A Diversity of Anarchisms

The Eclipse Committee

2025–2026

However, the infrastructure to do this will require work from existing anarchist organisations to build and maintain, and this kind of work has often been seen as optional. A big part of this is because we tend to dedicate all our limited time and energy to the problems in front of us. If we do take an interest in the wider movement, it is only to the extent necessary to keep our immediate projects and organisation functioning. Time spent on maintaining a big network that does not yield immediate gains in organising our workplaces, sustaining our mutual aid groups, or defending our communities is time that many people feel is wasted. But this has led to a disastrous underdevelopment of the infrastructure that brings more people from a broader base into the movement and allows us to cooperate effectively, which in the long run would allow us to do more as a revolutionary movement.

And we need to built this infrastructure, because we are on a timer. There is a real chance that after the next general election in 2029 we will be living under an openly fascist government, and at that point we may be forced to fight for the survival of our movement and humanity. We need to make sure that by 2029 we have the strongest movement possible, one which can resist not just locally but coordinate to resist across the span of the British isles and oppose both the far right and dead-end mainstream political parties. This is what the Eclipse project is attempting to build, but we can not do so alone. We can only provide the space and the framework to make a start, and then we need existing and new anarchists and organisations to communicate and cooperate with each other, to build an anarchist movement that is more than the sum of its parts.

We are the eclipse.

greatly diminished without those ideas being put into practice by the anarchists working within them.

The nature of these informal and incomplete networks of communication also mean that any discussion of wider strategy within our movement is often opaque to those not already in the know, and it is very difficult to turn that discussion into action, because there is no easy way to bring the ideas that result from it to the wider movement. Even at a local level, there are often no groups providing a general forum for anarchist thought, discussion, and action that can proactively organise to fill holes in capability or exploit new opportunities.

This leads to a situation where individual anarchists and anarchist groups can still be effective, often still achieving more given our limited numbers and resources than other strands of radicalism, but anarchism as a real movement is weak to non-existent, with all our achievements often failing to support each other, failing to spread more broadly, and failing to spark any greater understanding or interest in anarchism. We are in a situation where our diversity has made us weaker instead of stronger, because our diversity is one of isolated and sometimes antagonistic individuals and groups, instead of an integrated network of organisations, cells, and people.

As anarchists, the only way we can fix this problem is to start at the bottom and work our way up, and to start loose and work our way towards tighter organisation. This means building networks of communication that allow all the various anarchist groups and projects in Britain to reliably talk to each other, create shared resources that can direct new people to the place they want to be, spread the word of new groups and projects to the ears of the people who need to hear about them, hold spaces for the discussion and agreement of strategy and practice that allow discussion to turn into action, and develop the kind of joint projects needed to put anarchism in the public consciousness as a coherent and active political force.

Contents

This means that major issues in certain areas only ever make it to people as half-distorted rumours, important lessons from success or failure end up isolated in specific parts of the anarchist movement, and interesting projects flounder for a lack of reliable ways to reach the people who might be interested in supporting them.

This prevents good ideas and practices from spreading across the anarchist movement. Instead of having the collective experience and experimentation of an entire movement to draw from, many anarchists can only draw on what is known locally or within their organisation, and many anarchists must painfully reinvent the wheel over and over. This does not create a dynamic movement that can out-organise state and capital through superior flexibility and adaptability, but instead creates islands of isolation and stagnation.

This is especially harmful for new anarchists or the anarcho-curious who are not already linked into our informal and patchy network of cooperation and communication, which is a growing number of people in the age of the internet. If someone becomes an anarchist, their ability to learn more and get involved is heavily based on whatever their immediate point of contact with anarchism is, if they have one at all. This prevents anarchism as a movement from growing based on the diversity of ideas and practices it can offer people, because people can not understand or navigate that diversity in a way that allows them to find their place in the movement.

