

# Anarchism 101

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**(ASF-IWA)**



## Today's journey...

1. The problem of definition
2. Some key dates
3. The still(!) unfinished business of the French Revolution
4. Anarchism's core values
5. Principles of action and decision
6. Aspects of autonomy (individual and collective)
7. Organising beyond the immediate (delegation and federation)
8. Back to definition: the positive content



## The problem of definition

- Etymological
  - an-archē – against/without rulers



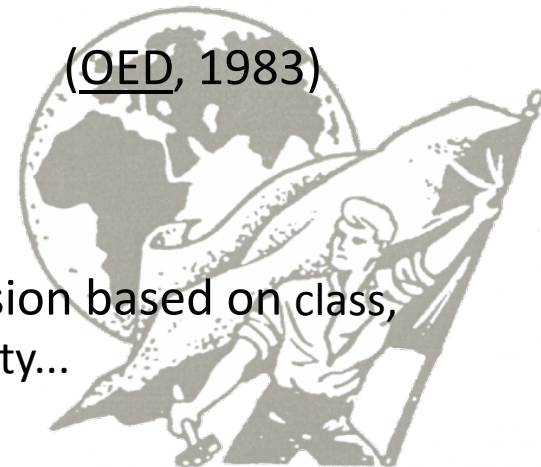
## The problem of definition

- Etymological
