

The Anarchist Library
Anti-Copyright



Burn the Bread Book

**Make Anarchy, Not More Ecocide & Mass
Extinction**

ziq

ziq
Burn the Bread Book
Make Anarchy, Not More Ecocide & Mass Extinction
December 2019

https://raddle.me/wiki/burn_the_bread_book

theanarchistlibrary.org

December 2019

The only way to destroy authority is to burn industry to the ground before it devours every last lifeform on the planet.

The only chance we have to survive what's coming in the next few years as our ecosystems are collapsing all around us is to tear down every factory and close every port and slice up every road until civilization is in ruins.

But in all honesty, we're not going to do that. We're going to watch television and sip iced tea and we're going to wait for the end. I'm going to keep watching in silence as the local bread man fells the last remaining wilderness.

Maybe the planet will recover somewhat in a few millennia and maybe the next lifeform that evolves will have more sense than the desertmakers. This is the last hope I cling to.

“anarcho” to the front of an industrial system will make a difference is absolutely fucking ridiculous.

Communism has never succeeded at liberating us historically and will not suddenly succeed just because you promise you’re better than other communists and you and all your super-libertarian ancom comrades will pick up cans of paint and make all the chimney stacks bright green.

Authoritarian behavior will only ever be repeated if society is structured around authoritarian institutions like industrialism and democracy. Both Marx and Kropotkin’s communism are centred around these institutions because their ideologies require that people be controlled by bureaucracy. Whether it be decentralized democratic bureaucracy or centralized party bureaucracy is irrelevant. The result is the same: Authority and control.

Without this bureaucracy, the society would descend into anarchy. Yes, wonderful, amazing, freeing anarchy. The very thing every red fears most because it would mean they’d no longer get to forcibly structure society and people around their sacred ideology and force their authority and morality on them. Domesticated people sit trapped in sterile little boxes, fed a steady drip of pesticide and high-fructose corn syrup as they labor, consume, consume, consume and then die.

This isn’t life. This isn’t anarchy. This is a waking nightmare, a depraved hell-world that has all of us thoroughly brainwashed into thinking it acceptable. Branding it “communist” or “libertarian socialist” or “democratic” or “egalitarian” or “decentralized” or “anarcho-communist” will not end the nightmare. It will not stop the planet-wide ecocide civilization has wrought on all living things. The means of destruction being controlled by industrial workers instead of industrial bosses will not stop the ecocide.

Seizing the factories and making them democratically managed as all reds yearn to do won’t do anything to save us from violence, misery, alienation and eventual extinction.

Contents

The True Cost of Bread	5
“The People’s” Authority: How “Anarcho-Communism” is Authority-Forming	9
All Industrial Goods Free for All People: A Recipe for Disaster	14
Is Communism Always Authority-Forming?	22
Seize the Means of Destruction! (And fucking burn it to the ground...)	27

Ancoms aren't going to suddenly decide to give up their phones, Doritos and washing machines when they find out they're environmentally destructive. They'll just rubber-stamp all the things they want as "needed", "eco-friendly", "sustainable" or "green" and call it a day. And we'll be expected to keep working our miserable jobs and like it because now they're anarcho-jobs in an anarcho-society with anarcho-exploitation and anarcho-masters.

Keeping people in the mines and factories building those consumer goods that "the people" decide they "need" will require massive authority that will be just another iteration of capitalism in all but name. Just like "communist" Russia and "communist" China and "communist" North Korea. Not a trace of communism will survive once industrial civilization is done grinding everything up. There's nothing about "anarcho-communism" that will spare it from the same fate. Claiming to be anti-authority rings hollow when you cling to authoritarian industrial civilization, workerism and all the other authorities ancoms at large decide are "justified".

A bureaucracy will always be instilled in an organized mass-society and this is why industrial communism isn't tenable. It's why every time industrial communism has been attempted, it has simply been manifested as a perverse collective-capitalism with even more centralized power than regular-flavor capitalism. The bureaucracy will quickly morph into a state, and by definition the society will no longer be communist. But of course, it'll keep calling itself "communist" and ensure the distinction between capitalism and communism remains paper-thin so people won't be able to envision a better world than the brutal industrial wasteland we've all been born into.

Any system that allocates resources and polices people is functionally a state, regardless of what it brands itself as.

All implementations of industrial society have failed to liberate people, instead making their lives more and more miserable with each stage of industrialism, and to claim that attaching

being “needed”, but almost none of the things defined as such are actually needed. This is why industrial communism isn’t really compatible with anarchy: anything and everything will be defined as “needed” by domesticated people, no matter how authority-forming the things are. If it means they get to keep consuming, anarcho-consumers would happily define everything from pesticides to slaughterhouses to automobile plants as “needed”. This is the power of democracy. Whatever narrative the collective adopts becomes the official, approved narrative and anyone questioning it will be seen as subversive and dangerous and a threat to order and common decency.

