

Within the Activist Community

Without the eradication of all oppression, there will be no real revolutionary change. Becoming aware of the connections between class, sex, and race is crucial to understanding any movement.

However, the destruction of capitalism and patriarchy will not erase oppression. True liberation from sexism cannot come without complete and total reformation of social thought and action. This includes getting to the root psychologically speaking of all discrimination, still present even within the activist community.

Sexism and the lack of recognition/empathy towards feminist issues are prevalent within many activist/anarchist/radical communities. It is important to recognize, come to terms with, and discuss with all people real solutions for these problems.

By collectively striving for better communication between all communities and organizations, by taking in the knowledge of one's struggles, by empathizing and sympathizing to greatest of one's ability, and by most importantly, reevaluating and empowering yourself, can there be successful and meaningful growth towards liberation.

"Anarchism asserts the possibility of an organization without discipline, fear, or punishment, and without the pressure of poverty: a new social organism which will make an end to the terrible struggle for the means of existence,—the savage struggle which undermines the finest qualities in man, and ever widens the social abyss. In short, Anarchism strives towards a social organization which will establish well-being for all."

"Her development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself. First, by asserting herself as a personality, and not as a sex commodity. Second, by refusing the right of anyone over her body; by refusing to bear children, unless she wants them, by refusing to be a servant to God, the State, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler, but deeper and richer."

- Emma Goldman

"[When women] become independent and be free to forge their own way in life" there will be an end to the "authoritarian juridical family" and the "full sexual freedom of women".

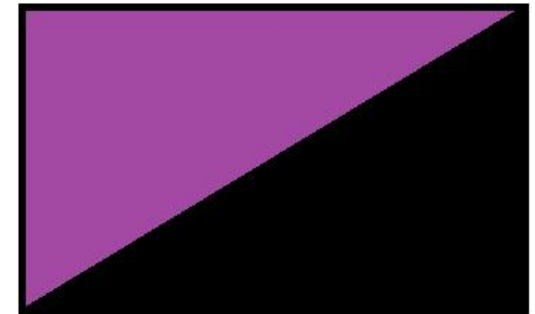
- Mikhail Bakunin

"The only genuine hope of feminist liberation lies with a vision of social change which challenges class elitism. Western women have gained class power and greater gender inequality because a global white supremacist patriarchy enslaves and/or subordinates masses of third world women."

- Bell Hooks

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Anarchist Feminism



"as anarchism is a political philosophy that opposes all relationships of power, it is inherently feminist."

- L. Susan Brown

What does it mean?

While feminism alone deals with the issues confronting all sexes/genders, anarchy-feminism seeks to emphasize the role that any patriarchy, government, and/ or other controlling or restricting force plays in the continuation of all forms of oppression, including sexism, racism, and classism.

It more specifically opposes the *enforcement*, but not the choice, of traditional family roles and gender roles. It is egalitarian in nature, leaving all the individuals of a community to agree upon that which benefits their lives best. Many anarchist feminists also oppose the institution of marriage. Emma Goldman stated that marriage "is primarily an economic arrangement...[woman] pays for it with her name, her privacy, her self-respect, her very life."

It may be true that the feminist movement has come a long way; unfortunately the benefits achieved are not as easily shared by non Western women. When we look at things like the rise in immigration we have to also keep in mind the economic and social inequality that forces these women (sometimes men) into prostitution, domestic work, and childrearing. Most important to note is this was the position of most women not too long ago. Our world's governments and systems are not going to change on their own volition, especially when they are fed through profit and the exploitation of the world and its inhabitants.

Egalitarianism

Goldman acknowledged that "Anarchism, at least as I understand it, leaves posterity free to develop its own particular systems, in harmony with its needs. Our most vivid imagination can not foresee the potentialities of a race set free from external restraints. How, then, can anyone assume to map out a line of conduct for those to come?"

True there are no clear cut approaches to achieving anarchy feminism, but there are similar working examples. When one looks at any egalitarian tribe or society, there is the immediate recognition in the lack of an authoritarian presence in all of its aspects of culture and philosophy. Egalitarian is essentially synonymous with anarchy-feminism. However, I usually appoint the term 'egalitarian' when referring to tribal societies that have long functioned without the use of government as we know it.

A present day example of such a society is the Batek, a tribe in Malaysia that has been around for hundreds of years. Devoid of all forms of government and



authority, the Batek also lack our concepts of gender roles and power structures. Batek culture is naturally egalitarian, because, as Karen Endicott argues, "where there are no institutionalized authority roles the only influences one person can have over another is that derived from personal qualities".

Why you should give a shit?

Patriarchy, dystopia, government, capitalism, etc. are all systems that not only enforce sexism but also "involuntary hierarchy", racism, poverty, war, destruction of the environment and its resources, and abuse towards animals. Its very basis is the indoctrination of power over others.

Under capitalism women can never expect to secure all economical and sexual freedoms. Due to things like maternity leave and reproduction, men are more economically secure under this system. Complete

reproductive and sexual freedom is not feasible within the confines of our current way of living.

Unlike most major feminist movements of the past, (and present still) anarchy-feminism aims to eliminate the exclusion of women and men on the basis of class and race.

It only makes sense that without the presence of power the issues of vulnerability, egoism, and struggle for domination would become less visible as well. For example, in a system where men were/are seen as the principle providers, economic rulers (as seen in their domination in government and the workforce), minorities and lower class individuals who are unable to fulfill these statuses and images of the male provider, will often turn to reciprocate their dissatisfaction by oppressing others, example, women.

It's obvious that men are not the problem, but the state in which we all live that is. Every state of our being is influenced and affected by the existence of patriarchy. Sexism is not the basis of all oppression, however, it is the first practice of domination that most people experience (man over woman, parent over child), namely in the home, socially, and domestically.

Anarchy-feminism aims to eradicate all forms of oppression. Nancy Tuana and Rosemarie Tong write in "Feminism and Philosophy" that "ecofeminists rightly note that except for anarchy-feminist, no feminist perspective has recognized the importance of healing the nature/culture division." It is this lack of connection between all groups that fight oppression that makes the struggle for freedom that much harder.

