



No War But The Class War: Iran and the Crisis of Empire

There is a persistent arrogance embedded in the worldview of Western power that overwhelming violence can break the political will of entire societies. Again and again the same assumption appears. Israeli strategists believe that flattening Gaza will sever Palestinians from their land. Washington spent more than sixty years trying to strangle Cuba economically in the hope that its people would abandon their revolution. Now the same logic is

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driving the escalating war against Iran. The belief remains that bombs, assassinations and economic siege will eventually force a nation to submit.

These actions are usually described in the language of policy errors or strategic miscalculations. But that framing misses the deeper issue. What we are witnessing is not simply poor strategy. It is the continuation of a worldview shaped by centuries of colonial domination, one that still imagines Europe and its settler extensions as the natural centres of civilisation. That worldview continues to shape the political imagination of Western elites, producing a kind of ideological blindness whenever societies outside the Western sphere refuse to comply.

The current war against Iran illustrates this dynamic with disturbing clarity. The conflict erupted when the United States and Israel launched coordinated strikes on Iranian military and strategic sites, triggering retaliatory missile and drone attacks across the region and raising fears of a wider war. The ripple effects have already spread far beyond the Middle East, shaking global energy markets and disrupting shipping routes

through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most important oil transit chokepoints in the world.

Yet even as the war intensifies, the underlying logic driving it remains remarkably familiar. Western policymakers appear convinced that military force will compel Iran to abandon its political trajectory. This assumption persists despite decades of evidence showing that sanctions, assassinations and military threats have failed to achieve that outcome.

To understand why this pattern repeats itself, it is necessary to look beyond individual decisions and examine the ideological structure that underpins Western power. For centuries European empires justified their expansion through a belief in civilisational superiority. Colonised peoples were portrayed as irrational, backward or incapable of governing themselves. This narrative provided the moral cover for conquest, slavery and economic exploitation.

Although the formal colonial empires of Europe have largely disappeared, the assumptions that sustained them remain

embedded in the political culture of the West. They shape how conflicts are interpreted and how resistance from non-Western societies is understood. When nations like Iran refuse to submit to Western dominance, their actions are often framed not as political resistance but as irrational fanaticism or extremism.

This mindset has profound consequences. It produces policies that consistently underestimate the resilience of the societies they target. The result is a cycle of escalation in which each failure leads to more coercion rather than reflection.

Iran occupies a particularly central place within this history of imperial confrontation. The modern conflict between Iran and the United States cannot be understood without remembering the 1953 coup that overthrew Iran's democratically elected Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he attempted to nationalise the country's oil industry. The coup, orchestrated by the CIA and British intelligence, restored the authoritarian rule of the Shah and laid the foundations

for the 1979 revolution that created the Islamic Republic.

In other words, the very political system that Western governments now describe as a threat was itself shaped by earlier Western intervention. The present war is therefore not simply a confrontation between two states. It is part of a much longer historical struggle over sovereignty, resources and geopolitical power.

Energy lies at the heart of this struggle. Iran sits atop some of the world's largest oil and gas reserves, making it a crucial player in global energy markets. Control over those resources, and over the financial systems that govern them, has long been central to US foreign policy. The dominance of the US dollar in international trade allows Washington to wield enormous economic power through sanctions and financial restrictions.

But that system is increasingly under strain. Countries targeted by sanctions are developing alternative financial arrangements designed to bypass Western control. Iran has strengthened economic ties with China and Russia

while participating in broader discussions within the BRICS framework about alternative trade and currency systems. The more Washington attempts to isolate these states economically, the more incentive they have to construct parallel systems outside the reach of Western financial institutions.

From the perspective of American strategists, this represents an existential threat to the existing global order. The privileged position of the US dollar has allowed the United States to sustain massive deficits while maintaining global influence. Preserving that position requires control over energy flows and the prevention of rival economic blocs capable of challenging dollar dominance.

Seen in this light, the war against Iran appears less like a defensive response to security threats and more like an attempt to enforce the geopolitical architecture that has underpinned Western power since the end of the Second World War.

For people in Aotearoa New Zealand, these dynamics might appear distant. Yet our country is far from neutral in this global system. The New Zealand

government has publicly supported the US-Israeli strikes as part of efforts to prevent Iran from threatening international security, while simultaneously calling for negotiations and restraint.

This response reflects a long-standing pattern in New Zealand foreign policy. Successive governments have cultivated the image of an independent, rules-based international actor while remaining firmly embedded within Western strategic alliances. Wellington may not deploy troops in every conflict, but it rarely challenges the fundamental assumptions of the imperial system that structures global politics.