This “needed industry” argument is a lot like the “justified authority” argument a lot of red “anarchists” keep making to uphold every shitty authority they cling to all the way up to the state, prisons and the police.

Usually they’ll just rename these authorities “the commune”, “the social re-integration facility” and “the peacekeepers” and be satisfied that they’ve come up with a real change. It’s meaningless. Domesticated people will not allow themselves to see past the carefully manufactured alienating world they’ve inherited. Very few civilized people are willing to risk losing what they perceive as the great comforts imbibed to them by industrial civilization.

Even if they recognize how strangling these “comforts” actually are to them and everything else on the planet, instead of rejecting them outright, they draw up elaborate plans to reform the way those “comforts” are produced and dispersed. Most of these plans, when deconstructed and debullshitted, ultimately amount to little more than slapping the word “anarcho” in front of everything and trusting it’ll be all good because it’s anarchized now.

People thrived without industry and agriculture for millennia. Civilization has led to the extinction of near everything on the planet. 99.9% of industrial goods are not “needed” by humanity, they’re wanted.

The True Cost of Bread

For years I’ve watched a man drive his pick-up truck into the forest around me and cut down all the trees that aren’t legally protected. So, every tree that isn’t a pine or an oak. The moment a carob or olive or hawthorn or mastic or strawberry tree grows big enough to burn, he cuts it down and drags it away for firewood. He even fells trees I planted, while smiling and waving at me like he’s doing me a favor. I glare at him silently but don’t say a word, knowing he has the full power of the state behind him.

He uses the wood to fuel his traditional bakery which has several large outdoor ovens. The much-loved industrial product he produces is bread; a product that has rapidly replaced all the native food-bearing plants of the area as they’ve been cut down to make room for wheat fields.

The villagers are proud of the bakery because it attracts visitors from all over the island and thus creates further opportunities for them to earn profit. The local bureaucracy; the democratically-elected village council, gives the baker free reign to do as he pleases since so many livelihoods depend on his bakery.

Because the baker cuts everything down as soon as it reaches human height, the trees never get big enough to fruit, so they don’t spread their seeds and grow new trees. The forest slowly dwindles to nothing but pine trees and can no longer sustain most animal life. The climate dries, the soil erodes, the air grows stagnant and depleted of oxygen. All that’s left in the few remaining forests that haven’t been bulldozed to grow more wheat is a sterile pine desert.

The baker will soon no doubt lobby the village council to allow him to harvest the pine trees too, otherwise the all-important bakery will cease to be operational when he runs out of legal trees to fell.

In just a few years, all the fruits, nuts and berries that sustained the people in the area for millennia are wiped out and replaced with a consumer product that is made from a single grain crop. A thriving ecosystem has been replaced with a wheat monoculture that could collapse at any moment and take the lives of everyone it feeds with it.

It's worth noting that the baker, like most people in my village, and in fact most people on the island, considers himself a communist. The village has a "communist party" clubhouse and they always elect "communist" local leaders and vote for "communist" politicians in the national elections.

Any anarchist worth their salt has no tolerance for these faux-communists, or "tankies" and their brand of collectivist-capitalism because they cling to money, states and rulers and really only embrace Stalinist politics because of the promise of cushy government jobs for them or their relatives.

The Stalinist politicians openly buy votes by promising jobs in the public service to their supporters. A job in the public service here is a guaranteed free ride for life for you and your family, with the salaries multiple times higher than private sector salaries and benefits out of the wazoo — including multiple pensions. They get a full pension for each gov sector they worked in, and the more connected civil servants are rotated through jobs in multiple sectors in the last few months leading up to their retirement to ensure the maximum pay-out possible.

I'm confident anyone reading this knows Stalinism is designed to enrich the bureaucrat class and give them complete control over the state's citizens. No anarchist sees that shit as communism. But in a "real" communist society; an "anarcho-communist" society where money, state and class have been abolished, the local baker would presumably still bake that bread, and since it would be offered freely to everyone far and wide, he'd need to bake a lot more of it and thus need more wood. More forest would be razed to keep the bread production going.

c. Work isn't voluntary.

No matter how much you swear you'll make labor democratic, no one is working because they really want to. They're working because the system requires them to work to survive. No amount of democracy will stop the system from asserting its authority on everyone inside its suffocating walls. Abolishing the borders between territories will do nothing if industrial civilization continues to box us in and starve us if we dare to resist its rule. If we can't escape civilization, the whole world is nothing more than one big prison.

Civilized people labor to create consumer goods because the system gives them no other option if they want to survive. The only way people will continue to toil in the factories and warehouses in "a communist society" is if they are forced to by the system. No free hunter gatherer will voluntarily give up their freedom to stand at an assembly line pushing buttons so other people can have Corn Flakes, weedkiller and AAA batteries. It's something that needs to be forced on humans by domestication and the joined threat of violence and starvation that props up the industrial system.

