

neonfeedback — contents

Doubtbound	2
The reality stack	3
Definitions of power	5
Two categories of inequality	7
What is matter?	9
How does anarchism typically die	11

Doubtbound

13 November 2025

I may have been cruel, O Holy Father.
I may have broken what none can restore.
I may have sinned and forgotten.
Unworthy of mercy, condemned.

Oh, god, of shame,
you grant no absolution,
but demand confession without end.
I name you not as god but as disease.

I no longer weep for imagined crimes.
I no longer scour for certainty.
I no longer bargain with ghosts.
I forsake the dance that grinds the soul.

I accept that I may be wretched.
I accept that grace may never come.
This confession is fractured, profane, and enough.
I choose to walk onward, unredeemed and unbound.

The reality stack

1 April 2026

A stack is layers where each rests on the one below: a tech stack, rock strata, floors in a building. The reality stack turns “is this just the way things are?” into “which layer does this sit at, and therefore how contingent, how mutable, and how accountable is it?” It is not metaphysics but a teaching device, descriptive in form and normatively motivated: it exists to make a particular claim about inequality arguable.

Three layers and a cross-section

The **physical layer** is invariant law: gravity, thermodynamics, the speed of light. You cannot negotiate with it; it gives rise to everything above without determining it.

The **material layer** is the physical world in the mode of human encounter: bodies, biology, climate, geography, and the infrastructure built into them. Not philosophical materialism, but physics seen through what humans need, are stuck with, and have made: the calorie requirement of a body, the river that is here and not there, the concrete a city is made of.

The **social layer** is constructed: arrangements humans make collectively, constrained by the material but not determined by it. Two societies with identical material conditions can organise themselves in opposite ways, and historically have. It is where power, roles, norms, and institutions live, and the layer people most often mistake for one below. Which side of the road you drive on, marriage, money.

The **agent** is not a fourth layer but a cross-section, a point where all three meet: a physical body, material needs, and a social layer carried inside as language, shame, politeness. What is purely agent? Very little: a flinch, a refusal. Yet the cross-section is the only site from which any of it can be questioned. Agents together reshape the social, which reshapes the material, which reshapes what is possible.

Locating a thing

To test where something sits, ask: *if the other layers varied independently, would this vary with them, or hold constant?* Gravity holds across all societies and bodies (physical). A body’s calorie requirement holds across societies but varies across species (material). Which side of the road cars drive on varies across societies under identical material conditions (social). The test is not a decision procedure: gender, race, disease, addiction pass it ambiguously, and that is the point: the framework surfaces the dispute rather than resolving it.

This is why we distrust the word **natural**: it often smuggles a social claim down to the physical layer, where it can no longer be argued with. “Hierarchy is natural” makes hierarchy a law of gravity; “it is human nature to be selfish” relocates a collective behaviour to physics against the anthropological evidence. The word has honest uses; the suspicion is of the move: a way to escape accountability by crossing into a layer where accountability does not apply.

Three spectrums run through the stack. **Contingency**, whether it could have been otherwise: zero at the physical, some at the material, a great deal at the social. **Mutability**, how readily it changes: gravity never, material conditions over generations, social arrangements within a lifetime, an agent’s position in a moment. **Accountability**, not “who caused it” but “who, going forward, is situated to change it”; responsibility can be collective and forward-looking even when no individual chose the outcome. They come apart, and the interesting political arguments are always about which axis a dispute is on.

So when you catch yourself asking “is this just the way things are?”, locate the thing in the stack. If it sits at the physical layer, accept it. If it sits anywhere above, the question has an answer: it is this way because of the layer it sits at, the path it took, and the feedback that locked it in. None of that is destiny. That is the whole point of naming the layers.

Definitions of power

30 May 2026

A working list of definitions.

Power

Power is the capacity to bring about outcomes: by acting directly, by shifting another agent's behaviour, by setting the conditions under which others act, or by producing agents and possibilities that didn't exist before. It comes in five overlapping forms. The English word "power" smears across all five; pulling them apart is most of the work.

Power-to

Power-to is the capacity to act (to make, to bring something about) independent of any other agent. A solo inventor with a working prototype has it without power over anyone. It is the substrate of the rest: you can't shift B, sustain a structure, or write the rules without first being able to act. When people demand "more power" in their lives, they usually mean this.

Agentic power

Agentic power is the capacity of one agent to shift another's behaviour toward outcomes the first prefers, against the second's resistance, across some domain. A has power over B to the degree B's behaviour tracks A's preferences more than it would in A's absence: no counterfactual gap, no power. It is capacity, not exercise (an unfired gun is still a threat), and always over some domain: a landlord controls where a tenant sleeps, not what they read.

Structural power

Structural power is the capacity of a system (a market, a bureaucracy, a body of law, a norm, an infrastructure) to shift behaviour against people's preferences with no agent willing the shift. The signature matches agentic power; the counterfactual differs: there is no A to remove. A worker taking a low wage is coerced not by the employer but by the labour market, a structure with no author, experienced by those inside it as a fact of the world rather than a thing being done to them.

Constitutive power

Constitutive power is the capacity to set the structure others then operate inside: to write the rules, pick the defaults, design the platform, draw the map. Agentic in form (someone wills it into being), its effect runs through structural power (once embedded, it shifts behaviour without further input). It is the highest leverage per unit effort (a structure shapes every interaction it mediates, for as long as it lasts), then decays into structural power with no author, which is why old constitutive choices are so hard to undo.

Generative power

Generative power is the capacity to produce new agents, capacities, desires, or possibilities: to bring into existence what wasn't there before, rather than shift or arrange what already is. The other four operate on a given set of agents and options; this one changes the set. It runs opposite to the standard image of power: it gives you wants and self-conceptions you wouldn't otherwise have had. It is the hardest to resist: by the time you can name yourself its subject, it has already made the "you" who would resist.