The reaction to the current Iran war illustrates this balancing act. Official statements have avoided openly endorsing regime change while still framing the strikes as a response to Iranian behaviour. Critics, including former Prime Minister Helen Clark, have argued that the attacks constitute a clear violation of international law, drawing parallels with earlier Western interventions such as the invasion of Iraq.

This debate reveals the contradictions at the heart of New Zealand's international identity. On the one hand, the country likes to present itself as a defender of international law and multilateral diplomacy. On the other hand, it remains politically and economically integrated into the Western alliance system that repeatedly violates those same principles.

These contradictions are not merely diplomatic curiosities. They reflect the material realities of a settler-colonial society embedded within the structures of global capitalism. New Zealand's prosperity has long depended on participation in an international economic order dominated by Western powers. Our security relationships, intelligence partnerships and trade networks are deeply intertwined with that system.

From an anarcho-communist perspective, this raises uncomfortable questions. Can a state built on the colonisation of Māori land genuinely claim moral authority in global debates about sovereignty and self-determination? Can a society integrated into imperial economic

networks meaningfully oppose the wars that sustain those networks?

The war against Iran forces us to confront these questions more directly. It exposes the reality that even small states like New Zealand are implicated in the geopolitical structures that produce global conflict.

This does not mean that the Iranian state itself should be romanticised. The Islamic Republic is a deeply authoritarian regime that suppresses dissent and enforces rigid social controls. Acknowledging that reality, however, does not justify foreign aggression. Opposition to imperial war does not require political support for the governments targeted by that war.

The real issue is the broader system that continually produces such conflicts. The same structures of global capitalism that generate inequality and ecological destruction also generate war.

Competition over resources, trade routes and strategic influence drives states toward confrontation.

As that system enters a period of increasing instability, the political responses within Western societies are becoming more authoritarian.

Governments expand surveillance powers, criminalise protest and tighten borders. The language of security becomes the justification for repression.

Empire and authoritarianism develop together. The violence inflicted abroad inevitably reshapes politics at home.

For people living in Aotearoa, this reality should not be abstract. Our own history is shaped by colonial conquest and the suppression of Indigenous sovereignty. The same ideological frameworks that justified the seizure of Māori land also underpinned the expansion of European empires across the world.

Recognising this connection does not mean collapsing all struggles into a single narrative. But it does require acknowledging that colonialism, capitalism and imperial war are historically intertwined.

The war against Iran is therefore more than a distant geopolitical event. It is part of a broader crisis within the global system that shapes our lives here as well.

As the conflict escalates, its economic consequences are already being felt around the world. Disruptions to oil supplies threaten to push up fuel prices and destabilise supply chains. Small economies like New Zealand's are particularly vulnerable to such shocks.

Yet the deeper significance of the war lies not in its immediate economic effects but in what it reveals about the trajectory of global power. The post-Cold War era of uncontested American dominance is fading. New geopolitical blocs are emerging. Old alliances are shifting.

In this uncertain landscape, imperial powers are attempting to preserve their dominance through increasingly aggressive means. Military force, economic sanctions and political destabilisation remain the tools of choice.

But history suggests that such strategies rarely achieve the outcomes their architects intend. Attempts to crush resistance often strengthen it. Societies subjected to external pressure frequently become more determined to defend their sovereignty.

This is why decades of sanctions have not broken Cuba. It is why Venezuela has survived repeated attempts at regime change. And it is why Iran, despite relentless pressure, continues to resist submission.

The lesson is not that states are invincible. It is that the political will of entire populations cannot easily be destroyed through violence and coercion.

For radical movements around the world, including here in Aotearoa, the challenge is to confront the structures that make such wars possible. That means questioning the alliances, institutions and economic systems that bind our society to imperial power.

It also means building forms of solidarity that extend beyond national borders. The struggle against exploitation and domination is inherently international.

The war against Iran is a stark reminder of the stakes involved. It reveals the enduring arrogance of imperial power and the catastrophic consequences that arrogance can produce.

The question facing us is whether we continue to accept the structures that make such wars inevitable, or whether we begin to imagine and organise for a world beyond them.

The age of illusions is ending. The only meaningful response is clarity, solidarity, and resistance.



The Liberal Capture of Anarchism



For the past few years, a peculiar current has swept through parts of the anarchist milieu, particularly those corners closest to academia, the NGO apparatus, and the broad “social justice” ecosystems of the liberal left. It goes something like this: “we don’t live in revolutionary times”. The line is always delivered with a kind of weary resignation, as if the speaker has grown too sophisticated, too worldly, too traumatised or too professional to still believe in any of the old principles.