Industry is a clear authority and anarcho-communist theory is completely oblivious to that. Anarcho-communism is nothing more than an attempt to reform the tyranny of civilization to give it a sly smile. It's the anarchist version of Barack Obama promising change but just delivering more of the same and expecting you to celebrate it.

Seize the Means of Destruction! (And fucking burn it to the ground...)

Ancoms insist "people would choose to produce only what is needed" in an anarcho-communist society. That word; "needed" is really useless. Anyone can define anything as

Some ancoms will no doubt unironically reply to this piece with reasoning that just amounts to “no, actually, anarcho-communist industry will be a utopia because Kropotkin said so”. They’ll quote a bunch of literature to me that is nothing but empty promises by long-dead European philosophers for industrial egalitarianism. I’ve really run out of patience for that line of thinking. It’s no different than a 7 year old trying to win an argument by insisting “because my dad said so”... But when it comes down to it, that’s all most reds can do. Quote their heroes and cling to the hope that they’ll be proven right some day. That hope is what keeps them going as their miserable civilized lives burn the world up. “All our suffering will end once we have democracy in the workplace”. Those poor, deluded, hope-filled souls.

Everything I know tells me industry cannot be made “green” any more than capitalism can be made ethical. All agricultural industrial society in history has resulted in ecocide and eventually collapse. When you extract resources, burn fuel, manufacture goods and distribute them to millions or billions of people, you do real irreversible harm to ecosystems and human lives. Ancoms are not magical beings that can somehow escape the consequences of this because they’re supposedly “good” and “egalitarian”.

If anarcho-communism were ever attempted, half the “nuances” it has will be thrown out for being fantastic, half-baked and impossible to implement in an industrial mass-society. Compromises will be made to make the system functional. A lot of things have been claimed about communism, but whenever its been attempted in real life models, almost none of those claims have come to fruition and they never will because:

- a. Resources aren’t infinite.
- b. Industrial output has a high ‘hidden’ cost, and most importantly:

Everyone living in the village and anyone passing through, and people in faraway cities will expect to have as much gourmet bread on their plates as they desire. More bakeries would need to pop up on the mountain as demand rises for delicious bread in the cities below, with the rural population working hard and doing their duty to feed the hungry urban population.

Over the years, I’ve put a lot of thought into envisioning how the workers seizing the means of production would end the environmental devastation this bread production brings to the mountain. I struggle to see any scenario where communism would stop the devastation being wrought on the ecosystem. The forests would continue to be razed to ensure production won’t slow down.

Free bread for everyone today means no bread (or any food) for anyone tomorrow as the top-soil washes away, the climate warms, the wildlife goes extinct, and the whole mountain rapidly turns to desert. It’s inevitable that soon even wheat will cease to grow in the fields surrounding the village.

Regardless of the economic system in place, the villagers being able to consume as many fresh loaves of baked bread as they can carry means all the forests in driving distance of the village are eviscerated, eventually all the fields become barren, the crops fail, and everyone starves. This is already well on its way to happening, and switching to a communist mode of production would do nothing to allay this inevitability.

“How would you feed people then, genius?” I hear you scoff. The answer is simple; tried and tested for millennia. I wouldn’t feed people. People would feed themselves instead of expecting others to labor to feed them; an entitlement that arose with industrial civilization. People would be inclined to protect the forests instead of bulldozing them for the supposed convenience of industrial food production if they picked their food directly from those forests everyday.

They'd protect the forests with their very lives because they'd need the food that grows in the forests to survive without industrial farms, bakeries and factories outsourcing food production and then hiding the ecocide they cause just out of sight of the villages and their carefully manicured streets.

Bread and other industrial products alienate us from our ecosystem and cause us to stop caring about how our food is produced, so long as it's there in the store when we want to eat it. Putting food production back into the control of the individual is the only way to preserve the ecosystem. Direct food is the only anarchist mode of production. When other people are tasked with growing your food, they will take shortcuts because the food isn't going into their own mouths or the mouths of their loved ones. Food harvesting needs to go back to being a way of life for every able-bodied person, rather than something industrial farm workers are tasked with to serve an elite class of privileged office workers who are completely disconnected from the food chain.

All over the world, complex centuries-old polyculture food-forests that sustained countless lives for generations are destroyed by the arrogance of industrial production, replaced for a short while by a wheat or corn monoculture so people can pick up their bread down the street from their home or workplace instead of muddying their feet to gather food from the wild as their ancestors did. This convenience seems like "progress" to civilized people, at least until the destructive industrial agriculture process renders the wheat fields infertile and farms all over the world are turned into a vast uninhabitable dust bowl. A sustainable way of life that kept us alive and thriving for centuries has been tossed aside in favor of a short-lived attempt at industrial convenience that has already proven itself a horrible failure; bringing us and every other lifeform to the verge of extinction.

right around me and didn't even slow down. When I saw him later, he swore on his life that he didn't see me because the sun was in his eyes. I nodded and shrugged.

