

anarchism starts in the now: hope for a better future

there is still time

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one: doom

"All my siblings wanna swim but it's infested with great whites Tell me if shit changed since Leelah and Blake died Tell me if my best friend's about to be next in line Tell me that I'm brave motherfucker, do you wanna die?" **Rural Internet - i am not brave**

the world is looking dire right now. it seems like everything is worse than it has ever been, or maybe just like things suddenly flipped back to "bad" after a brief period where it seemed to be getting better. but no matter what happened or how, one thing is clear: the number of socially acceptable targets and scapegoats is steadily increasing, the focus shifting constantly.

the fascists call us "degenerates", blaming us for all of society's woes, while the liberal "left" throw us under the bus again and again, blaming anyone but themselves for their loss of state power. none of this is new, per se, but the suffocating feeling of this ever-accelerating descent into hell is just as scary. the US has voted four times on a federal level since trump first came to power, and somehow we're still exactly where we left off almost a decade ago.

it's paralyzing, really, to see the rights we've fought over for decades—maybe even centuries—eroded away so rapidly all over the world. no matter how predictable this may have been, no amount of "told you so" changes just how shocking it still is.

we undeniably are at a turning point of sorts—things are not fine, and this essay does not want to pretend they are. its goal is instead to provide a perspective for a hopeful future at a community level, a perspective beyond voting and party politics. and while clearly sparked by the results of the US election, i did my best to write this for an international audience¹.

two: community

"there is no higher good than the pursuit of self happiness and fun. the act of doing something purely for fun is blindingly good, as it is the action of doing something only to create positivity and put more goodness into the world. [...] the act of having fun creates goodness, which means it is the greatest thing one can do." **elena fortune, manifesto**

one call pierces sharply through all the vaguely hopeful posts whenever a rightward shift happens, or the state takes another life, or a fascist wins an election, or yet another right is stripped away, or one more senseless war breaks out: "organize!"

but what does it really mean to "get organized"? *what is community and how do we find it?* a lot of those posts seem to think of organizing as simply joining a union, a political party or a similar radical organization. to me this feels too hollow, too shortsighted and too often leaves people with more questions than answers.

after all, the true heart of any radical movement—of any revolution, *of any kind of community*—is the people supporting it and keeping it alive from behind the front lines. think about the community kitchen that cooks for you; the local bands stoking your morale; the storytellers keeping the memory of your movement alive; the researchers documenting fascists and the state;

¹ i mean, it's not like im from the US myself

the queers who organize the parties where you can be unapologetically yourself for a night; the mental health and legal support folks making sure you and your friends are safe during and after a demonstration; the people making flyers, art, and zines; the friends you can count on for always being around and full of hope.

no matter if you're at the front lines when we face off against fascists and the state, you play an integral role in keeping the movement thriving. *there's a role for everyone*—no matter your skillset, risk affinity or ablebodiedness.

any kind of community has the *ability* to enact change in this neoliberal individualist society—*any kind*. this includes not just the examples at the start of this section, but also your local friend circle, your city's underground music scene, your polycule, your local book club, your group chat or really any other group of people. hell, even conservatives have used this to their advantage for decades now—it's one of the reasons why homeowners' associations and groups of "concerned parents" are so damn good at politicizing whatever the hell they want to.

we slowly build a future for ourselves by fostering communities of all kinds, creating lifelong bonds and friendships, making *collective memories* of moments where time stops just for a little bit as we sit around a fire and have fun, refusing to give up our love for each other through all hatred. because no matter how fun it is to imagine the current system laying in ashes before us, actually getting there is meaningless if we have nothing to *fill that void with*.

when i think of community *i think of friendships*, of friend groups, the people who share my dream for a better future. i think about the people i've gone to protests with, the people i've ran away from cops and fascists with, the people who've tended to my health afterward, the people i've hacked governments and corporations with, the online music communities that rebuilt my hope when i was on the verge of throwing in the towel, the people i've moshed with at local shows and all the people i can run to when it feels like everything is just too much. there isn't "the community", *there are many communities* that every single one of us are a part of.

to me, the problem with any community solely dedicated to "doing politics", whatever that may be, is that the only thing that tends to hold it together is the unifying force of anger. and while that rage and resentment may be powerful in the short term, it is integral for any community to also share more positive emotions; the fun times are the glue holding us together and keeping our spirits high. we cannot just fight, *we have to live to be able to fight*. anarchism is about togetherness, and we can only achieve this by coming together not just to fight but also to have fun and laugh together, even if only for a bit.

three: hope

"We are in crisis. Crisis is opportunity. I absolutely do not want to celebrate the fact that we are in crisis. It is not good. But it affords certain opportunities, ones that we need to engage with." **Margaret Killjoy, *The Sky is Falling; We've Got This* (2024)**

it is in this togetherness, this feeling of belonging and this common joy, where i find my hope for the future. anarchism is alive in the here and now; our bright future is being molded within the bleak present. autonomous DIY venues, squats, small-scale occupations and entire autonomous regions show us how a different, non-authoritarian future is not only possible but also already happening.

more and more people are growing disillusioned with the status quo, and while many of them join mass actions, be it on the street or online, we can't be content with just that. make friends at protests, help people figure out their place in the movement, give each other community. this is how we keep up the momentum, how we keep our hope for a better future alive. we have a chance to turn our shared anger at this moment into shared love for each other—a chance to keep going.

it's this hope that makes us powerful. it's this hope that keeps us and those around us going. it's too easy to fall into a doomer mindset, to just go "it's joever", but doom won't save us: we can't build a better world on nihilism. *spite alone can get you far, but it will never make you happy.* as cheesy as it sounds, one thing all the easy-to-share optimistic posts are right about is that love, hope and friendship will always be some of the most radical acts we can do.

hope alone obviously doesn't *lead* us to this future, but without it we have no reason to raise our arms, to rebel and tear down the systems holding us back. it is this hope in a world full of doom that creates solidarity in crisis, this hope that organically leads to mutual aid in natural disasters, this hope that leads people to pick up guns and fight for their community when an army tries to tear their world apart. *why fight to survive if we don't allow ourselves to truly live until our very last breath?*

autonomy is the result of hope in moments of crisis, and our love, hope and friendship is the glue that holds it together. anarchism is a human response to oppression, to our world falling apart around us, to having no one left but each other. anarchism has always been everywhere. *anarchism starts in the now.*

further reading

- The Anarchist FAQ Editorial Collective, *An Anarchist FAQ* (2020)
- Adam Gary Lewis, *Imagining autonomy on stolen land* (2017)
- Phineas Fisher, *Hack Back: A DIY Guide* (2017)
- Subcowmandante Marcos, *Hack Back: A DIY guide to robbing banks* (2019)
- maia arson crimew, *stop studying cybersecurity because of me* (2024)

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