

Αναρχία: ORGANIZED FOR LIBERATION

In movements for justice and freedom, everyone has at least one common objective: an end to oppression, the ability to be themselves, and to be able to speak on the things that concern them. This is how Anarchists and their organizations, involved in local activism, have a role to play in social movements.

Anarchists see the objective of every positive social movement, as working towards liberation and self-determination. People are not always able by themselves, to push towards these broad societal goals while fighting to improve their own lives. As anarchists we do not impose our goals on people, but rather we demonstrate how achieving progress is done through direct action and autonomous organization, recognizing that respecting the struggles of others will foster the greatest solidarity. As a learned experience, not settling for the compromise of reform can be an empowering lesson. Through this lesson, concessions are more likely to be won and stronger movements are almost certain.

Not everyone understands political dilemmas the same way, or agrees that a free society can be created through popular revolution. Anarchists organize and support social movements to keep them creative, combative and independent - working towards liberation and solidarity between grassroots organizations and individuals across the country, and around the world.

We are active in movements for worker's and tenant's rights, and the rights of those without houses or employment. student movements for fair education, struggles against the police state and capitalism. And in efforts to protect the environment. We oppose nationalism, patriarchy, white supremacy, heterosexism, transphobia, and all other manifestations of oppression, rejecting authoritarians who serve their interests at the expense of our autonomy, mental, physical and economic.

Anarchists participate in movements, and work towards political education, political action, and social relations. Part of this task is keeping a record of the struggles and their lessons and keeping them in the collective memory. Creating continuity and helping shape theory based on lessons learned from past experiences.

Every aspect of an anarchist organization is to foster authentic relationships and greater understanding, with self-determination and integrity, without falsehood and prejudice.

At the "Humboldt Anarchist Book Fair," I once sat down with representatives of well-established anarchist organizations **Black Rose**, **Crimethinc**, **It's Going Down (IGD)** and **Revolutionary Action Movement (RAM)**, during an anarchist organizing panel and asked some open questions. And got back three different versions of the same answer.

They all agreed on what Anarchy meant - That anarchy comes from the Greek- *Αναρχία*, and its literal meaning *is without rulers or chiefs - the condition of a people who live without a constituted authority, without the state*. They agreed that the state, the capitalism that supports it, and the privileges, prejudice and oppression of any kind that depend on it are unnecessary and extremely harmful; anarchy is society without bosses or the hierarchy of the state, a natural order, a unity of human needs and the interests of all, complete freedom within complete solidarity.

The representatives agreed on the role of anarchists and their organizations was to coordinate, come together and always work to increase the capacity of anarchist efforts towards a free society. They all agreed on the need for organizing all the revolutionary forces of anarchism in an effort to prepare people for a social revolution and for the struggle for the realization of the anarchist society.

The representatives of the various Anarchist organizations agreed that anarchist organizations to be consistent, founded on agreements made freely and in solidarity, both how they function internally and in external action. Without tolerance for relations of domination, exploitation or alienation in the group anymore than outside it.

They all agreed politically and philosophically but not stylistically. Aesthetics and style have a lot to do with identity: who one belongs with and how one feels about one's ideas, even when different ideas on paper describe the same concept. I think of it like writing style, drawing or painting about the same subject. It looks different, feels different but describes the same subject in different ways.

That's looking at it in the positive then there is the other side of it. There are instances typically authoritarian by nature of the false having primacy over the real, where there is no substance, only spectacle. Where people group together around unfounded ideas and an almost arbitrary artificial sense of group membership. If oppression takes the place of freedom, these symbols and inauthentic relationships stand in place for genuine love, connection and solidarity with others.

You can almost taste the difference between encouraging real common cause vs the fake progress of authoritarians selling the image of your dreams back to you. Think of the city beautification projects extolling the strength of community while pushing poor people out on the street and converting slums into speculative businesses or higher class apartments.

Healthy nurturing relationships with one another and in natural organizations of affinity is what allows culture and aesthetics to enhance authentic connections and build communities we value.



Every type of relationship: political, business, artistic, spiritual, friendship and romantic are different and they can run parallel, interdependent or co-dependent to each other. When they are layered co-dependently on top of one another though, each one may be weaker as a result. We recently saw a prominent collective in Portland disbanded when two members in a romantic partnership broke up. Dissolving the group in large part because every other relationship in the collective relied heavily on the whims and stability of the romance. This turned out to be a fundamental weakness.

Anarchists organize using the concentric circle model to avoid that weakness and build up strength of the group and the people in it. Where the more passion and reliability a person demonstrates the more responsibilities they are trusted with. And everyone fits in according to their abilities, in the place they are in their lives. People take responsibility for what they advocate, so that all makes decisions based on what they are willing to manifest. In this way rights and responsibilities are balanced. The group and the individuals involved along with their multifaceted relationships and lives have opportunities to grow and change with the community and one another. Grounded on what is really being done together, and the commitments we make to one another.