In many cases would-be anarchists end up joining in with more general radical organising because of the lack of any easy entry points into anarchism. This leads to the bizarre situation where many non-anarchist political groups, unions, community organisations, and protest movements are sustained by the contributions of anarchists or fellow travellers and often benefit greatly from the anarchist approach to organising, while anarchism remains weak as a movement and mostly ignored or mocked as an idea, even within radical circles that would be

cept that we need different ideas and tactics for different situations and different sections of society. We can not build an anarchist movement that has maximum social impact, if we dismiss all ideas that are not relevant to our particular projects and concerns. We need to accept diversity and build trust in our movement before we can use it as a weapon against state,capital and the dominant culture.

PART III – MAKING DIVERSITY WORK

In our last two posts, we argued that diversity was a necessary and unavoidable part of the anarchist movement, and that accepting and working with this diversity can ultimately create a stronger and more effective anarchist movement, rather than ignoring it or trying to work against it. But this leads to the question of how well the current anarchist movement in Britain actually takes advantage of its diversity, and how can we do better?

Anarchism in Britain is extremely fractured. It is defined by a vast array of different niche groups that organise around specific issues or in specific areas, and isolated individuals embedded in communities and more general radical political movements and organisations. The connections between all these groups tend to be individual, with flows of knowledge and opportunities for cooperation based around informal social connections. While most individual groups have their own ideas of what the anarchist movement should be doing, there are no consistent traditions or institutions of cross-movement communication, decision-making and cooperation.

This fractured nature prevents anarchism in Britain from taking advantage of the potential advantages of its own diversity. Information does not spread quickly or evenly and, unless you know the right people, finding out what is happening outside of your immediate area or community is very difficult.

PART I – ANARCHISTS AND ANARCHISMS

Anarchism is a diverse movement with a long history. There are many routes into anarchism; socialists and greens who reject the state, liberals who apply their liberalism consistently, local traditions of dissent and resistance, experiencing abuse of authority by bosses and politicians, cultural critique, reading anarchist theory, and the countless other ways we all ended up where we are right now. These different origins all leave a mark on our ideas and our practices, and we all have our own preferences and ideological hang-ups. Every anarchist carries a slightly different anarchism within them, which also implies a slightly different communism, or a collectivism, or a mutualism, or perhaps a rejection of any of the old economic ideas in favour of something entirely new.

This feeds into a diversity of organisational forms, tactics, and broad strategies. Syndicalists who anchor their efforts in the workplace. Insurrectionaries who prefer direct attack against state and capital. Municipalists who are building a new world in the shell of the old in their neighbourhoods. Countercultural anarchists who attempt to live as free as they can in the here and now. Philosophical anarchists who do cultural and education work for a better world in the far future. And even within each branch of anarchism there are important differences between their members.

This diversity is an inherent part of anarchism. Anarchism has always respected the ability of each individual to organise with their peers based on their own experiences, conditions, capabilities, and desires, and so has always accepted that different people will have different ideas, build different organisations, and follow different strategies. Anarchism has always held that organising both along and across these lines of difference will result in a society that better serves its members, rather than a

homogeneous society built on trying to suppress diversity and impose a one-size-fits-all solution.

As an example of this, someone may need to adopt an anarchism that puts an emphasis on dropping out of society because society is so hostile to them that staying within it is excruciating. That position makes it far harder for them to do the kind of organising that requires being well-connected to mainstream society, like workplace or community organising. Attempting to apply a strict syndicalist or municipalist approach to anarchism would only result in frustration for them, and likely not be effective regardless of the merit of syndicalism or municipalism. But perhaps they are well placed to maintain countercultural spaces, launch acts of insurrection, or reach for new horizons of anarchism in the spaces not yet controlled by the dominant culture.

On the flip side to this, someone who is well-embedded in their community, local traditions of organising or resistance is unlikely to be able to easily remove themselves from that position even if they tried. They have networks of solidarity that they rely on, and people who rely on them. Building on those traditions and attempting to push them in a more radical direction is probably the optimal thing for them to do. But the very social links that open some avenues for radical action also may close some avenues for insurrection or countercultural activity, regardless of the merits of those approaches.