  - an-archē – against/without rulers
- Minimalist:
  - **Anarchy (n)** absence of government in a society; political or social disorder
  - **Anach(~ist) ~ism** (adherent of) doctrine that all government should be abolished



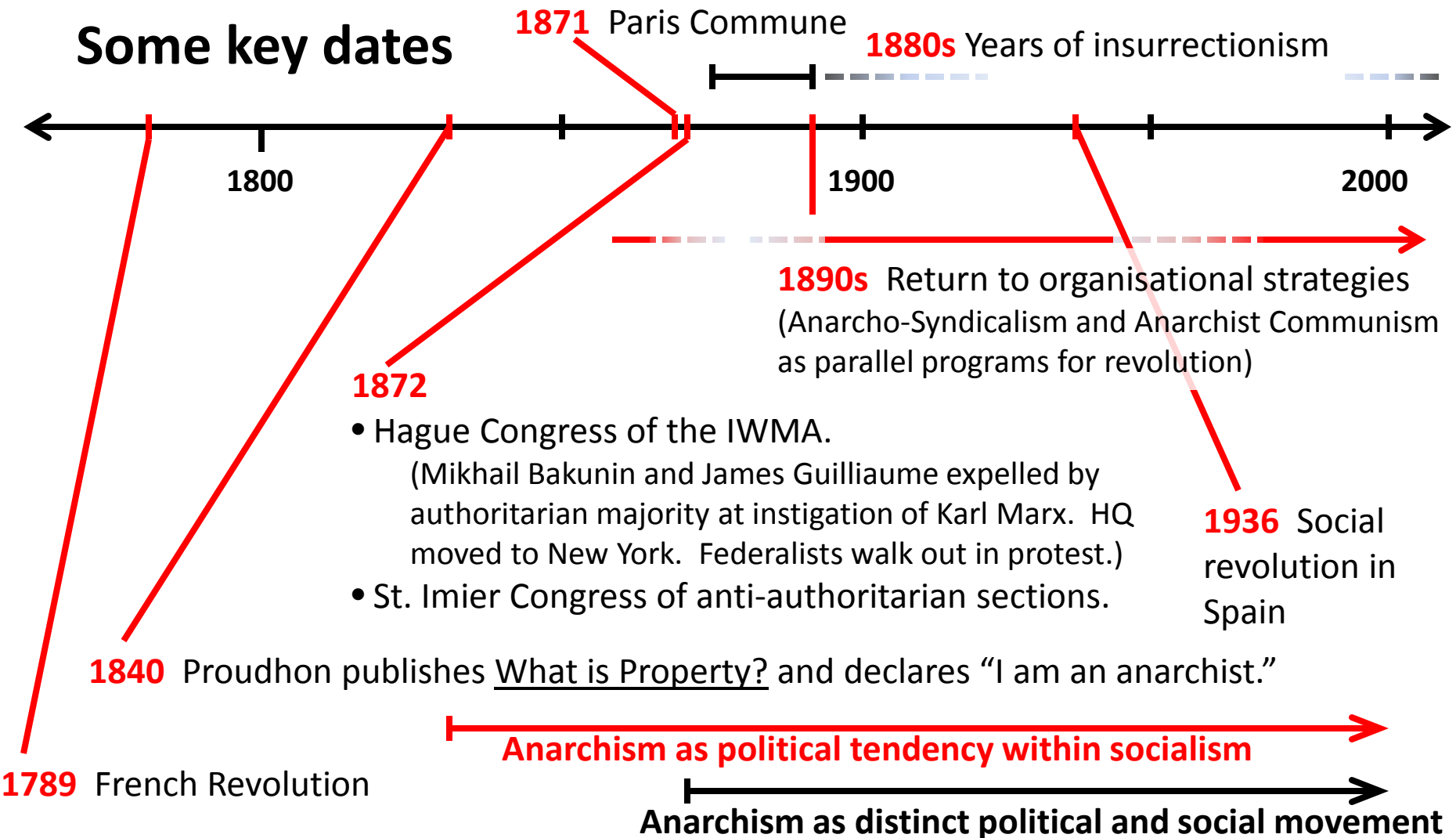
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  - **Anach(~ist) ~ism** (adherent of) doctrine that all government should be abolished
- **Maximalist:**
  - an-archē – against domination...
  - ...and therefore against exploitation and/or oppression based on class, ethnicity, gender, colonialism, sexuality, appearance, ability...



