibility, and by rendering Communism, which is the negation of wage-slavery, the only possible solution.”

—Peter Kropotkin

“Prisons are universities of crime, maintained by the state.”

–Peter Kropotkin

“The mutual-aid tendency in man has so remote an origin, and is so deeply interwoven with all the past evolution of the human race, that it has been maintained by mankind up to the present time, notwithstanding all vicissitudes of history.”

–Peter Kropotkin

“Be strong. Overflow with emotional and intellectual energy, and you will spread your intelligence, your love, your energy of action broadcast among others! This is what all moral teaching comes to.”

–Peter Kropotkin

“The true founder of anarchy was Jesus Christ and ... the first anarchist society was that of the apostles.”

–Georges Lechartier

“Socialism greatly needs Anarchism as a critic and to keep it from sacrificing the individual and his originality to the domination of the mass.”

–John William Lloyd

“Anarchists are committed to treating other people as equals, rather than as either masters or subordinates.”

–Roderick Long

“Anarchism’s outward form is a free, non-governed society, which offers freedom, equality and solidarity for its members. Its foundations are to be found in man’s sense of mutual responsibility, which has remained unchanged in all places and times.”

–Nester Makhno

“Anarchy is a word that comes from the Greek, and signifies, strictly speaking, ‘without government’: the state of a people without any constituted authority. Before such an organization had begun to be considered possible and desirable by a whole class of thinkers, so as to be taken as the aim of a movement (which has now become one of the most important factors in modern social warfare), the word ‘anarchy’ was used universally in the sense of disorder and confusion, and it is still adopted in that sense by the ignorant and by adversaries interested in distorting the truth.”

–Errico Malatesta

“We anarchists do not want to emancipate the people; we want the people to emancipate themselves.”

–Errico Malatesta

“If you say that you reject violence when it exceeds the limits imposed by the needs of defense, they accuse you of pacifism, without understanding that violence is the whole essence of authoritarianism, just as the repudiation of violence is the whole essence of anarchism.”

–Errico Malatesta

“As every form of government only serves to protect the privileged classes, so do police and judges only aim at repressing those crimes, often not considered criminal by the masses, which offend only the privileges of the rulers or property-owners.”

—Errico Malatesta

“Impossibility never prevented anything from happening.”

—Errico Malatesta

“Anarchy is synonymous with Socialism. Because both signify the abolition of exploitation and of the domination of man over man, whether maintained by the force of arms or by the monopolization of the means of life.”

—Errico Malatesta

“Communism made through the will of a government instead of through the direct and voluntary work of groups of workers does not really appeal to me. If it was possible, it would be the most suffocating tyranny to which human society has ever been subjected.”

—Errico Malatesta

“Capitalism is the same everywhere. In order to survive and prosper it needs a permanent situation of partial scarcity: it needs it to maintain its prices and to create hungry masses to work under any conditions.”

—Errico Malatesta

“I think the question is not about ‘communists’ and ‘individualists’, but rather about anarchists and non-anarchists.”

–Errico Malatesta

“The aim is not therefore to liberate some ‘essential self’ by throwing off the burden of government and the State, but to develop the self in creative and voluntary relations with others.”

–Peter Marshall

“Proudhon was the first to draw attention to the fact that the sum of the wages of the individual workers, even if each individual labour be paid for completely, does not pay for the collective power objectified in its product, that therefore the worker is not paid as a part of the collective labour power.”

–Karl Marx

“The struggle is so great that the triumph over fascism alone is worth the sacrifice of our lives.”

–Federica Montseny

“In Spain, we should have enough intelligence, enough sense of individual and collective responsibility to do for ourselves that which would be imposed upon us by a dictatorship.”

–Federica Montseny

“We tried many times before to speed on the social revolution in Spain; attempted to stir up the feelings of the people and to raise the banner of Libertarian Communism.”

–Federica Montseny

“Authority is something from which we are constantly subtracting, of which there remains always a residue, and which we attempt to make smaller and smaller.”

–Federica Montseny

“Your pretty empire took so long to build, now, with a snap of history’s fingers, down it goes.”

–Alan Moore

“Our masters have not heard the people’s voice for generations and it is much, much louder than they care to remember.”

–Alan Moore

“The aims of anarchists and true communists are identical.”

–Johann Most

“Fortunately, no country was ever more suited for anarchist agitation than present-day America.”

–Johann Most

“He who negates present society, and seeks social conditions based on the sharing of property, is a revolutionary whether he calls himself an anarchist or a communist.”

–Johann Most

“Anarchists are socialists because they want the improvement of society, and they are communists because they are convinced that such a transformation of society can only result from the establishment of a commonwealth of property.”

–Johann Most

“The anarchists, on behalf of the proletariat, therefore consider it necessary to show the proletariat that it will have to win a gigantic battle before it realizes its goals.”

–Johann Most

“Jesus wanted to liberate everyone from the law—from all laws. But this could not be achieved by abolishing or changing the law. He had to dethrone the law. He had to ensure that the law be man’s servant and not his master.”

–Albert Nolan

“Now, what do we mean when we say revolutionary Socialist? We mean that the land shall belong to the landless, the tools to the toiler, and the products to the producers. (Applause.) Now, let us analyze that for just a moment, before you applaud me. . . . We say, “The products belong to the producers.” It belongs to the capitalist class as their legal property. Do you think that they will allow you to vote them away from them by passing a law and saying, “Be it enacted that on and after a certain day Mr. Capitalist shall be dispossessed?” You may, but I do not believe it.”

–Lucy Parsons, ‘*Speech of Lucy E. Parsons*’, *The Proceedings of the First Convention of the Industrial Workers of the World*, 1905, Chicago

“Anarchists know that a long period of education must precede any great fundamental change in society, hence they do not believe in vote begging, nor political campaigns, but rather in the development of self-thinking individuals.”