We are told that anarchists cannot reject electoralism, because that would be “dogmatic” or “purist.” We cannot maintain a principled anti-militarism in the face of imperial alignments and geopolitical chessboards, because that

would be “naïve” or “privileged” or simply “not how the world works.” We cannot challenge nationalism, because apparently even anarchists must kneel before the altar of flags when the right war breaks out. And in Aotearoa, we are increasingly instructed that anarchists, of all people, should simply fall into line behind Labour, the Greens, or Te Pāti Māori, and that anything else amounts to assisting the Right, aiding fascism, or failing to take “real-world consequences” seriously.

It is a remarkable ideological contortion, one that has transformed a large portion of self-identified anarchists into adjuncts of liberalism, junior partners to parliamentary leftism, and in some cases loud defenders of militarised state power. This collapse is not merely political drift; it represents a profound refusal to uphold the most basic tenets of anarchism. It is a capitulation dressed up as realism, a surrender disguised as nuance, and a fear of being politically unfashionable mispackaged as maturity.

But at its core, this discourse expresses something simple and corrosive – a belief that anarchism is incapable of acting as a revolutionary force in its own right, and

must therefore outsource its agency to liberal institutions.

One cannot understand the present collapse of anarchist independence without understanding the cultural ecosystem that many leftists now inhabit. In Aotearoa, as across the Western world, political energy has been systematically redirected into NGOs, consultancies, academic departments, and publicly funded “progressive” institutions which operate comfortably inside capitalism’s infrastructure. These spaces speak the language of radicalism but behave according to the incentives of bureaucracy.

Many young anarchists do not radicalise through struggle anymore, through occupations, workplace organising, anti-militarist resistance, housing fights, or anti-police action. Instead, they are socialised into a professional sphere where the primary goal is to secure contracts, maintain social capital, and avoid political risk. The result is predictable: anarchism becomes merely a branding aesthetic rather than a commitment to revolutionary action.

Inside those institutional spaces, rejecting electoralism is framed as childish.

Criticising leftist parties is framed as sabotaging “progress.” Maintaining anti-militarist principles is presented as dangerous idealism. Refusing to collapse into a Labour-Green-Māori Party electoral bloc is seen as a betrayal of the “community.”

But these are not moral judgments, they are occupational ones. Anarchists working within NGO and academic networks quickly internalise that their material survival depends on aligning with the soft-left consensus. Electoral criticism risks contracts. Anti-militarism risks reputational safety. Anti-state politics complicates relationships with funders.

And so a new norm develops – anarchists should avoid being too anarchist. Radical rhetoric is allowed, even encouraged, so long as it ends up reinforcing the parliamentary left.

Anything that threatens the state’s monopoly on legitimacy becomes unspeakable.

The result is an anarchism that speaks fluently about “mutual aid” yet forgets that mutual aid is not a social service but a

weapon against the state's claim to necessity. An anarchism that condemns racism and colonialism yet funnels all resistance into state-aligned institutions. An anarchism that champions decolonisation yet recoils from any challenge to parliamentary authority in Aotearoa. An anarchism that supports struggles overseas only when they align with Western strategic narratives.

In essence, it is an anarchism that has lost its nerve — and then rationalised that loss as intellectual sophistication.

The drift into electoral reasoning is a key symptom of this collapse. It takes several forms.

Sometimes it is explicit: “We must vote for Labour/Greens/TPM to keep the Right out.” Sometimes it is dressed up in social-justice rhetoric: “Marginalised communities are harmed when the Right wins, therefore anarchists have a responsibility to vote.” Sometimes it is wrapped in strategic fatalism: “Voting won't save us, but it helps buy time.”

But underneath all of this is the same core assumption that the state must remain the primary vehicle for social

change, and anarchists must adjust their politics to accommodate that reality.

It is extraordinary how quickly anarchists forget that the modern state, liberal or conservative, is structurally unable to abolish the exploitation, hierarchies, and coercive apparatus that define it. Even when left governments attempt reforms, they do so by strengthening the machinery anarchists seek to dismantle: police, prisons, militaries, borders, welfare bureaucracies, surveillance technologies, taxation extraction systems.