# Anarchism 101

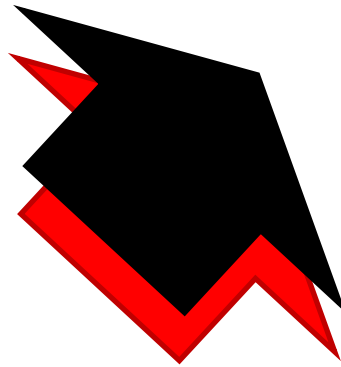
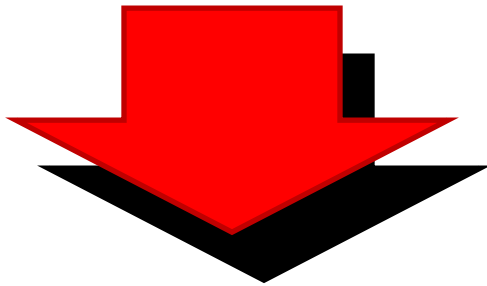
## Some key dates



# Anarchism 101

**Anarchism is a revolutionary social movement.**

- Equality
- Freedom
- Working class solidarity



- (Direct) democracy
- Direct action
- Mutual aid

**For:**

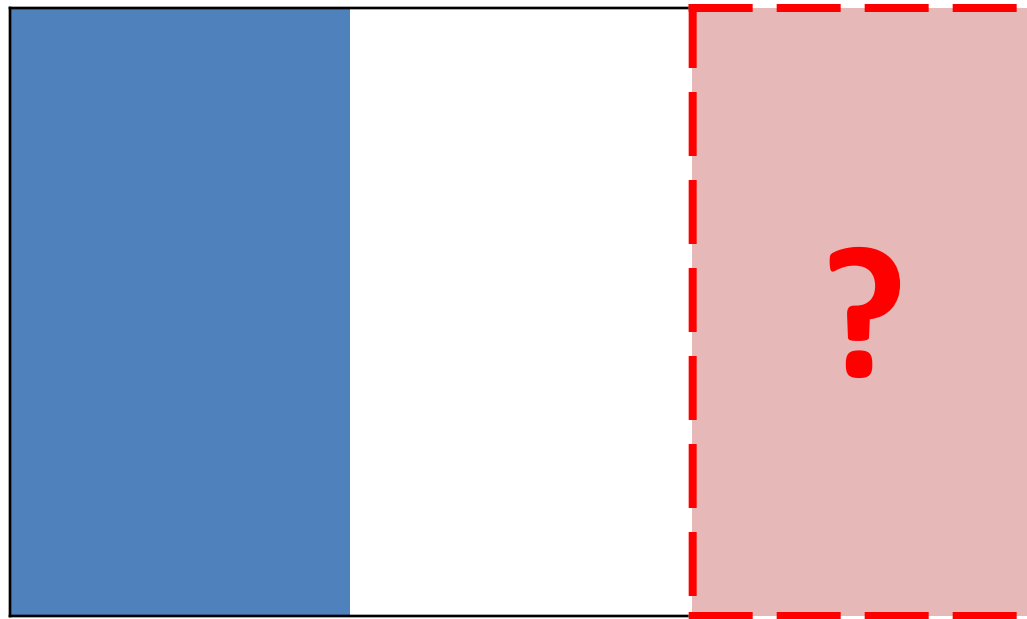
- collective self-management

**Against:**

- Capitalism
- Party politics
- Electing leaders to parliament

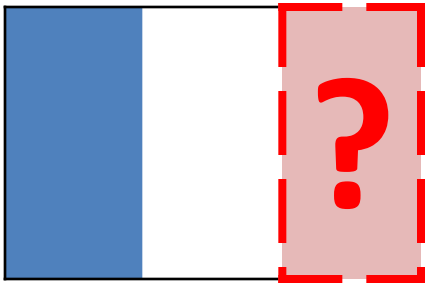


# The still(!) unfinished business of the French Revolution



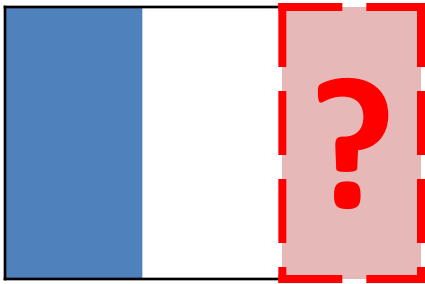


## The still(!) unfinished business of the French Revolution



**Liberalism:** formal (legal) equality (regardless of wealth)

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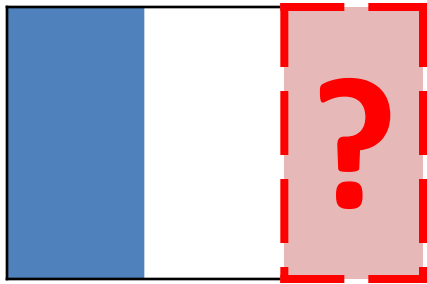


**Socialism:** freedom requires formal (legal) equality plus concrete (economic) equality



**Liberalism:** formal (legal) equality (regardless of wealth)

## The still(!) unfinished business of the French Revolution



**Anarchism:** concrete (economic) equality is incomplete without **political equality**, not just the legal right to vote, but **full participation in collective decision making**