Communism wouldn't stop this lying dipshit from exploiting me; he'd still need someone to fix his leaky pipes, start up his diesel generator, saw off the upper branches of his olive trees and climb shoddy makeshift structures for him regardless of the economic system in place. He'd still give me a sob story about his painful ulcer and I'd still do the hard work to spare him the pain of doing it himself. He wouldn't stop being an exploitative asshole just because democracy is installed in the workplace. He wouldn't start practising mutual aid when he goes to great lengths to avoid all work and shames other people into doing it for him.

Red anarchists throw every insult in the book at me when I voice my doubts about their wistful ideologies; condemning me for being critical of the amazing breadman Kropotkin or their "green industry" tsar Professor Bookchin... It's hard to give my perspective as an indigenous anarchist to these people who are so hostile to any worldview that doesn't validate their luxurious industrial lifestyle and their driving desire to make that lifestyle more democratic in order to receive a bigger share of the pie.

Between the shouts of "reactionary lifestylist" and "dirty primmie" they lobby at me, I try to explain my perspective to them. I see suffering in the world and I want to make sense of it. I'm not satisfied just handwaving it away and clinging to fanciful utopian ideologies designed to energize European factory workers from the 1800s. I don't believe red-industry will cure society of all its ills and free humans from their chains.

The warehouse I've worked in for more than a decade will not become magically liberating if I'm given the power of democracy. It'll still be a miserable fucking place filled with toxic pesticides that are slowly killing me.

into the communist notion that humans are inherently good and they just need the right industrial system to bring that good out of them.

Any society where I'm expected to just sit back and watch as a logger destroys my ecosystem because he's serving the "greater good" isn't a society I want any part of. I value my autonomy over the desires of traumatized workers pushing buttons for 8 hours a day in a city far-removed from me. I'd rather take the logger's chainsaw away than fiddle my thumbs as he takes everything I know, and to hell with whatever bureaucratic process enshrined him with the right to decimate the forest to give bread to the workers. Fuck the workers and their bread and their fully-automated luxury communism and their divine democratic rights.

There's simply no reason to believe exploitative assholes will go away if communism is ever enacted.

There's a man I know who constantly exploits me for my labor, and I always go along with it. He dangles a carrot on a stick in front of me every time; promising that after I help him, he'll hook me up to his well so I can have free water for my trees. For years he's made this promise.

I've spent countless hours doing dangerous work for this guy with no reward. He always disappears after I do the work without giving me what he promised. Then the next week he wakes me up again at 6am on a Saturday by honking his horn, apologizes for not getting around to hooking me up to the well yet, saying he was too busy or in the hospital or had a family emergency, promises he'll do it this week, and then I'm hanging off a cliff or a roof repairing pipes for him all day while he barks orders at me.

I do it because I'm a fucking pushover who can't say no to people due to my ridiculous kind nature. But whenever I ask him for anything, I'm met with a blank stare, an abrupt subject change or a sorry excuse. I was stranded a two hour walk down the mountain last week when my car broke down, and he drove

Industry is not sustainable. Industrial systems are all destructive. Communism, capitalism, fascism, they're all founded on ecocide. The authority of the baker is upheld over everything else because domesticated people would rather consume "free" industrial bread for a few years than unlearn their destructive consumerist habits. If we are to survive these times of devastating ecological collapse, humans need to go back to fostering vast food forests as our ancestors did for millennia; producing and gathering our own food without destroying the very ecosystem that gives us life in the name of luxury and convenience.

“The People’s” Authority: How “Anarcho-Communism” is Authority-Forming

If someone kept cutting down all the trees to bake bread, the people who depend on the forest to survive would of course have to intervene to stop the loggers from destroying the forest and thus killing their way of life.

This happens in rainforests today where indigenous people who have been let down by the state gleefully issuing licenses to corporate loggers, and turning a blind eye to illegal logging, instead take matters into their own hands and shut down the loggers using force.

They put their lives on the line to do this, and a lot of them are killed by the loggers who value their profits over the lives of indigenous people. They know if they don't act to stop the loggers, the forests they call their home will be decimated and their way of life will have been destroyed forever. They'll be forced into the cramped cities and have to labor all day every-day to buy the bread and beef that stripped their forests bare.

So how would an anarcho-communist society deal with someone who cuts down all the trees to bake bread? In an

anarcho-communist society, everyone will be environmentally conscious and consume sustainably, right...? No. Not if you're engaging in any kind of critical thinking.

Loggers can only destroy forests at the current explosive rate if the society imbues them with authority. If they have no authority, there's nothing stopping others from using force to end their pillaging of our natural resources. Without the authority of civilization behind them, the loggers have incredibly diminished power and no real motive to risk their lives to fell trees.

Anarcho-communism is an industrial ideology based around the notion of seizing the means of production and then running the factories, saw mills, oil rigs, mines and power plants democratically. Industrial civilization is an incredibly totalitarian authority that is nevertheless upheld by "anarcho"-communist theory, even though anarchists supposedly oppose all forms of authority.