In Aotearoa, Labour is a textbook example. Every time it returns to power, the anarchist milieu fractures. Those closest to NGO infrastructures begin arguing for strategic support. The rhetoric of “harm reduction” becomes weaponised to shut down criticism from those who insist, rightly, that Labour has proven itself a reliable servant of capital, imperial alliances, and domestic managerialism.

This dynamic intensified during the Ardern era. Many anarchists who had once mocked parliamentarians found themselves reduced to timid criticism, or complete silence, because the social atmosphere of liberal adoration made

genuine dissent feel culturally taboo. Within activist circles, Ardernism was treated as “good enough,” and anarchists who disagreed were cast as troublemakers, misogynists, or unrealistic purists.

A movement that views itself as revolutionary should never be this fragile. Yet the collapse was widespread and revealing: many anarchists were more committed to social belonging within the liberal cultural class than to anarchism itself.

Once this cultural shift occurs, a fatal logic takes hold: anarchists must not reject electoralism because their allies, often their employers, depend on it.

This is how a revolutionary tradition turns into a lobby group.

The most alarming expression of this drift has been the abandonment of anarchist anti-militarism. For centuries, anarchists have insisted that war is not an aberration but a predictable outcome of the capitalist state system. Militarism is the purest expression of hierarchical power, resource extraction, nationalism, and obedience. It is the machine that devours

working-class youth to protect the interests of competing ruling classes.

Yet in recent years, many self-described anarchists have adopted a military logic indistinguishable from Western liberalism. They cheer for NATO when it suits them. They speak approvingly of sending weapons to proxy conflicts. They amplify the language of “defence,” “security,” and “strategic necessity.” They shame anti-militarists for “not supporting the right side.”

This is the most dangerous capitulation of all.

Once anarchists accept the legitimacy of war, they have surrendered their last meaningful distinction from the statist left. The result is an anarchism that obediently follows the emotional rhythms of Western media cycles, outraged when instructed, supportive when instructed, silent when instructed, instead of maintaining its own anti-militarist compass.

Part of this collapse is ideological. Part is material. But a significant part is psychological.

Many anarchists today are terrified of being seen as “irresponsible.” The wider

liberal-left culture frames politics through the lens of compliance, safety, and harm-minimisation. Anything that challenges institutional frameworks is seen as reckless. Anything that disrupts political normalcy is dangerous. Anything that undermines parliamentary leftism is indirectly “helping the Right.”

This creates a paralysing moral landscape where the worst sin an anarchist can commit is not supporting the status quo loudly enough. The fear of being blamed for a right-wing victory becomes so overwhelming that many stop imagining politics outside the narrow horizon of elections. The fear of being accused of “not caring” about marginalised communities becomes a weapon used to silence radical politics.

In such a climate, anarchism becomes an identity, not a praxis – a way of feeling radical while behaving safely.

This anxiety-based politics produces an anarchist who:

- privately agrees the state cannot liberate anyone, but fears saying so publicly.

- privately knows elections change nothing fundamental, but votes anyway and pressures others to do so.
- privately opposes war, but shares liberal talking points so as not to appear insensitive.
- privately wants to resist capitalism directly, but settles for symbolic action within the system.

The result is tragic: anarchists who are radical everywhere except where it matters.

The situation in Aotearoa intensifies this collapse because the liberal left is structured around moral frameworks linked to biculturalism, Treaty discourse, and NGO-based social justice work.

These are important terrains of struggle, but the state has learned to weaponise them to maintain legitimacy.

This produces a political landscape where anarchists are pressured to treat parliamentary actors, especially Labour, the Greens and Te Pāti Māori as central vehicles for “progress,” even when their track record is deeply entangled with colonial administration, policing, market capitalism, and militarised foreign policy.

The liberal state in Aotearoa has become adept at performing moral virtue while intensifying its structural violence. It deploys kupu Māori in its rebranding while expanding prisons. It funds “community providers” while crushing working-class living standards. It hires iwi consultants while pushing militarised surveillance in the Pacific. It offers symbolic recognition while evading material decolonisation.

Yet many anarchists, immersed in NGO environments and Treaty workshops, struggle to critique this dynamic without being accused of cultural ignorance or reactionary politics. The result is silence, caution, or apologism, behaviours entirely incompatible with anarchist commitments to confronting state power, all state power, regardless of the rhetoric it cloaks itself in.

And so the argument returns: anarchists must support leftist parties; anarchists must not reject electoralism; anarchists must not oppose nationalist or militarised frameworks when they are framed as protective of Indigenous sovereignty or marginalised communities.

Such reasoning conflates the state with the people, a mistake anarchists spent 150 years warning against.