In the above examples it is clear that each anarchist should take very different approaches to organising and tactics based on their particular context and strengths. By embracing a diversity of tactics we can better serve anarchism as a whole by doing different things as and where we can. Anarchists have different inclinations, exist in different spaces, and will have built up different skills and networks, all of which would be squandered if they decided to swap places with others because they felt that this was the only ideologically correct course of action according to a certain theory.

on the fly. This adaptive advantage grants a diverse bottom-up movement another way to offset the resource advantages of state and capital, by adapting faster than they can counter, ensuring those vast resources are going to fight whatever we were doing yesterday, not what we are doing today.

The third advantage of a movement of diverse anarchisms is that it can better tailor itself to local conditions and specific circumstances than any top-down hierarchy that is always going to have to apply a more one-size-fits-all approach to organising society. We don't seek to spread a single anarchist monopoly across the land like a fast-food franchise but to connect localities that are unique and relevant to their communtiies, to whom they belong and reflect. Someone embedded in their community or workplace is always going to better understand what is happening on the ground, compared to a top-down administrator. A diverse anarchist movement can organise and resist in ways that are themselves diverse, shifting, and exploit specific local weaknesses in state and capital with scalpel-like precision, while state and capital can only respond slowly with a generalised defence, that cannot cover all of its vulnerabilities at once.

Lastly, if there is a single collection of ideas, organisation forms, and tactics that are correct for the vast majority of anarchists, we are more likely to discover this within a broad and diverse movement, than in one that is smaller and more homogenous. The greater the breadth of our collective experience, the more experiments in resistance we can look to, and the more angles of critique we can expose our ideas to, the more capable we will be to be able to sort the good from the bad.

But these advantages can only be leveraged if we commit to active communication and cooperation between different strands of anarchist thought and action. We can not learn from each other if we do not talk to each other in good faith. We can not cover each others' weaknesses if we treat those weaknesses as irrelevant. We can not support each other, if we do not ac-

and organisation around as many issues as we can, working to influence culture from as many angles as possible, and such a diversity of organising space is going to both demand and reinforce a diversity of anarchisms.

The second advantage of diversity is that it allows us to operate in ways that are harder for the centralised institutions of state and capital to counter. Centralisation grants state and capital access to monstrous resources to deploy against their opponents. Radical movements that attempt to mirror this rigid, homogenised, and centralised structure are often defeated, because state and capital are better at playing that game, and can throw more resources at the problem until it is crushed by sheer brute force. Anarchists should not make this mistake.

Instead, an anarchist movement of diverse anarchisms can exploit the ways in which centralised hierarchies are weak and ineffective. A diversity of anarchisms allows us to quickly find out what works against state and capital in any given circumstance; a diverse bottom-up movement is capable to testing many more different theories at once, compared to a top-down hierarchy that can only try a limited number of approaches. A thousand activists all trying different approaches to fighting state and capital are always going to find weaknesses faster than 999 activists waiting on one theoretician to come up with the answer through abstract thought. This is a way to offset the resource advantage state and capital have, by being able to use the resources we do have in a way that is more responsive to reality.

Diverse bottom-up movements also have an advantage over top-down hierarchies in their speed of adaptation. State and capital adapt to better suppress social movements, but they do so slowly; information must be gathered, filtered, and made understandable to each level of the hierarchy as it travels up towards the top where decisions are made, and then orders must flow back down the hierarchy. Bottom-up activists can use their own initiative and adapt to changing circumstances

This kind of diversity is also never going to go away. Even if one anarchist theory or strategy becomes the most prominent, there will always be other approaches active alongside it. If this diversity is inherent, then all we can do is choose what to do with it. Ideally, we would turn our diversity into a strength, with different traditions mutually supporting each other as best they can towards building a united revolutionary movement.