In an industrial communist society, much like in a capitalist society, logging is necessary to further the industrial production the society is built around. As long as production drives the system, trees will have to be felled for all kinds of reasons: from lumber and paper production to making way for crops and cattle.

So, logging is highly valued by the people that uphold the industrial society, and in a real world scenario, these "anarcho" communists would have to take measures to protect loggers from repercussions from a small, uncivilized minority – the indigenous inhabitants of the forest. These measures are, by any definition, an authority. A monopoly on violence. A state in everything but name.

But since the loggers are providing this valued service to good, decent, reasoned, educated, domesticated, egalitarian, democratic, civilized anarcho-communists in big shiny cities who are accustomed to a litany of luxury consumer products being delivered to their doors everyday... Decidedly authoritarian methods will need to be taken to ensure the

holes are only assholes as long as capitalism pits them against each other."

Even if we wake up one morning and marketing, consumer culture and wealth are all done away with, we still have generations of indoctrination in authoritarian behavior to contend with. That doesn't go away overnight. But even without consumer culture to guide them, people are still completely capable of being assholes. Going back to before mass-society even existed, people would murder each other and take their stuff. They'd raid each other's settlements, they'd steal their children, they'd fight over territory and cultural differences. These aren't things that were invented by capitalism and they won't go away just because communism is declared.

People aren't inherently just or unjust. Humanity is not good or bad. Every person is an individual, each with different experiences, motivations, traumas. Communism expects everyone to be altruistic. Capitalism expects everyone to act out of greed and self preservation. Neither is true because both are ideologically driven worldviews that attempt to define human nature in order to instruct us how to behave by instilling us with their morals. People are greedy, people are generous, people are kind, people are mean-spirited. Every person in the world is all of these things and more. People are not defined by one single personality trait their entire lives.

I'm haunted by every shitty thing I've ever done and I'm sure I'll do more shitty things yet, despite my best intentions. No one is above making mistakes. Mutual aid is a great thing, but it needs to be earned. There are people in our lives that we trust and people we can't stand to be around. Not everyone is deserving of the products of our labor. Some people in the world will always try to exploit you, even if they already have everything their hearts could possibly desire. Some people will be kind to you no matter how big an asshole you are.

I've been accused by communists of being cynical, of being "regressive" and "counter-revolutionary" because I don't buy

Anarcho-communism is not the solution to fighting authority, it's simply a skin-deep re-brand of authority. A sparkly new paint job. There's a reason so many ancoms strive to "justify" authority. They don't actually care about reaching for anarchy.

Is Communism Always Authority-Forming?

In my mind, communism can only work outside of industrial mass society. A small community gathering or growing supplies and freely sharing them with the rest of the community. Each community trading with other small communities. Marx and Engels ironically dubbed this hunter-gatherer form of society that had long existed in human history as "primitive communism" and suggested it was inferior to their advanced industrial communism that valued the factory and centralized city life above all else.

Mass industry requires mass agriculture, mass labor, mass transport, mass resource extraction, mass construction, mass policing, mass military... Mass society and will only lead right back to capitalism and statism because it's so unwieldy and authority forming. Any communist tendency built around industrial exploitation is going to create all kinds of fucked up hierarchies and just lead us right back to the apocalyptic status quo.

Most communists I've talked to about this are unable to accept that some people will still act like assholes if capitalism collapses, which I'd probably find endearing if these people weren't such giant assholes themselves; calling me a privileged reactionary for daring to suggest their blessed ideology might have some flawed logic. They insist everyone will cease being selfish assholes once capitalism is done away with because "ass-

anarcho-loggers can do their anarcho-work without facing retaliation from the "primmie" forest dwellers. These methods can easily be justified in the ancom's mind; there's nothing an ancom loves more than to "justify" authority with their mighty reasoned logic™.

So when faced with the conundrum that the anarcho-communist city needs lumber, paper, corn and meat, and the only thing standing in the way of production is a few indigenous tribes, the ancom will put their anarcho-Spock ears on and declare: "the needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few". Just as capitalist and socialist states today violently suppress the indigenous people who take action to shut down logging and mining operations that quash their way of life, the anarcho-industrialist will send a red-and-black army in to escort their red-and-black bulldozers and discipline anyone that interferes with the will of "the people".

The indigenous inhabitants of course won't give a shit that their forests are being felled by communists rather than by capitalists. They won't give a shit that the bulldozers are now owned collectively or that the land they've lived on for millennia has now been designated as belonging to "the people" (the civilized voting majority) instead of to the state or to capital.

The forest that nurtures the indigenous people and their children is still being decimated to maintain the destructive lifestyles of apathetic city-dwellers. Their lives are still being ended because to civilized people, they're a backwards, regressive minority standing in the way of progress... Damaging the revolution, inhibiting the growth of their glorious egalitarian civilization. The educated, "progressive" majority outvote them. Anyway, everyone who has spoken to a red anarchist knows primmies are dirty reactionary ableists who want to stop us from building wheelchair and drug factories, right?

