

Why Red Anarchists Project Ableism Onto Greens

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Green anarchy, or anti-civilization (anti-civ), is an anti-left (often, though less accurately, described as post-left) current within anarchist thought that differs fundamentally from programmatic traditions such as anarcho-communism and anarcho-syndicalism.

Where programmatic anarchist traditions attempt to prescribe how production, distribution, and social organization should function after a popular revolution, anti-civ anarchism is primarily a critique of the structures that shape modern life: industrial dependency, ecological destruction, alienation, mass society, institutionalized violence, and the erosion of both individual autonomy and collective bonds.

This distinction is frequently misunderstood by people whose political identity revolves around lofty manifestos for economic management, urban and rural planning, industrial production, and institutional design. Leftist critics often interpret green anarchy through the lens of their own programmatic assumptions, imagining that anti-civ anarchists seek to impose a new social order involving the abolition of technology, the closure of cities and farms, the dismantling of the healthcare and schooling systems, and a forced return to the Stone Age. But this misunderstands what green anarchy and the broader anti-left tradition are actually for.

These critics confuse an analysis of civilization's trajectory toward potential collapse with a political program for intentionally producing that outcome. Green anarchy does not inflict harm on vulnerable people; it critiques industrial civilization as a system that creates dependency, concentrates power, and subjects people to forms of ecological and social harm they can't escape from.

Anti-civ thought does not present itself as a constitutional project for organizing society. It rejects the premise that liberation can be achieved by designing a comprehensive blueprint and imposing it upon everyone else. Rather than asking how mass society ought to be managed, Greens question whether the very project of managing mass society is itself a form of domination that limits genuinely anarchic possibilities.

This does not mean green anarchism lacks a vision of transformation. On the contrary, it explicitly anticipates a *total transformation* in human relationships, symbiotic interactions, and our relationship with the natural world. However, it understands this transformation as emerging

through the ongoing crises of civilization, ecological collapse, resistance, experimentation, and the cultivation of decentralized forms of autonomy, cooperation, and mutual support.

It does not propose that anarchy can be achieved through the seizure of political power or the implementation of a predetermined revolutionary program. As many green anarchist writers have argued, a genuinely liberated society cannot be reduced to a universal blueprint, because liberation cannot be designed in advance or administered from above.

Much of the criticism directed at green anarchy, particularly accusations of ableism, stems from a misunderstanding of this distinction. Critics often argue that anti-civ anarchism necessarily implies the destruction of healthcare, food systems, infrastructure, and other essential services. Yet this assumes that green anarchy advocates a revolutionary program to dismantle these systems.

It does not.

Greens are not advocating the denial of life-saving medication or essential services. Rather, they argue that the industrial civilization on which modern medicine depends is inherently unsustainable and vulnerable to eventual collapse due to its extractive foundations. When such a collapse occurs, regardless of the economic system in place, healthcare systems reliant on global supply chains, advanced manufacturing, and complex technological infrastructure would be severely disrupted or cease to function. This outcome, from the anti-civ perspective, would be a consequence of systemic failure rather than deliberate policy. Those whose survival depends most heavily on these systems, including many disabled people, would face the greatest dangers in the resulting aftermath.

From the anti-civ perspective, industrial society continually expands the number of people whose lives are bound to an increasingly fragile technological system prone to deadly collapse. According to this critique, technological development has created unprecedented capabilities while simultaneously creating deeper forms of ingrained dependency: A way of life increasingly reliant on the continued operation of systems that Greens see as ecologically and socially unsustainable and vulnerable to eventual collapse.

The anti-civ critique is therefore not necessarily a rejection of medicine, technology, or infrastructure in themselves, but rather a critique of the systems, dependencies, and social arrangements through which they are produced and maintained. It questions whether a society built around perpetual industrial expansion can indefinitely maintain the ecological, material, and social conditions required for its own survival. The proposed alternative is not the abandonment of medicine or technology, but the cultivation of decentralized, ecologically sustainable, regenerative, and autonomous ways of meeting human needs beyond the vulnerabilities of industrial civilization. The goal is not to accelerate collapse, but to create resilient autonomous networks that can provide continuity, care, and support when existing systems fail.

The irony is that many accusations directed at green anarchy rely on assumptions that apply more directly to explicitly revolutionary and programmatic traditions. If the mere possibility of social upheaval, infrastructure disruption, and human suffering is enough to condemn an anarchist tendency as inherently ableist, dangerous, or genocidal, then that criticism must also be applied to red anarchist currents that actively seek to overthrow and reorganize society through comprehensive revolutionary programs.

Any large-scale social revolution carries the potential for severe disruption to healthcare, food distribution, energy systems, transportation, and other essential infrastructure. These risks are inherent in any attempt to fundamentally transform the structures upon which society depends.

Anarcho-communists generally accept this danger because they believe that a successful transition to a stateless, moneyless communist society would ultimately save lives by eliminating poverty, exploitation, preventable disease, and other harms they view as inherent to capitalism and the state. Whether such an outcome is realistically achievable remains a matter of ideological debate, but the point is that revolutionary socialists have long understood periods of upheaval, disruption, and uncertainty as a necessary cost in pursuit of a fundamentally different social order.

Green anarchism occupies a different position. It does not claim to possess a grand design for what should replace industrial civilization. Its central project is critique: examining how systems of power, technological dependency, and ecological exploitation shape human existence. It emphasizes autonomy and resistance rather than administration and social engineering.

For this reason, many criticisms of green anarchism ultimately attack a position it does not hold. These accusers portray anti-civ anarchy as a blueprint for forcibly dismantling society when its actual argument is that civilization itself produces forms of self-destructive dependency and domination that should be critically examined.

Opponents of green anarchy should respond to the critique itself and not to an imagined constitutional program that green anarchists have never laid claim to. Reds projecting a centralized political program onto a current that explicitly rejects programmatic politics amounts to them ironically arguing against their own ideological position: their grand plans to restructure society in the image of communism.

Ironically, all the common red anarchist criticisms of anti-civ ideas reveal less about green anarchy than they do about the assumptions embedded in their own programmatic politics. By treating anti-civilization thought as merely another competing blueprint for organizing society around, they attribute to it precisely the kind of prescriptive politics that every anti-left tendency explicitly rejects.

Does all this mean anarcho-communism, anarcho-collectivism and anarcho-syndicalism are inherently ableist? I'm not interested in making that argument. My point is a narrower one. If the possibility of revolutionary disruption and its human consequences is sufficient grounds for condemning an anarchist tendency as ableist, then that criticism applies most directly to currents advancing revolutionary political programs that seek to dismantle and reconstruct the systems on which millions of people currently depend. It's an inherently self-defeating accusation for red anarchists to charge Greens with.

For better or worse, any attempt to fundamentally reorganize society carries the risk of deadly disruption. Replacing the institutions that provide healthcare, infrastructure, and social services could have serious consequences for those who depend on them. Revolutionary programs that seek to "reboot" society must therefore confront the charge that their advocates improperly raise against anti-civ thought: vulnerable people will suffer and die during periods of profound social transformation.

The central conversation within green anarchy is not whether people should be deprived of modern comforts and technologies or whether advanced pharmaceuticals should exist. It is whether an industrial civilization built on perpetual expansion and extraction can sustain itself indefinitely, and what forms of freedom and autonomy might emerge in its place if it cannot. There's nothing harmful about this inquiry.

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