Yet there is still a reflexive ideological absolutism in current and historical anarchist discourse and organising. We tend to treat our particular strain or experience of anarchism as superior to others, and treat what others are doing as simply wrong. We sometimes end up discussing the pros and cons of different kinds of anarchism in the abstract, instead of the needs and capabilities of actual anarchists and our communities. When we dismiss other anarchist traditions like this, we often end up also dismissing potential avenues of communication and cooperation, and damn anarchism to be a "movement" of isolated projects that live and die on their own or end up in spirals of infighting and ideological nitpicking with others.

This kind of attitude contradicts the pluralistic spirit of anarchism and contains the seeds of a new authoritarianism and, considering how easily authority has re-asserted itself in past movements for liberation, we must do all that we can to guard against it. Whatever else we might be, we must be good anarchists first, and we would much rather have a movement in which someone's preferred approach was a minority but they could still trust everyone involved to be truly committed to the core ideals of anarchism, and work through disagreements with mutual respect for a diversity of tactics and a shared solidarity.

That said, this is not a call for everyone to drop their theoretical, organisational, and strategic commitments and adopt an anarchism that is a loosely-defined mush. Having specific commitments and principles in our anarchism is important,

whilst remembering that not every theoretical, organisational, or strategic idea is necessarily equally valid. Some people are still doing things that are wrong for them, or wrong for anarchism as a whole. Neither is this a call for everyone to give up on deeper strategy and do whatever is easiest for them. It is laudable when people think beyond their immediate context and develop themselves as activists to fill roles they believe the movement needs.

This is a call to accept that anarchism will always be diverse, and that diversity isn't necessarily rooted in some anarchists doing anarchism wrong, but in real differences in where individual anarchists are, what they need, and what they can do. This is a call to start organising a real revolutionary movement for all of us that can incorporate this diversity instead of ignoring it, or pretending we can build a movement on the basis of a single fixed "correct" idea of anarchist organisation or strategy. Many anarchists are going to choose, or be forced, to fight where they stand, and everyone starts standing in a different place. We need to work out how best to support each other on that basis and fight to win.

PART II – PLAYING TO OUR STRENGTHS

We argue that diversity of theory, organisational form, tactics, and strategy is something that anarchists have to accept about our movement for it to succeed as a movement, and we can not impose ideological or strategic unity on our comrades. It is not a question of if we accept this diversity, but rather a question of how we react to it? Should we embrace it and build networks of communication and cooperation across our pluralistic movement, or should we treat disunity as an unfortunate cost of bottom-up structures that we must overcome?

We take the side of building networks of communication and cooperation across the anarchist movement that mutually embrace our inherent diversity. Such an approach plays to the strengths of anarchism instead of working against them, allows us to better exploit weaknesses in the hierarchical structures we oppose, and ultimately is the approach that will allows us to develop a shared strategy that actually works, if such a thing is possible.

The first advantage of embracing the diversity within anarchism is that it will allow us to reach far more people. There is often a tendency to treat outreach and recruitment as a zero-sum game, with different forms of anarchism competing for the same small pool of radicals who we might come into contact with. This may be true in terms of our existing base of activists, but that is the attitude of a movement that has accepted stagnation, death, given up on the prospect of significant growth, and turned inwards on itself.

If, instead of focusing our discussions on each other, we turn our focus outwards to people who are not already anarchists, then this logic changes. People are diverse, with their own interests, preferences, and experiences. Someone who is not interested in anarchist organising in one sector, or around one issue, may be drawn in by some other anarchist project. Someone who dislikes one kind of propaganda may still be receptive to a different set of arguments for anarchism. In this context, the diversity of anarchism does not put us in a situation in which we are competing with each other to build our specific projects and organisations, but covering each others' blind-spots, and building a movement that draws from the broadest possible pool of support.

This broadness is important not just for making anarchism relevant to as many people as possible, but also to deny space to our ideological opponents. This is especially important in this time of rising fascism; anywhere we are not organising and building solidarity across society is a space that we risk giving up to fascist opportunists. We need to be in the community, in the workplace, in subcultural spaces, building our movements