

# **An Experimental List of Anarchist Principles**

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Some groups and projects try to put together an aims and principles list to explain what campaign news and philosophy they'll focus on and I think this can positively influence what actions people take and think are justified. Some examples I know of include:

- By Any Means Necessary
- Anarchist Radio Network
- Green Anti-Capitalist Front

You also have people using slogans like 'by any means necessary' going all the way back to Malcolm X & Franz Fanon in the 60s, which I guess is an attempt to say we'll go as far as we're pushed, so be careful what state terror tactics you use on us.

My aims are reflected in the CrimethInc exercise in what an anarchist program might look like. And I've already written about my ethics broadly, but I'll try to be more specific here, in experimenting with drawing up a list of principles that I think would be useful to the calculation of what tactics I think are useful and justifiable in the UK today which is in my view a non-revolutionary period, which to me just means a time when social tensions are not at their height:

1) Never act with reckless indifference to human and non-human animal life.

2) Never physically hurt people for the purpose of achieving political goals as it runs counter to our philosophy on the left that material conditions create the person and so we should make every peaceful effort to rehabilitate people.

Some tricky to explain examples that are justified, but only just outside this principle are:

(A) Community self-defense and self-defense by proxy, where you might desire to fight fascists in the street in order to block them from marching through immigrant communities or where you might desire to push your way through huntsmen in order to save a fox from getting mauled to death by dogs.

(B) Survivor-led vigilantism, where to the extent that some current institutions fail to rehabilitate people and the process of seeking justice through the institutions available can sometimes cause more trauma than its worth, then personal violence in order to resolve feelings of helplessness in the face of evil acts can sometimes be reasonably viewed as justified to regain feelings of agency.

3) Never take actions on the basis of anti-science beliefs or with the intent to propagate anti-science beliefs e.g. disproven conspiracy theories.

4) Take care to respect the difference between property which is personally and privately owned.

So, it could be seen as ethical to choose material targets of evil actors in order to cause economic damage and make a statement, so long as in the case of personal property, the item has no intrinsic sentimental value and can be replaced because the person is wealthy and that the item was paid for through the exploitation of others

labor. Or is private property, meaning the means of production which should be owned collectively anyway.

The action would be an outlet for legitimate anger against that which causes us suffering and a means of developing people's thinking and creating a wider base of people joined in sympathy for those ideals.

For example, if taking the risk to slash slaughterhouse trucks' tyres in the dead of night both draws attention to animal suffering and also helps you to develop stronger bonds with a group of people and learn from other liberation struggles, then the action is both productive and leads to personal growth.

5) Never take actions in the hopes of helping in part instigate a revolutionary war sooner than it's reasonable to believe you would have the capability to win. Similarly don't use rhetoric about how tensions in society have escalated to the state of civil war or a third world war. For example, even if the revolutionary left got really good at assassinating captains of industry and getting away with it, there would be reasonable fears around the psychology of people who would take such an act against people who they could have grown up and been socially conditioned to be themselves, which would inexorably lead to a more authoritarian society and worse foundations on which to work towards a better society.

I do think we can hypothesize the unrealistic case of 99% of society desiring a referendum on a shift from parliamentary representative system to a federated spokes council system and the MP's dragging their feet, the same way both parties gerrymander the boundaries to make it easier to win despite it being the one issue most everyone agrees is bad, and people needing to storm the halls of power to force a vote to happen.

More likely though, an opportunity for revolution might arise from such a confluence of events as climate refugees and worker gains forcing the state and corporations into trying to crack down on freedoms in order to preserve their power and enough people resisting that move, who are then able take power and usher in radical policy change, with either the army deciding to stand down or splitting into factions.

Most can sympathize with quick revolutions against dictatorships where the result is a freer society, like the Kurdish uprising in Northern Syria which took power from a regime who had rolled tanks on demonstrators and outlawed teaching of their native language.