Civilized people always have pushed the notion that the "common good" or the good of the many will always outweigh

the needs of individuals or small groups of people, ever since Aristotle, in his “The Aim of Man” wrote:

“The good of the state is of greater and more fundamental importance both to attain and to preserve. The securing of one individual’s good is cause for rejoicing, but to secure the good of a nation or of a city-state is nobler and more divine.”

Communism is even more adamant in this “the will of the majority is paramount” shtick, going as far as to declare the industrial-worker class as the only voice that matters, with everyone needing to become part of the worker class in order to abolish class differences.

This logic is why the USSR, China and other communist experiments forced collectivization on self-sufficient indigenous peoples and then slaughtered them when they inevitably resisted. If people won’t consent to being displaced from their ancestral lands to work on the industrial farms and factories that fuel the destruction of their homes, they’re branded “kulaks” and “counter-revolutionaries” and “reactionaries” and are systematically genocided, usually by destroying their food sources.

Industrial goods are valued by industrial society over the forest and its inhabitants because domesticated people want to eat bread and microwaved pizza and the real cost of those products (environmental destruction) is of no real concern to industrial society beyond empty gestures like an occasional “save the rainforests” or “go vegan” banner.

The inhabitants of the forests and their strange foreign culture are too far removed from the busy cities for the average urbanites to involve themselves in their plight. Even the civilized rural people who live around the forests are forever striving to urbanize their villages in the unending quest for upwards mobility. In my experience, they’ll happily trade every tree in sight for a gourmet bakery, Apple Store or coffee-shop so they can feel as civilized as the people in the big cities who tend to look down on them for being “hillbillies” or “country bumpkins”.

A state exists wherever an authority can authorize and legitimize violence. There is no way for an anarchist to “justify” a coercive, authoritarian institution such as a police force that will no doubt be biased against minority groups and lead to the accumulation of power by the dominant group, and abuses of power by the people doing the policing. Even if minority groups are involved in the police force, the majority group will still oppress their groups.

A society that mass-produces goods and distributes them in communal stores will manifest itself as a state, regardless of Kropotkin’s insistences that everyone will work voluntarily and then take whatever they want from the stores. There’s no practical scenario where industrial labor is truly voluntary. There’s no practical scenario on this Earth of rapidly diminishing returns where “free” stores won’t need to be policed to deny unlimited goods to individuals and groups who the governing body decides are less worthy of the fruits of their labor.

Anarcho-communism simply isn’t revolutionary as long as we are depleting all our resources in the name of industrial civilization; something anarcho-communism demands as an industrial, work-based ideology that revolves around civilizing the land and its inhabitants in order to extract resources and labor. There’s nothing revolutionary about continuing the global ecocide under the guise of democracy. Every anarchist should understand the difference between isolated force and authority, but very few self-identifying social anarchists seem interested in this and are content prating on about “justified authority”, debating “how an anarcho-communist police force could work” and excitedly discussing Chomsky’s latest speech telling them to vote for a lesser-evil neoliberal politician.

I know I sound bitter, but I’ve been disillusioned with the majority of red anarchists I come into contact with for years now and they only seem to get worse as industrial society plods on and the sands and seas climb further up our necks.

lence. My use of force doesn't extend beyond my own two fists. Since assault is illegal, and his logging is legal, the logger has the full authority of the law behind him, so any action I take to oppose that authority is punching up. It's fighting to curve a gross power imbalance. It's anarchy.

In this civilized world, I could be severely punished by law enforcement for using force to stop his desecration of a forest. As the state gave him his logging permit, he has authority over the forest and every life that depends on the forest to survive. He punches down every time he fells a tree. He is the full embodiment of archy. If I choose to stand in his way, there's no state behind me, no court, no police force. Me physically stopping a logger from felling trees is an isolated use of force to strike back at a system of authority. The logger destroys life for profit, and if I take action to stop him because I don't want to see the forest become a barren desert, I don't become a state or any kind of authority based on that decision to fight back.

Forming a police squad and a bureaucracy to patrol and govern an officiated communal store, appointing authorities to sit and judge how much each individual deserves to eat, on the other hand, creates legitimized systems of power and an institutional monopoly on violence. It creates a state, or at the very least a proto-state that will later develop into a full-blown state as the bureaucracy grows.

The German philosopher Max Weber defined the state as a monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. State violence, whether it's committed on behalf of the state by a politician, a judge, a cop or a logger, is always a legitimate force. Any violence the state does is immediately "justified" simply by virtue of it being dispensed by a legitimate state actor who is doing it for the good of the state and its authority.

A logger with an official permit to slice up a forest is thus fully justified in the eyes of society to do as much harm to the forest as is deemed necessary by the authorities who granted the permit.

"The people in the big cities of Sao Paulo and Rio, they want us to live on picking Brazil nuts," a farmer says. "That doesn't put anyone's kid in college." (From RollingStone.com.)