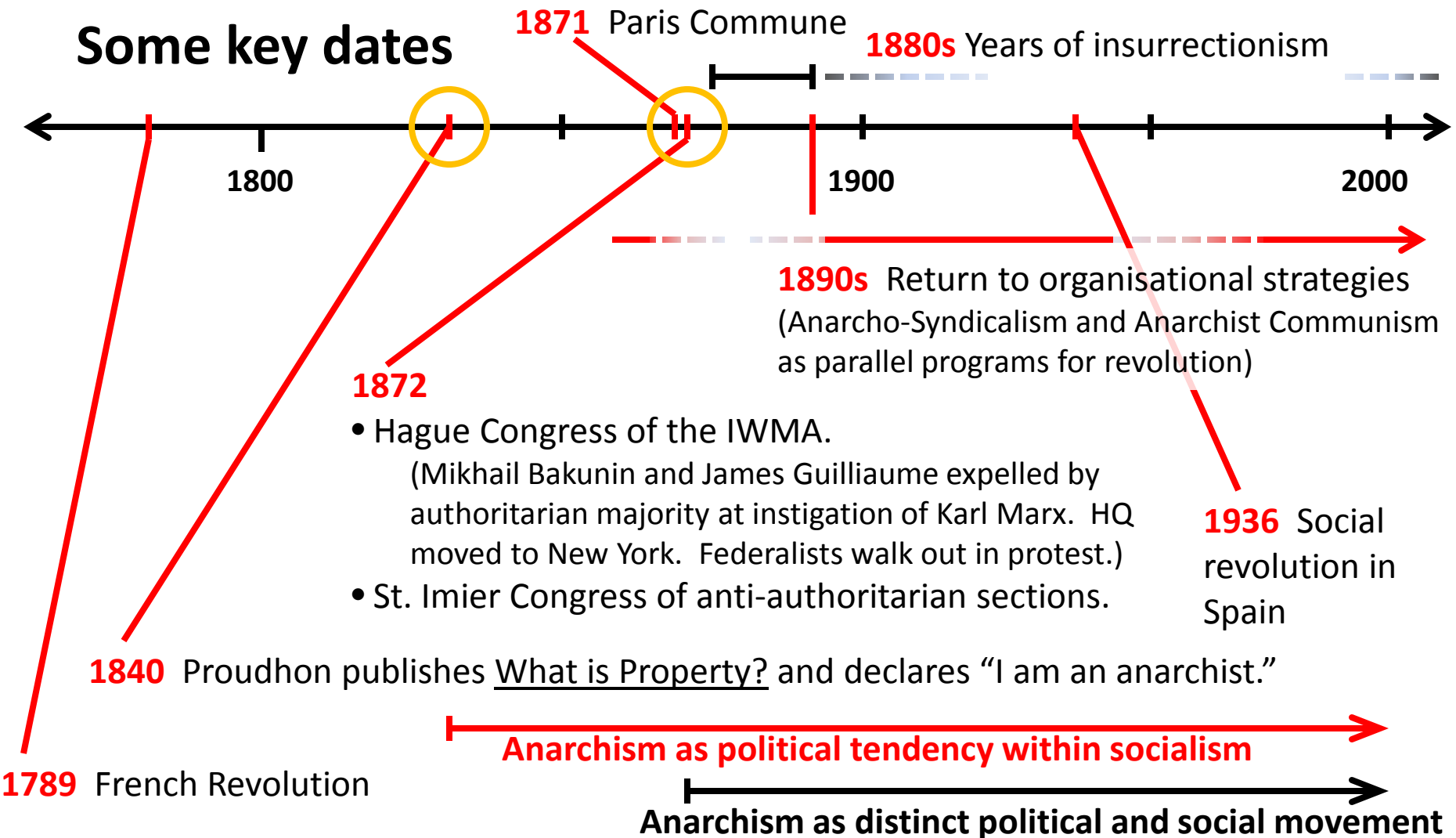
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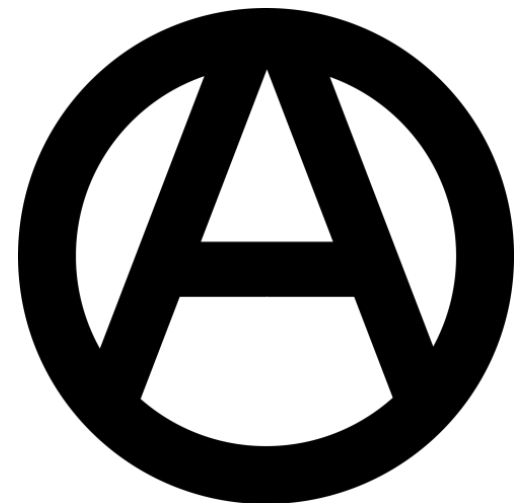
# Anarchism 101

## Some key dates



## Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, What is Property? (1840)

- “Property is theft!”
- “The **synthesis of community and property** we call nominate liberty.”
- “Liberty is essentially **organising**: in order to ensure equality between men.”
- “...society’s highest perfection lies in the **unity of order and anarchy.**”
- I am, in the fullest sense of the term, an anarchist.



# Anarchism 101



Gustave Courbet, Proudhon and his children (1865)





# (Autonomy)

Liberty / Freedom

Equality

Fraternity / Solidarity

Direct Action

Free Association

Mutual Aid



(Direct) Democracy\*

(Collective autonomy)  
← - - - -



Delegation

Federation



- Rotation
- Limited mandate
- Immediate recall

- Local sovereignty
- Free association into federations
- Bottom-up initiative
- Ratification before local implementation

\*Autonomy has two aspects – individual and collective – and democracy is the collective aspect of autonomy.