But, even there, there are key foundations you need to work from, like the probability you won't just give an excuse for the oppressor committing even worse horrors as was the case with the Rohingya militants who ambushed a police checkpoint, resulting in army & citizen campaign to burn down many villages, plus murder and rape those that couldn't get away.

As well as a responsibility to put down arms after winning political freedoms and a majority are in favor of diplomacy through electoral politics, like in Northern Ireland today.

Under representative democracies, the sentiment of most is that, even if it could be argued that a war of terror (not a revolutionary war) against the ruling class was the easiest route to produce a better society, that it would still be ethically wrong to be the person who takes another's life just because it's the easiest way. Since regardless of manufactured consent or anything else you still could have worked to build a coalition to overcome those obstacles.

And I agree, it would be an act of self-harm to treat life with such disregard when we could have been that same deluded person shrouded in the justificatory trappings of society which normalizes that behavior. I don't think the way we win today is by treating a cold bureaucratic system with equally cold disregard, by justifying our resort to threat and violence because we have fewer resources, and a belief in the importance of our message. Time on earth is a foundational value worth fighting for, and everybody deserves some amount of breathing room to make mistakes and learn from them.

# Appendix

## By Any Means Necessary - Principles

Source

**Principles of The Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN)**

*Adopted October 19, 2000 at the BAMN mass meeting and conference, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (115 votes for, 0 against, 1 abstaining)*

1. BAMN is a mass, democratic, integrated, national organization dedicated to building a new mass civil rights movement to defend affirmative action, integration, and the other gains of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and to advance the struggle for equality in American society *by any means necessary*.

2. BAMN will consist of local BAMN groups, other independent organizations that choose to affiliate or otherwise associate themselves with BAMN, and individuals who declare their support for BAMN's principles and express this support in action consistent with these principles.

BAMN groups will include independent community, labor, campus, high-school, middle-school, youth, and other political and activist organizations that endorse the principles of BAMN, conduct their internal business democratically, and commit themselves in action to the achievement of BAMN's aims.

3. BAMN is committed to making real America's founding declaration that "all men are created equal." Real equality of rights and opportunities for women and for disadvantaged black, Latina/o, Native American, Asian Pacific American, Arab American, and other minorities requires *active, positive measures*, a national policy of *affirmative action*. American society can overcome its fundamental inequalities only if *positive measures* are taken to transform it into what it should be.

4. BAMN is committed to making real the ideal of "government of the people, by the people, for the people." But democracy, too, must be a sham as long as the fundamental inequalities of poverty, racism, and sexism deform the relations of political power along with access to educational and economic opportunities. Here again, America can only become what it should be through a national policy of *affirmative action*.

5. BAMN recognizes that history has made clear that the *positive measures, the affirmative action* necessary to achieve genuine equality and real democracy will require the victory of the struggles of a new, independent integrated civil rights movement

committed to fight for these aims *by any means necessary*. As Americans committed to saving our society from the evils of racism and sexism, we understand that racism and sexism are so deeply a part of the structure and institutions of American society that only the growing power of a new mass movement can uproot them.

6. BAMN defends the integration plans that were the decisive first fruit of the previous generation of civil rights struggles. We recognize that the attack on affirmative action has been accompanied by a less well publicized but even more dangerous series of right-wing attacks on integration plans in American public schools, even where these plans have been most successful and have had the widespread support of minority and white parents and students alike.

7. BAMN sees the attack on affirmative action and integration—policies that in practice have benefited people of both sexes and all races—as a fundamental attack on the democratic character of American society itself.

This is true, in the first place, because of the intrinsic importance of the actual policies under attack as very modest steps in the direction of equality of opportunities for women and disadvantaged minorities.

But it is also true because the victory of the opponents of affirmative action and integration will set the stage for a broader and deeper attack not only on the gains of the past civil rights movement but on the democratic rights won through the mass struggles of the labor movement of the 1930s and the youth, women's, and lesbian/gay movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

8. BAMN will employ whatever means are necessary to oppose and defeat these attacks on the democratic and egalitarian aspirations and struggles of our people.