The claim that anarchists “can’t” reject electoralism, or “can’t” oppose leftist parties, is ultimately a claim about the impossibility of political imagination. It assumes that the state is the only terrain available, that nothing meaningful can be done outside of it, and that anarchists must align themselves with the managerial left because the alternative is irrelevance.

But this is only true if we accept the premises of liberal fatalism. The entire anarchist tradition exists because previous generations refused those premises. Emma Goldman did not look at the early 20th century and decide anarchists must support progressive mayors. Kropotkin did not conclude that the working class should vote for liberal reformers. Māori radicals in the 1970s did not decide that liberation ran through Parliament. The Spanish CNT did not believe emancipation required alliances with bourgeois parties, until internal liberal capture weakened them with disastrous consequences.

Anarchism has always insisted that politics extends far beyond electoral cycles. If anything, the crises of our age, climate breakdown, housing collapse, militarised imperial alignments, collapsing social infrastructure, prove that anarchist organising is not merely viable, but necessary.

The state is not the only site of political action. It is not even the most effective one. It is simply the only one liberals can imagine.

If anarchism is to reclaim itself from liberal capture, it must reaffirm some basic, uncompromising truths.

Anarchists must reject electoralism not because elections are morally impure, but because electoral participation actively undermines the development of autonomous working-class power. Every hour poured into canvassing is an hour not spent organising. Every argument about strategic voting is a diversion from the real labour of building alternatives. Every second spent defending leftist parties is a second spent normalising the idea that liberation flows downward from Parliament rather than upward from struggle.

Anarchists must oppose all militarism, not selectively, not only when it aligns with Western interests, not only when liberals approve, because every war strengthens the state, intensifies nationalism, and expands the repressive apparatus that will ultimately be used against us.

Anarchists must reject the notion that leftist parties represent “the community.” Labour does not represent working people. The Greens do not represent ecological resistance. Te Pāti Māori does not represent decolonisation. Parties represent themselves – their leadership, their funders, their institutional incentives, their careers.

Anarchists must refuse the guilt-trip politics of liberalism — the idea that we are responsible for right-wing victories if we refuse to align with the parliamentary left. That logic is emotional blackmail used to discipline dissent.

Most importantly, anarchists must rediscover the confidence that we can act, we can organise, and we can build political power outside the state. We must stop believing that autonomy is impossible. The future belongs not to voters but to those who take the risk of

creating something outside the suffocating frameworks of capitalist governance.

The liberal discourse infecting contemporary anarchism ultimately reduces to one pitiful sentence:

“Anarchism can’t do anything, so anarchists should help the liberals.”

It is a defeatist creed masquerading as pragmatism. It is the whisper of a movement that has lost faith in itself. It is the ideology of an anarchism that has forgotten its own history, its own victories, its own capacity to terrify the powerful.

When anarchists argue that they cannot reject electoralism, they are abandoning the principle that liberation grows from below. When anarchists argue they cannot oppose leftist parties, they are surrendering their independence to the very institutions designed to neutralise social movements. When anarchists argue they cannot maintain anti-militarism, they are accepting the logic of empire. When anarchists argue they cannot act without state permission, they are no longer anarchists at all.

We stand at a moment when capitalism is unravelling, the climate is breaking down, global militarism is accelerating, and the old political categories are collapsing. This is not a moment to retreat into the exhausted pragmatism of the liberal-left. It is a moment to reclaim the audacity and clarity of anarchism: the belief that the working class can organise itself, that communities can govern themselves, that solidarity can replace coercion, and that states, all states, are obstacles to freedom, not vehicles for it.

We owe the world something better than becoming the auxiliary wing of liberalism.

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Epstein and the Political Economy of Elite Perversion



When the Epstein files surface, as they periodically do, they arrive wrapped in the language of scandal. Names are whispered, associations mapped, flight logs parsed. The public is invited to gawk, to speculate, to feel briefly outraged. And then, inevitably, attention drifts. The files retreat back into the archive of unresolved horrors that liberal society has learned to live with. What remains unexamined is not who appears in those documents, but what sort of social order makes such documents inevitable in the first place.

Jeffrey Epstein is consistently presented as an anomaly, a predator who slipped

through the cracks, a grotesque aberration made possible by institutional failure. This framing is comforting because it preserves the idea that the system itself is fundamentally sound. All that is required, we are told, is better oversight, stricter enforcement, cleaner politics. Yet nothing about Epstein's rise, protection, or endurance suggests accident or malfunction. On the contrary, everything about his operation points to a system functioning exactly as intended, shielding wealth, managing risk, and harming the powerless.