–Lucy Parsons

“Anarchism has but one infallible, unchangeable motto, 'Freedom.' Freedom to discover any truth, freedom to develop, to live naturally and fully.”

–Lucy Parsons

“Most anarchists believe the coming change can only come through a revolution, because the possessing class will not allow a peaceful change to take place; still we are willing to work for peace at any price, except at the price of liberty.”

–Lucy Parsons

“Every time we take a step we're surrounded by the ideological birds of prey who feed on our possibilities, fill themselves with concepts of our desires and reenslave us with beautiful combinations of words which seem to depict the world we failed to realize.”

–Fredy Perlman

“The darkling plain is here. This is the waste land: England, America, Russia, China, Israel, France....And we are here as victims, or as spectators, or as perpetrators of tortures, massacres, poisonings, manipulations, despoliation.”

–Fredy Perlman

« La propriété, c'est le vol ! »

“Property is theft!”

–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated at, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither the right, nor the knowledge, nor the virtue.”

–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“Laws: We know what they are, and what they are worth! They are spider webs for the rich and mighty, steel chains for the poor and weak, fishing nets in the hands of government.”

–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“If I were asked to answer the following question: what is slavery? and I should answer in one word, it is murder, my meaning would be understood at once. No extended argument would be required to show that the power to take from a man his thought, his will, his personality, is a power of life and death; and that to enslave a man is to kill him. why, then, to this other question: ‘what is property?’ may I not likewise answer, it is robbery, without the certainty of being misunderstood; the second proposition being no other than a transformation of the first?”

–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“Property is robbery! That is the war-cry of ’93! That is the signal of revolutions! Reader, calm yourself: I am no agent of discord, no firebrand of sedition. I anticipate history by a few days; I disclose a truth whose development we may try in vain to arrest; I write the preamble of our future constitution. This proposition which seems to you blasphemous—property is robbery—would, if our prejudices allowed us to consider it, be recognized as the lightning-rod to shield us from the coming thunderbolt; but too many interests stand in the way! . . . Alas! philosophy will not change the course of events: destiny will fulfill itself regardless of prophecy. Besides, must not justice be done and our education be finished?”

—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“I build no system. I ask an end to privilege, the abolition of slavery, equality of rights, and the reign of law. Justice, nothing else; that is the alpha and omega of my argument: to others I leave the business of governing the world.”

—Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“I have made every effort to obtain exact information, comparing doctrines, replying to objections, continually constructing equations and reductions from arguments, and weighing thousands of syllogisms in the scales of the most rigorous logic. In this laborious work, I have collected many interesting facts which I shall share with my friends and the public as soon as I have leisure. But I must say that I recognized at once that we had never understood the meaning of these words, so common and yet so sacred: Justice, equity, liberty; that concerning each of these principles our ideas have been utterly obscure; and, in fact, that this ignorance was the sole cause, both of the poverty that devours us, and of all the calamities that have ever afflicted the human race.”
–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“As man seeks justice in equality, so society seeks order in anarchy.”
–Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

“Jesus, in some respects, was an anarchist ... A great social revolution, in which rank will be overturned, in which all authority in this world will be humiliated, was his dream.”
–Ernest Renan

“I am an Anarchist not because I believe Anarchism is the final goal, but because there is no such thing as a final goal.”
–Rudolf Rocker

“Power operates only destructively, bent always on forcing every manifestation of life into the straitjacket of its laws. Its intellectual form of expression is dead dogma, its physical form brute force.”

–Rudolf Rocker

“The Anarcho-Syndicalists know that wars are only waged in the interest of the ruling classes; they believe, therefore, that any means is justifiable that can prevent the organised murder of peoples.”

–Rudolf Rocker

“Common to all Anarchists is the desire to free society of all political and social coercive institutions which stand in the way of development of a free humanity.”

–Rudolf Rocker

“Are not laws dangerous which inhibit the passions? Compare the centuries of anarchy with those of the strongest legalism in any country you like and you will see that it is only when the laws are silent that the greatest actions appear.”

–Marquis de Sade

“We are not ready to fight because we love fighting. We are ready to fight because we are worth fighting for.”

–Zoé Samudz

“Our laws make law impossible; our liberties destroy all freedom; our property is organized robbery; our morality an impudent hypocrisy; our wisdom is administered by inexperienced or mal-experienced dupes; our power wielded by cowards and weaklings; and our honour false in all its points. I am an enemy of the existing order for good reasons.”

—George Bernard Shaw

“Poverty is organized robbery.”

—George Bernard Shaw

“Merciless criticism and independent thinking are two traits of revolutionary thinking. Lovers, lunatics and poets are made of the same stuff”

—Bhagat Singh

“People get accustomed to the established order of things and tremble at the idea of change. It is this lethargic spirit that needs be replaced by the revolutionary spirit”

—Bhagat Singh

“They may kill me, but they cannot kill my ideas. They can crush my body, but they will not be able to crush my spirit”

—Bhagat Singh

“When I say ‘Anarchism’ you hear ‘Chaos, Violence, Mayhem’. When I say ‘Anarchism’ I mean ‘Cooperation, Voluntary Association, Mutual Aid’”

—Simon Springer

“Aggression is simply another name for government.”

–Benjamin Tucker

“Anarchism is for liberty, and neither for nor against anything else ... I define Anarchism as the belief in the greatest amount of liberty compatible with equality of liberty; or, in other words, as the belief in every liberty except the liberty to invade.”

–Benjamin Tucker

“Anarchism is the attempt to eradicate domination.”

–John Zerzan