Liberty / Freedom

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Liberty / Freedom

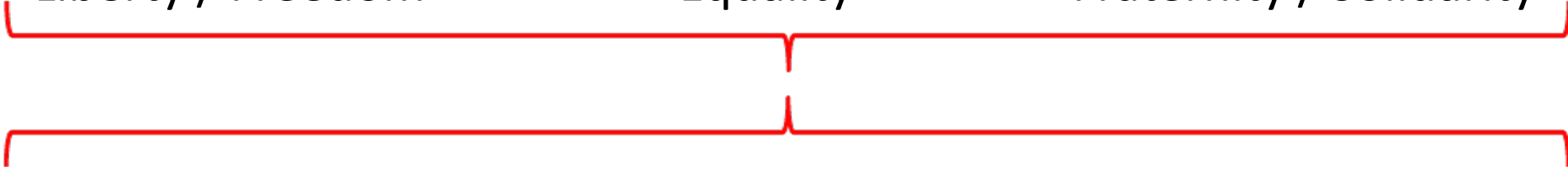
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## Collectivism must solve two important problems...

### 1. Scope

- The collective cannot decide together on everything
  - Needs a common understanding of what issues are common and what counts as individual choice
- ↳ public sphere // private sphere

### 2. Size

- There are physical and technological limits to the size of any assembly





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## Another attempts at defining anarchism...

*“Freedom without socialism is inequality and injustice. Socialism without freedom is brutality and slavery.”*

– Mikhail Bakunin (1867)

**Anarchy is autonomy, individual and collective.**

**Anarchism is a revolutionary social movement that aims to achieve this social vision by extending democracy (direct, participatory democracy) to every institution of society.**





**The following slides not part of the presentation  
but might be useful.**



## Anarchism and autonomy

- Anarchists understand the relationship between the individual and the collective differently to other socialists.
- Anarchists don't subordinate the individual to the needs of the collective.
- Autonomy [*auto*, self; *nomos*, law] is the act of giving the law to oneself.
- Key insight: **individual autonomy** and **collective autonomy** are mutually reinforcing, rather than these two values being in completion with each other.



## Anarchism is libertarian socialism

Balancing **individual autonomy** and **collective autonomy** means...

- Direct democracy, not representative ~~democracy~~ parliamentarianism.
- universal and equal **participation** in collective decision making (not the election of leaders/representatives)

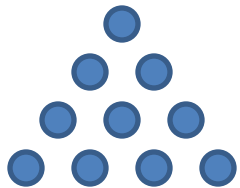
Type	Examples
<b>Monarchy</b> [ <i>mono</i> one, <i>archē</i> rule]	Dictatorship, Feudalism
<b>Oligarchy</b> [ <i>oligos</i> , few; <i>archē</i> rule]	Aristocracy, Representative parliamentarianism (i.e. representative democracy) Also: Capitalism, Authoritarian communism
<b>Democracy</b> [ <i>demos</i> , people; <i>kratos</i> , power]	Anarchism, libertarian socialism





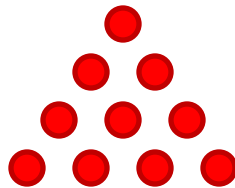
## Liberal capitalism

- individual > collective
- private property (means of production)
- capitalism (private enterprise)
- Minimal state
- representative democracy
- privatised social corporatism



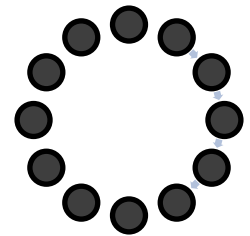
## State communism

- collective > individual
- Collectivised means of production
- state enterprise (state capitalism)
- Welfare state
- representative democracy
- State corporatism




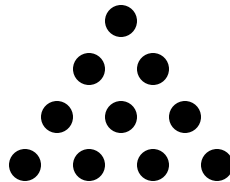
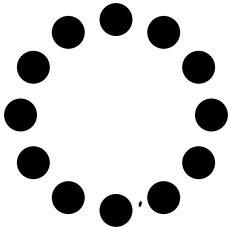
## Libertarian communism

- individual ↔ collective
- Collectivised means of production
- Freely federating local communes
- No state
- direct democracy
- Collectivism



## Political collectivism

- Preserves individual autonomy through **equal, shared and direct participation** in collective decision making processes
- Individual autonomy  collective autonomy
- (Direct) democracy is collective autonomy's institutional form
- Members must be equal and remain equal