The settler-farmers who are burning what's left of the Amazon rainforest to the ground say they're doing it for their children... To make the cash to pay for their children to be educated and get good jobs in the city. It shouldn't be controversial for me to say civilized people value their civilized life and will always put their civilized needs before the needs of uncivilized others.

Civilized people can relate to their civilized neighbours who have the same struggles as them: paying their bills, educating their kids, buying good insurance, washing their car, deciding where to go on vacation, renovating their kitchens, choosing the next Netflix show to binge watch... So it's not surprising that they'll do everything they can to prop up civilized people and kick down the uncivilized people who stand in the way of their quest for ever-increasing industrial comforts.

I can already see the denial stage setting in on some of your faces as I type: "But us anarcho-communists aren't like capitalists, we're good caring people. Humane people. We'll make industry green, we'll manage the forests in a sustainable manner using direct democracy, unions, unicorns and equality!"

Why would anyone swallow that crock of shit? Why would thoroughly domesticated people used to all the comforts of destructive industrial civilization suddenly decide to forgo those comforts because of democracy? Why would 7.7 billion people suddenly change how they live because anarcho-communism has been declared? How would ancom civilization make industry "green" when it's clearly demonstrable that all industry is destructive to the environment and to wild people, and modelling a society on an industrial system has had disastrous results throughout history, regardless of what the attached ideology was named?

All controlled mass-society, including every historical experiment at building a communist society has created authority; bodies of people that hold power over others. That power grows over time and takes the “communist” society further and further away from its revolutionary origins. Every indication is that authority would continue to be manifested with industrial anarcho-communism. There is no evidence that anarcho-communism would avert authority when it’s so dependent on destructive, exploitative, alienating, domesticating industry and the control and domination of a global population of workers.

Anarcho-communism will not liberate the world.

All Industrial Goods Free for All People: A Recipe for Disaster

In communism everything is free for the taking and resources are often treated as if they’re infinite. If you decide you need something, you take it from the communal store. Kropotkin said no one has the right to judge how much an individual needs, except the individuals themselves.

Since most reds hold that resources should be allocated according to “need”, decisions would need to be made to determine who in the community has “need” of the biggest shares of resources.

I know most ancoms, like Kropotkin, claim every individual will just take whatever they “need” (want) from communal stores, but I’m going to cry foul on that because it’s really not practical in an industrial society. Resources aren’t infinite and no one is going to spend their life doing gruelling manual labor and then just give everything they produce away to some random stranger who shows up at the communal store with a dumpster truck and says “I need your community’s entire monthly output of goods today, so load it up”. For some

Direct action is an isolated use of force unconnected to institutional systems of power. People who engage in direct action are not appealing to a higher authority for legitimacy. Their action is not legitimized by anyone and they receive no protection or reward from an authority as they take the action. There’s no monopoly on violence being granted to them by an authority, so there’s nothing to guarantee their safety from retaliation if the action fails or succeeds.

There’s no institutional power-imbalance being created when someone takes direct action against an authority. The authority already created the power imbalance, and your direct action is a form of defense to shield you, your ecosystem or your community from that imbalance.

Direct action is an entirely anarchist tactic, but pinning badges on people, officiating them, and giving them the authority (and the monopoly on violence) to police a store and withhold food and products from certain people for whatever reason has nothing to do with anarchy. Building a hierarchy like this has nothing to do with anarchy.

Police officers and judges (authorities) ruling over a communal store is authoritarian. An officiated police force is a completely different thing from the isolated use of force by a lone actor or a small group of actors to preserve life and combat authority (direct action).

Creating a police force, even if it’s formed of volunteers, even if they were elected, even if they make decisions collectively, even if their uniforms are red and black, even if the officers placed on duty are regularly rotated, is authoritarian by any definition. There are no anarchist cops. An “anarchist cop” couldn’t be a bigger oxymoron.

Here’s an example of direct action: me punching a logger who is cutting down my favorite tree. This action is completely removed from structural systems of authority because I have no authority or structural power behind me. There’s nothing legitimizing my use of force or giving me a monopoly on vio-

hours instead of having external bodies decide how much value / worth to assign to them as a person.

If you're going to spend your life toiling in a factory or farm to produce goods for other people, would you really want a bureaucrat or a committee or even a direct voter body deciding how much you deserve for that labor, while giving someone who does the same job (or a much easier job) more than you because of potentially biased reasons?

Regardless, anarcho-collectivism still only really values the workers who are most willing to submit to the factory grind and put in the most hours. Anarcho-collectivism still holds ecological industry and luxuries for cityfolk up above all life on the planet... So that 19th century ideology isn't going to save you either. Throw it right in the trash with the bread book because this "reform-industrial-society" charade isn't helping when the planet is on fire.

If industrial communism were actually implemented in the real world, you can be relatively certain that some kind of authority would need to be put in place to prevent bad actors from showing up at the store and taking a community's entire monthly production. People would need to police the store and judge whether someone is worthy of taking as much as they're taking. They'd need to become authorities, upholders of law and order. Purveyors of "justice".