Specifically, BAMN will employ the methods of independent mass organizing and struggle, of mass education and action, of democratic discussion and decision-making, of telling the truth and only the truth, of rooting our fights in the courts or in elections in the growing movement on the streets, of building the leadership of the disenfranchised and oppressed.

9. BAMN will be independent of the Democrats and Republicans and of governments and school and university administrations. In any elections, BAMN will consider supporting only those candidates, slates, and parties whose support for affirmative action and the struggle of the new movement for equality is explicit and unequivocal.

10. Confident in the capacity of a new movement to learn, grow, fight, and win, BAMN rejects cynicism and despair.

11. BAMN rejects the principle of “separate but equal” as one of the great lies of American history. We will oppose every measure aimed at the re-segregation of American society.

12. BAMN rejects biological determinism and its pseudoscientific ideological explanations of the inequalities of modern society.

13. BAMN rejects all claims that the inequalities of race and gender and the oppression of racism and sexism can be adequately explained as natural or inevitable

consequences of human nature, original sin, biological destiny, or the supposed deficiencies of various ethnic cultures.

The inequalities of race and gender in American society are a result of the actual history of that society.

Racism and sexism are expressions of the actual inequalities of wealth, power, and status that characterize the society that have developed through that history. Our aim should be to understand that history in order to end those unequal relations of power and privilege, not to invent theories to rationalize passive submission.

14. BAMN will expose the falsehoods of the baseless and arrogant attempts to use standardized tests to define merit or intelligence or human dignity. We recognize that such inevitably biased tests correlate most strongly, not with any question of merit, but with the relative privileges or disadvantages of race and socioeconomic status and amount to a means of rationalizing preferences for certain racial and class privileges.

15. BAMN stands proudly in the tradition of the great abolitionist, civil rights, and antiracist movements of the past, critically studying, learning from, and developing the lessons of the struggles of our heroic forebears. We look especially to the towering figure of Frederick Douglass (“If there is no struggle there is no progress”), and, as representative leaders of the 1960s, Martin Luther King (“The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges”), and Malcolm X (“action on all fronts by whatever means necessary”).

16. BAMN will base itself on the new movement as it develops, viewing its tasks from the standpoint of the oppressed and the poor, not the privileged elite. While maintaining its independence and not shirking the duty of leadership or yielding the right of criticism and the obligation to tell the truth, BAMN will work hard to build any alliance that can help make the new, independent movement broader and more powerful.

17. BAMN defends the rights and dignity of immigrants against the divisive, racist, and chauvinist attacks that have deformed American political life over and over again throughout our nation’s history.

18. BAMN sees itself as part of a reawakening international mass movement against racism and fascism and for equal rights and opportunities. We will develop links with antiracist and pro-equality movements outside the US in order to help where we can and in order to learn from the struggles of our sisters and brothers in other nations.

19. BAMN will fight for the democratic election of leaders of movement bodies; for the direct accountability of all leaders to the new movement; and for democratic discussion and decision-making in all the meetings and bodies of the new movement.

20. BAMN will be an organization in which strong women leaders play a fully equal role in all its work. BAMN will be built by women and male leaders inspired by the examples of the heroic women leaders of the abolitionist and civil rights movements—courageous fighters like Harriet Tubman and Sojourner Truth, Rosa Parks, Ella Baker and Fanny Lou Hamer. BAMN will fight for the equal leadership role of women in the new mass movement.



21. BAMN will be an organization in which black, Latina/o, Native American, Asian Pacific American, Arab American, and other minority leaders play a full and prominent role. We will fight for full integration of the leadership of the new movement.

22. In any new movement, youth must play a decisive role. BAMN will be an organization of idealistic and brave youth, fighting for a future of genuine equality and justice for all.