## Collectivism must solve two important problems...

### 1. Scope

- The collective cannot decide together on everything
  - Needs a common understanding of what issues are common and what counts as individual choice
- ↳ public sphere // private sphere

### 2. Size

- There are physical and technological limits to the size of any assembly

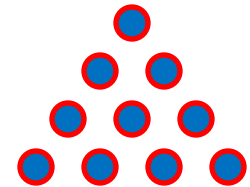


# Anarchism 101

## Two problems: scope and size

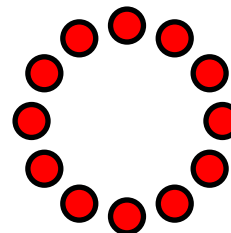
- The authoritarian solution to these problems are **wealth** and **power**
- The result is **centralism** and **hierarchy**.

- Liberalism and state communism: Same same, but different?
  - Market capitalism vs state capitalism.



- **Anarchism** is not just economic socialism but political socialism. What is shared is not just wealth but participation in decision making.

- This is what makes it truly revolutionary!



## Anarchism's history







## Anarchism's **history** historiography (the history of writing anarchism's history)



## Anarchism's historiography

Paul Elzbacher, Anarchism, Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy (1900)

- **William Godwin** [1793] – benevolence, education, indiv. rationality → common good
- **Max Stirner** [1844] – rational, anti-authoritarian and possessive ego-centrism
- **P-J Proudhon** [1840-65] – libertarian socialism (collectivism ↔ mutualism)
- **Mikhail Bakunin** [1871] – libertarian socialism (collectivism)
- **Pëtr Kropotkin** [1892] – libertarian socialism (anarchist communism)
- **Benjamin Tucker** [1881] – anti-governmental
- **Leo Tolstoy** [1890s] – Christianity → anti-authoritarian pacifism

# Anarchism 101

## Paul Elzbacher, Anarchism, Exponents of the Anarchist Philosophy (1900)

- William Godwin
- Max Stirner
- P-J Proudhon
- Mikhail Bakunin
- Peter Kropotkin
- Benjamin Tucker
- Leo Tolstoy

## Rudolf Rocker, Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice (1936)

- William Godwin
- Max Stirner
- P-J Proudhon
- Mikhail Bakunin
- Peter Kropotkin
- ~~Benjamin Tucker~~
- Leo Tolstoy

9/170 pg book  
4 chs: history of movement  
2 chs: AS aims and methods

## George Wookcock Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements (1962).

- William Godwin
- Max Stirner
- P-J Proudhon
- Mikhail Bakunin
- Peter Kropotkin
- ~~Benjamin Tucker~~
- Leo Tolstoy

• 220/500 pg book  
• ½ summary and bio,  
• ½ history of movement

## Anarchism's historiography

Peter Marshall, [Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism \(1993\)](#)

- Ancient, Classical, Medieval and Early-Modern libertarians
  - **William Godwin**
  - **Max Stirner**
  - **Pierre-Joseph Proudhon**
  - **Mikhail Bakunin**
  - **Peter Kropotkin**
  - Elisée Reclus
  - Errico Malatesta
  - **Leo Tolstoy**
  - Josiah Warren, Lysander Spooner, **Benjamin Tucker**
  - Adin Ballou, John Humphrey Noyes, Voltairine de Cleyre, Alexander Berkman
  - Emma Goldman
  - Gustav Landauer, Johann Most, Rudolf Rocker
  - Mohandas Gandhi
- ...and many more.**

## Anarchism's historiography

David Morland, Demanding the Impossible? Human Nature and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Social Anarchism (1997)

- Critiques “most representative authors”

• ~~William Godwin~~

• ~~Max Stirner~~

• Pierre-Joseph Proudhon

• Mikhail Bakunin

• Peter Kropotkin

• ~~Benjamin Tucker~~

• ~~Leo Tolstoy~~

Schmidt & van der Walt, Black Flame: the Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism (2009)

- Critiques Elzbacher's original selection as unrepresentative of the movement

• ~~William Godwin~~

• ~~Max Stirner~~

• Pierre-Joseph Proudhon(?)

• **Mikhail Bakunin**

• **Peter Kropotkin**

• ~~Benjamin Tucker~~

• ~~Leo Tolstoy~~



## Anarchism's historiography

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