Sexual exploitation at the level revealed by the Epstein files does not occur in spite of capitalism, it occurs because of it. Wherever wealth accumulates beyond accountability, human beings become consumable. This is not a moral observation but a material one. Capitalism reduces all social relations to exchange, all value to price, all bodies to assets or liabilities. Under these conditions, intimacy itself becomes a resource to be extracted, managed, and monetised. Epstein did not invent this logic. He simply applied it with particular efficiency.

Throughout history, ruling classes have treated sexual access as a privilege of power. From feudal courts to colonial administrations, from slave plantations to modern corporate empires, domination has always had an erotic dimension. The powerful do not merely command labour, they command bodies. What distinguishes the modern capitalist elite is not that it desires more, but that it desires without exposure. Risk is outsourced. Consequences are absorbed by lawyers, publicists, and courts. Harm is rendered invisible through distance, payment, and procedural delay.

The Epstein files gesture toward this reality without ever being allowed to name it. We are shown fragments – a financier here, a politician there, a university donation, a private jet. What remains obscured is the totality, the dense web of institutions that collaborated, actively or passively, to ensure that exploitation continued uninterrupted. Prosecutors declined to prosecute. Police failed to investigate. Banks moved money. Universities accepted funding. Media organisations softened language. This was not a

conspiracy in the cinematic sense, it was coordination through shared interest.

The 2008 non-prosecution agreement was not a miscarriage of justice but a declaration of class loyalty. It made explicit what is usually left unsaid, that the law exists primarily to regulate the poor. When wealth reaches a certain threshold, legality becomes negotiable. Epstein was not spared because evidence was lacking. He was spared because prosecution would have destabilised networks too important to disrupt. The victims were not ignored, they were sacrificed.

From an anarchist perspective, this is not surprising. The state does not exist to abolish violence but to manage it. It polices disorder from below while tolerating, and often facilitating, exploitation from above. Elite criminality is treated not as a threat to social order but as a variable to be controlled. When exposure becomes unavoidable, containment follows. Charges are narrowed. Language is softened. Responsibility is individualised. The system survives intact.

Epstein's death in custody, whether through negligence or something more deliberate, completed this cycle. With the central figure removed, accountability dissolved into abstraction. Files replaced trials. Speculation replaced justice. The network remained largely untouched. This was not closure but erasure, a familiar outcome when elite interests are at stake.

The persistent suggestion that Epstein functioned as part of an intelligence-linked blackmail operation is often dismissed as conspiracy, yet blackmail has always been a routine instrument of power. States do not rule through morality, they rule through leverage. Sexual compromise has long been used to discipline elites, enforce obedience, and neutralise dissent. Whether Epstein was formally connected to intelligence agencies matters less than the fact that his operation mirrored intelligence logic perfectly – recruitment of the vulnerable, documentation of transgression, selective exposure, and absolute impunity at the top.

What this reveals is not a secret cabal but a social structure in which power circulates horizontally among elites while

accountability is blocked vertically from below. Those named in the files remain insulated not because they are innocent, but because they are useful. Power protects itself instinctively.

The media's role in this process is indispensable. Corporate journalism thrives on scandal but recoils from structural critique. It will publish details without analysis, outrage without context. Survivors are briefly platformed, then discarded. The story is continually reset, fragmented into consumable episodes that prevent sustained political understanding. Capitalism is never named as the common denominator because doing so would implicate the very institutions that control publication.

Anarcho-communism understands sexual violence of this nature as political, not personal. The problem is not individual desire but social relations structured by ownership, hierarchy, and alienation. Under capitalism, alienation does not disappear at the top, it intensifies. When all material needs are met without effort, desire becomes abstract, mediated, and increasingly divorced from reciprocity. Pleasure is no longer about connection but about control. Risk must be

heightened to be felt at all, and harm becomes an acceptable by-product.

This is decadence in its true sense: – not excess, but emptiness. Epstein's world of private islands, rotating victims, and endless consumption was not an exception to elite culture but a distilled version of it. The horror lies not only in what occurred, but in how normal it was allowed to become among those with power.

There is a persistent belief that if only the full truth were revealed, every name, every document, justice would follow. This belief misunderstands how power operates. The ruling class can absorb scandal indefinitely. What it cannot tolerate is the redistribution of wealth and control. Exposure without organised resistance changes nothing. At best, it rearranges factions within the elite, at worst, it serves as spectacle that drains popular anger without threatening underlying structures.