## **Anarchist Radio Network - Basic principles**

### Source

The 24/7 radio project is defined as a platform for networking and coordination of anarchist radios from different countries.

The members of the platform support the pursuit of an emancipatory society based on solidarity with horizontal and egalitarian structures. The motivation for the network is the exchange of experiences, mutual aid, common projects and the meeting of each other from time to time.

Not desired are groups that have one or more of the following practices:

- Support of structures or behaviour according to capitalist logic
- Support of nationalist groups or propaganda
- Lack of reflection of the own privileges and the own reproduction of power relations and capitalist logic
- Discrimination of any kind
- Advocacy and implementation of hierarchical structures or relations of power
- Supporting the idea that some forms of oppression are more important than others
- Supporting an avantgarde strategy, in which one or more groups seek the leadership over certain social movements
- Scapegoating certain persons or person groups for the problems of abstract structures
- Propagating irrational worldviews (conspiracy theories etc.)

The international anarchist radio project gathers radio projects, shows/programs are aware of the diversity of anarchism. It is organized on individual, not collective, responsibility. Participation and organization is based on free association, individual and groups/collective autonomy. Everybody joining is responsible to improve the platform/tool, because there is no work division recognized inside.

# Green Anti-Capitalist Front - Aims & Principles

Source

GAF is a name, a banner, a call to action. It's not an organisation or a network and has no central authority. We want GAF to act as a way of bringing people together, to take action, to spread a radical, anti-capitalist position on climate change and other environmental issues. If you agree with our manifesto, we encourage you to organise, to take action yourself, you can be part of the Front!

There is no specific model to follow, different situations call for different forms and actions, but there are a few important principles that we ask those organising as GAF to stick to:

- We don't work with companies or the private sector
- We don't work with the police or the state
- We are against all forms of exploitation and oppression including but not limited to those based on class, race, sex, sexuality, gender or ability, and we support trans and sex-worker inclusive feminism
- We organise in a supportive, inclusive way, free from bullying or abusive behaviour

Anyone carrying out an action under the GAF name must agree to and act in line with the following **Points of Unity**

1. **An existential threat** – Human induced climate change and environmental destruction more broadly are a threat to global ecosystems. Action must be taken now to guarantee we not only survive, but flourish in the future.
2. **Capitalism is the crisis** – Capitalism is part of the problem. A global economic system built on competing capitalists cannot be trusted to combat climate change when doing so threatens their profits. We must make the link between capitalism and environmental degradation explicit in our politics and critique the role of the state in facilitating this.
3. **International class solidarity** – We must be internationalist in our scope and ensure victories for workers in MEDCs does not mean just pushing environmental problems onto workers in LEDCs who have done the least to contribute to climate change. We must push our trade unions to adopt an environmental as well as anti-capitalist stance which argues for a just but rapid transition for workers in extractive industries. We must take a hard stance against nationalism and aim instead for global unity.

4. **Building collective power** – We should ensure the actions we take, and the struggles we link up for, leave us and others who take part stronger not weaker. We must avoid any so-called victory that relies on the ‘good will’ of a politician or the ‘expertise’ of an NGO. Win or lose, each action and campaign should leave us more aware of the world around us, more confident of our collective power, and more experienced in our ability to self-organise.
5. **Diversity of tactics** – We must develop a diversity of tactics that is not dependent on the actions of politicians or corporations developing a conscience to achieve its goals.
6. **Horizontal, bottom-up structures** – We cannot recreate the structures we know do not work within our own movement. Our movement must be horizontal and autonomous so that it truly represents the interests of those our current rulers treat as expendable. We must also take an intersectional approach to our solidarity and care for each other at all times.
7. **We need a new system** – Ultimately, while the imminent threat of climate change may limit us to putting pressure on state and capital in the short term, in the longer term we need to replace these institutions to solve the systematic problems that have created this crisis.

(German translation of Our Manifesto)

(Spanish translation of Our Manifesto / Traducción al español de nuestro manifiesto)

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