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POLICING & RESISTANCE BEHIND THE REDWOOD CURTAIN

Policing powers in the United States Since its origin as slave patrols have been rooted in brutality and injustice, enforcing laws created by the illegitimate hierarchies of ruling class colonizers, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

The abolitionist movement, beginning with early U.S. slavery, has long been a movement against the system of policing, gaining strength with the the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s. Anti Police sentiment is now experiencing a significant revival following the 2020 uprisings in response to the murder of George Floyd.

Behind the Redwood Curtain Policing also enforces the same oppressive hierarchies and brutality, and enjoys the same lack of consequences for their extra-judicial beatings and slayings of community members.

If they do not belong to vulnerable communities, many local people have been blind to the reality of the police terror that exists here. In recent weeks it has become impossible



to deny the racist, misogynistic, anti-homeless actions and attitudes of Local Police agencies.

Cheri Lyn Moore was killed 15 years ago when a SWAT team stormed her apartment as officers used a shotgun and rifle to shoot the 48-year-old woman, the first in an especially violent year for police shootings in Eureka, with fewer than four dozen police officers. Police shot and killed three more people in the ensuing eight months.

The community was shocked. The city called for healing. And the police promised reforms. They worked to improve their community relationships, rolled out mental health programs and new officer training.

It is clear that meaningful changes to law enforcement in Eureka are held back by a toxic mixture of "old guard" officers, fear of retribution, infighting and distrust of some of the department's leadership.

This year, Eureka officer Rodrigo Reyna-Sanchez, who was a named defendant in a civil suit from the 2006 raid of Moore's apartment, became a central figure in the investigation into vile banter on private text messages, in which Reyna-Sanchez and other officers likened homeless people to troglodytes and joked about putting mentally ill women in demeaning sexual situations. Reyna-Sanchez, who texted his squad to "face shoot" a suspect, shot a man in the head at close range in 2010. The shooting was deemed justified. Now, the county public defender is reviewing cases to determine whether court testimony from some Eureka police officers can be believed at all.

Steve Watson, the current police chief, has faced pressure from the community and his employees to investigate the demeaning comments and hold the officers accountable. Despite Watson's insistence that officers can come directly to him with concerns, some inside his ranks are questioning whether they have a meaningful way to air grievances.

Police union leaders have scrambled to publicly strike the right tone that distances officers from the vile comments while also trying to protect officers who might be brought into the review. Outside the department, residents and police officers past and present are questioning how much has changed in 15 years. Fallout could reach far beyond the department's reputation with homeless advocates.

In recent weeks, protesters have gathered outside the Humboldt County courthouse and taped paper signs on a pillar that quote the text messages and make demands. "**Chief Watson: Fire the officers!**" one said March 26. An online petition (change.org/p/eureka-city-manager-fire-the-texting-squad) spells out even more demands.

Officers like Reyna-Sanchez should not be reinstated, said Yahmo Ahqha, an event organizer.

The content of the messages were disturbing enough to prompt calls for the firing of the officers involved, but are not surprising to those who experience routine harassment from the police, or are paying attention to the routine abuse doled out by police. Local activist are frustrated, while so many abusive actions taken by our local police seem to be met with apathy, the broader population is shocked into action only in to response to these text messages. We suspect that this may be due, at least in part, to the sparse reporting done by local news media when it comes to police abuses, while the same media outlets heavily report and sensationalize illegal activity, along with any little good deed that law enforcement manages. much of the local news media seems to act as a law enforcement Public Relations department. In this case the news was broken by the Sacramento Bee a newspaper from out of the area.

Redwood Curtain Copwatch, beginning in approximately 2005, kept a record of individuals who were murdered by law enforcement behind the Redwood Curtain. Since Redwood Curtain Copwatch disbanded, **Humboldt Grassroots** has attempted to fulfill the task of record keeping when it comes to those lost to police violence, though it is impossible to say how many have been killed by police more passively, like the houseless who die of exposure after having their survival gear confiscated by police, which is an occurrence you can hear about any day of the week from folks living outdoors. since 2007 alongside others we have been organizing in resistance to the police, and are grateful to see more groups come together to take on this important work locally within the past year, like **READ (Radical Education and Abolition Development)**, **Humboldt Defund**, and **Abolish Humboldt**, along with a heartening number of unaffiliated individuals.

The problems with policing run deep and there are no simple solutions.

We know that the system of policing is not broken, it is functioning in precisely the way it was intended to from the beginning, and no amount of reform will fix a system that is rotten to its core.

As the unjust nature of policing has revealed itself again and again, it is clearly time for us all to get to work in finding better ways of dealing with our societal ills and work toward real justice.

For more on resistance and justice work being done locally, stay tuned for an upcoming expanded article on our website, HumboldtGrassroots.com. If you have anything you would like to share with us about local law enforcement, local resistance, or if you would like to learn more about our work in the community, you can message us on the **Humboldt Grassroots Facebook** or **Instagram**, or email us at

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