The Epstein files will not save anyone. They will not dismantle trafficking networks. They will not prevent future abuse. They function as an archive of managed outrage, released just enough

to maintain the illusion of transparency while preserving impunity. The fixation on lists and flights distracts from the deeper question – why do such operations exist in the first place.

An anarcho-communist response does not begin with punishment but with abolition. It asks what social arrangements make sexual exploitation viable and seeks to dismantle them at their root. It demands the destruction of extreme wealth accumulation, the abolition of private ownership over institutions that govern social life, and the construction of collective systems of care and accountability outside the state. It understands that as long as some human beings wield unaccountable power over others, abuse will follow as predictably as profit.

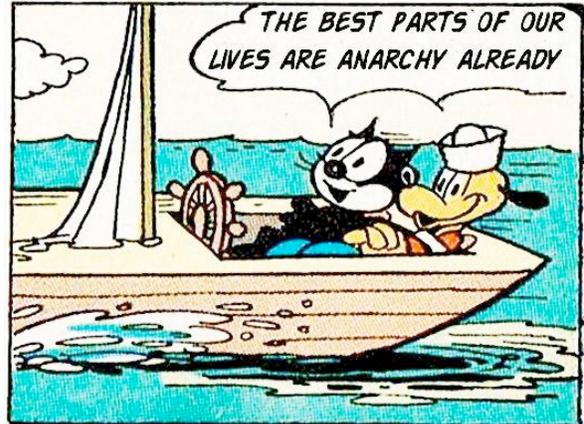
Jeffrey Epstein was not a monster who slipped through the cracks. He was a product of a system that converts vulnerability into opportunity and treats human beings as instruments. The obsession with who boarded which plane is a distraction from the more uncomfortable truth that capitalism allows planes like that to exist.

Until the structures that protect wealth, obscure harm, and commodify intimacy are dismantled, there will be another Epstein. And another. And another. The system is not failing. The system is the crime.

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Anarchy Is Not What You Think It Is



For most people, the word anarchy conjures chaos. Burning cars, smashed windows, shouting crowds, the collapse of all restraint. It is a word carefully trained to frighten. Politicians invoke it as a threat, newspapers as a warning, and police as a justification. Anarchy, we are told, is what happens when order disappears.

But we are making a simpler and more unsettling claim: anarchy is not the absence of order, but the absence of rulers. And far from being rare, it is woven through everyday life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This is not about anarchism as an ideology, a movement, or a future

revolution. We are not arguing that everyone should call themselves an anarchist, nor do we offer a blueprint for how society ought to be reorganised. Instead, we offer something quieter and more subversive. We look closely at how people already live, care, work, raise children, resolve conflict, and survive, often without asking permission, without formal authority, and without the state playing a central role at all. In other words, we argue that anarchism is a lived practice, not a doctrine.

The inspiration for this approach comes from the British writer and thinker Colin Ward, whose work *Anarchy in Action* refused the dramatic gestures of revolutionary politics and instead turned attention to the mundane. Ward was interested in housing co-operatives, playgrounds, allotment gardens, informal education, and the ways ordinary people organise their lives when institutions fail or intrude too heavily. His argument was disarmingly simple - if you want to understand anarchism, do not look to manifestos or barricades, look at everyday life.

Aotearoa offers a particularly clear view of this everyday anarchism. Not because it is uniquely radical or harmonious, but because the failures and violences of the state are so visible, and because people have had to rely on one another in spite of it. Mutual aid after floods, whānau stepping in where welfare systems fall short, informal housing arrangements that keep people off the streets, cash work and favours that bypass wage discipline, conflict resolved quietly without police or courts, these are not marginal or exceptional activities. They are normal. They are how life continues and yet they are rarely named as political.

One of the most powerful myths of modern society is that order comes from above. We are taught that without rules imposed by the state, without police, bureaucrats, managers, and experts, society would descend into violence and disorder. Cooperation is treated as fragile, conditional, and in need of constant supervision. When people help one another, it is framed as charity or kindness, never as a form of social organisation in its own right.

This myth serves a purpose. It legitimises authority while obscuring the fact that most of what keeps society functioning happens below the level of law and policy. The state depends heavily on unpaid care, informal cooperation, and community resilience, even as it claims credit for stability and threatens punishment for deviation. It is quick to intervene when people step outside permitted channels, but slow, or absent, when real support is needed.