Let's be clear now because I know a lot of red anarchists are going to try to "justify" this authority as being "necessary for the good of society" as they will do. Policing who can take food and how much they can take is a clear authority. Not a "justified" authority, because such a thing simply does not exist.

And this store-policing is not the anarchist tactic of "direct action" either, let's make that clear right now, because it's a frighteningly common misunderstanding with red anarchists. Creating a police force has nothing to do with direct action.

reason ancoms think assholes would cease to exist in a communist society. Why would anyone work their asses off, wasting their life away doing menial manual labor just to watch some shitlord drive away with everything they produced because he announced he "needed" it?

"But as woke anarcho-communists in an advanced fully-automated luxury communist society, labor will in fact be quite limited and fun because we can divide duties between all our comrades! And profit will no longer be a concern since everything we make will be given to anyone that wants it free of charge, so we don't need to worry about marketing our products and that will further minimize the amount of labor we'll do, giving us ample leisure time to enjoy the fruits of our production!"

For the purposes of cold-hearted mockery, I'm slightly paraphrasing an ancom who responded to an early draft of this piece. What fantasy realm are ancoms living in where all the massive problems posed by industrial production (including the ongoing extinction of near-every lifeform on Earth) will evaporate when you remove profit and marketing from the equation?

I keep saying this in my writing but here I go again: In an industrial society that aims to give everyone in the world equal access to consumer goods, industry does not decrease; it increases. If everyone in the world suddenly has free and equal access to the mountains of wasteful shit that Western consumers consider necessary to life, not only would production need to massively increase, but we would run out of resources to exploit much more rapidly.

That's assuming anyone would even want to work in the mines and factories in a supposedly equal society if they no longer had guns to their heads. Why would anyone go back down into that mine once their chains are broken? Does anyone honestly think those Congolese kids give a shit if you have a new phone every year? Should they really be expected to sac-

rifice themselves for your entitlement? So you can continue to live in luxury with all your little conveniences?

In a real world implementation of industrial communism, communities will no doubt quickly impose limits on what can be taken from communal stores after a few people take way more than they have any right to and other people go without as a result, despite them laboring for hours a day to produce those goods. Kropotkin might insist we'll all be happy toiling away all day to make this consumerist shit just to give it away to random strangers, but he was a privileged scholar who never had to work a day in his life, so what do you expect?

Industrial society right now is fed by the ceaseless labor of billions of exploited people in the Global South. People are forced to toil in mines from childhood to procure the materials that other people (also including children) then assemble into consumer goods in factories, all for starvation wages. This is debilitating, dangerous work that leaves the people who do it sucked of their youth after a few years.

Anyway, let's play along with communist mythology for a bit to get to my next point. In an ideal communist society (where I guess minerals are somehow found equally all across the planet and not overwhelmingly located in the Global South as in the real world), outsourced labor would presumably go away because communists would never exploit workers in distant lands (who ever heard of an imperialist communist, right? Right??) So instead production would need to be localized, and then the goods would be distributed according to need.

For resources to be allocated according to need, you'll have some kind of deciding body in place to judge what each person's needs are; what resources each person should be given.

There are lots of factors to take into consideration when deciding someone's "needs", like how far they live from work, how far they live from the store, how many calories they burn doing the labor they do, the size of their family, their dietary restrictions, disabilities they might have, their particular

metabolism, how many parties they throw, how many friends they have and thus might invite to the parties, their religious and cultural practices, the size of their house, the size of their garden, the type of insulation their house has and how quickly it loses heat, the fuel efficiency of their car... I could list hundreds more things but I'll stop myself.

Giving bureaucrats this power will no doubt mean certain favored groups / individuals will be rewarded and less desirable groups / individuals will be neglected, or even punished. This is the nature of authority. You'll need a body of full-time bureaucrats to collect all this data and measure how it should determine your share of the pie, and those bureaucrats are going to have biases. If a computer does it, the programmer will have biases. And you'd still need bureaucrats to collect the data and feed it to the computer. Then they could easily feed incorrect or selective data to the computer because of their biases.

It's always felt like a recipe for corruption and exploitation to me for a bureaucracy to determine someone's worth... Which is probably why Kropotkin stipulated that everyone should be able to just take whatever they themselves decide they need from the stores.

Of course, the real solution would be to not base your proposed utopian society on industrial production in the first place... Promising industrial production will be unlimited because everyone will voluntarily agree to work real hard in the factories and mines and slaughterhouses and the goods will be distributed to everyone everywhere somehow while maintaining a sustainable ecological green solarpunk paradise just makes you a smug fucking liar. No different than a grinning politician promising to give us freedom, liberty and prosperity if we vote for him.

The only red anarchist tendency that made a modicum of practical sense in my mind was anarcho-collectivism, because at least the workers would receive the direct value of their labor