Nowhere is this contradiction clearer than in moments of crisis. After earthquakes, floods, and fires in Aotearoa, it is neighbours, whānau, and community groups who act first. Food is shared, shelter organised, children looked after, elders checked on. These responses are not centrally planned. They emerge from relationships, trust, and local knowledge. The state arrives later, often to regulate, document, or withdraw support once the immediate danger has passed.

This is not an argument that the state does nothing, or that it is always irrelevant. It is an argument that social life is not produced by authority, even when authority claims ownership over it. The

order we rely on most is informal, relational, and largely invisible to official accounts.

In Aotearoa, these dynamics are inseparable from colonisation. The settler state did not arrive to create order from chaos. It arrived to impose its own forms of order on societies that were already organised, often in ways that conflicted with European notions of property, hierarchy, and law. Māori social organisation, grounded in whānau, hapū, tikanga, and collective responsibility, represented a profound challenge to the authority of the colonial state. Land tenure without individual ownership, justice without prisons, governance without a sovereign rule, these were not abstract alternatives, but lived realities.

Colonisation sought to dismantle these systems, replacing them with wage labour, private property, policing, and bureaucratic control. Yet despite generations of violence, dispossession, and assimilation, non-state forms of social organisation persist. They persist not as relics of a pre-colonial past, but as adaptive, living practices shaped by ongoing resistance and survival.

It is important to be clear here. We are not claiming that Māori society is “anarchist” in any simple or ideological sense. Such a claim would be both inaccurate and disrespectful. What it does argue is that Māori social life exposes the limits and contradictions of the state by demonstrating that authority is not the only way to organise society, and that relational, non-statist forms of order are not only possible but enduring.

These practices are not confined to Māori communities. Working-class life across Aotearoa is full of informal systems that make survival possible in the face of rising rents, precarious work, and shrinking public services. People share childcare, tools, transport, and knowledge. They look after one another’s kids, cover shifts, lend money without contracts, and find ways around rules that would otherwise leave them stuck. Much of this activity exists in a legal grey area, tolerated when it is convenient and criminalised when it becomes too visible.

What links these practices is not ideology, but necessity. People do not organise this way because they have read anarchist theory. They do it because they have to,

and because cooperation works better than competition when resources are scarce and institutions are hostile.

Anarchism, in this sense, is not a destination but a description. It describes what happens when people take responsibility for their own lives and for one another, rather than deferring to distant authorities. It describes social order that emerges from below, shaped by context, relationships, and mutual obligation. It is messy, imperfect, and often fragile, but so is life itself.

This perspective challenges both defenders and critics of the state. Against those who insist that authority is the source of all order, it offers abundant evidence to the contrary. Against those who imagine anarchism only as a future rupture or total collapse, it insists that much of what they desire already exists, quietly, in the present.

We are not trying to romanticise these practices. Informal systems can reproduce inequality, exclusion, and harm. They can fail, break down, or be overwhelmed. Nor do we deny the reality of violence, abuse, or exploitation within

communities. What we do though is refuse the assumption that the state is the natural or necessary solution to these problems.

Instead, we ask a different set of questions. How do people actually manage harm when they do not call the police? How do families and communities regulate behaviour without formal authority? What happens when responsibility is collective rather than delegated upward? And why are these forms of organisation so often ignored, dismissed, or actively undermined?

These questions matter now more than ever. As faith in political institutions erodes, as economic inequality deepens, and as crises multiply, the gap between official systems and lived reality grows wider. Governments promise security while delivering precarity. Bureaucracies expand even as their capacity to care diminishes. In this context, the everyday anarchism of mutual aid and informal cooperation is not a fringe phenomenon, it is a lifeline.

We invite you to look differently at your own life and the lives around you. To

notice the ways order is created without orders being given. To recognise that much of what feels natural or inevitable is in fact the result of collective effort without command. And to consider what might change if we took these practices seriously, not as temporary stopgaps, but as the foundations of social life.

We are not demanding agreement, but we do ask for attention. Because once you start to see anarchism in action, it becomes difficult to unsee it.





Aotearoa Workers' Solidarity Movement (AWSM) are an Anarchist-Communist group in Aotearoa/ so-called New Zealand.

Since 2008 we have promoted the creation of non-hierarchical grassroots democracy and classless, stateless societies here and internationally.

We exist so our ideas can be more widely known, understood and adopted by working people. We see this theoretical knowledge and its application as essential in the struggle to replace the dominant economic system of capitalism.

Therefore, we have the ultimate aim of becoming a direct action organisation that is physically engaged in daily struggles.

We encourage sympathisers to join us and help contribute to this process.

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For Anarchy