Egalitarianism

An egalitarian society simultaneously raises the floor of power-to, caps concentrations of power-over, distributes constitutive power broadly, and biases structural power toward enabling rather than constraining. Four dials, not one: win on one while losing the others and it isn't egalitarian. The floor, not the average, is what counts; power-over is capped rather than abolished, since the target is to prevent domination, not authority; and the rule-writing is distributed, the dial most often left out and the one that quietly sets the rest. They have to move together or they undo each other.

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is the property that makes power voluntarily accepted by those subject to it: legitimate power runs on compliance, illegitimate on enforcement. It is a property power can have, not a sixth form: any of the kinds above can be legitimate, illegitimate, or contested. Two senses get confused. *Descriptive*: those subject to it actually accept it as rightful, a fact about behaviour. *Normative*: it meets an external standard (consent, procedural fairness, justice), a claim about what ought to be acceptable. They come apart both ways: a regime can be widely accepted yet unjust (most stable tyrannies), or normatively legitimate yet rejected on the ground (most failed reforms).

Two categories of inequality

28 June 2026

It helps to separate two kinds of inequality, even if the line between them is rough. Confuse them and you drift toward one of two errors: blaming people for outcomes nobody chose, or excusing a rigged system as if it were weather. Most real inequality is a mix of the two, and any given case can be hard to sort, but the two tend to have different causes, different moral weight, and different cures, so the attempt seems worth making.

Emergent inequality

Emergent inequality is the gap that opens from fair-looking rules, with nobody intending it. Start everyone equal, hand them symmetric rules, run the system long enough, and you can still end up with an oligarchy. Nobody cheats; the maths just favours someone.

Some games are rigged in a way no player can see. In the yard-sale model, two people repeatedly stake a fixed fraction of the *poorer* one's wealth on a fair coin: every bet is even, yet one player ends up with everything, because the same stake is ruin for the poor and pocket change for the rich. Multiplicative luck bites the same way: a 50% loss then a 50% gain leaves you at 75%, so a run of fair odds drifts the typical fortune toward zero even as the average climbs.

Small advantages compound. Money makes money: a fixed return turns any head-start into an exponential lead. A child who reads a little better at five gets more books and more praise, and by ten is years ahead. Attention flows to whoever already has it: links, citations, and followers all follow power laws, so a few hubs run away with the traffic, not because they are best but because they arrived first.

And accidents harden into structure. Where your parents lived fixes your school, your peers, the air you breathe, and the network that will hire you: none of it chosen. A neighbourhood's rent creeps up, then crosses a line past which the people who gave it its character can no longer stay. The same recession that costs an investor a few years costs a worker their home. None of this was designed. All of it compounds.

Adversarial inequality

Adversarial inequality is the gap that specific, identifiable people open and defend because they profit from it. Here there are names, budgets, and lawyers. Where emergent inequality has a mechanism, so does this, and it is the mirror of compounding: the winnings are spent to protect the winnings.

It starts with extraction, sitting between people and what they need and charging for passage. Landlords bank the value a neighbourhood's improvement creates; patent trolls sue instead of building; commons that were shared (land, water, knowledge, seed) are fenced off and rented back. What extraction throws off then buys the machinery that keeps it coming.

That machinery is the rules and the story. The rules get captured: industries staff the agencies meant to police them, district lines are drawn before the first vote is cast, and the tax code sprouts loopholes only their authors can afford, until the people a rule was meant to constrain are the ones who write it. The story gets bought: think tanks, owned media, and a curated vocabulary ("job creators", "trickle-down"), so the people the system fails explain it to themselves as the way things simply have to be. Each turn of the loop makes the next extraction easier to defend.

So what

In practice the two feed each other: emergent dynamics open the gap, and whoever lands on top turns the winnings to holding it open. The emergence may be blameless. The maintenance almost never is.

The distinction matters because it kills a favourite excuse: *this is just what happens when free people get on with their lives, so nobody's to blame and there's nothing to be done*. Half true. Much inequality does arrive unintended, but a process can be innocent at the start and ugly at the end, and the more useful response is to change the process, not to admire how cleverly it works. The other half is plainer once you look: rent-seekers, captured regulators, and paid-for stories are not accidents. They are load-bearing. They are how the structure stays upright.

The response has roughly one shape in both halves, even where the targets differ. Where the dynamics push the wrong way, build rules that push back: cap the runaway, tax the compounding, raise the floor. Where people have built machinery to stop you, confront it and take it apart. Neither is easy, and neither is guaranteed to work; but neither is mysterious.

Emergent or adversarial, none of it is quite weather. One grew from the rules, the other was built by hand, and neither is as fixed as it can look. Part of what keeps it in place is the belief that it can't be changed at all.

What is matter?

4 July 2026

A summary of Noam Chomsky's **Language and Nature** (*Mind*, Vol. 104, Oxford University Press, 1995; PDF), archived by the Radical Anthropology Group as class text 095. The title is mine; the argument is his, and it is stranger than it looks.

The mind-body problem, in brief. We seem to be two things at once: a body (brain, neurons, matter under physical law) and a mind (thought, sensation, the felt redness of red). How can meat produce an inner life, and how can a weightless decision lift an arm? Fitting consciousness into a physical world with no evident room for it is the problem, and for three centuries it has been filed under *insoluble*.

Gilbert Ryle ridiculed Descartes's dualism as **the ghost in the machine**. The joke presumes we still know what the machine is. Chomsky's reply is that we lost it long ago, and that the ghost was never the difficulty.

1. **Matter, defined then destroyed.** The seventeenth-century *mechanical philosophy* held the world to be a machine: bodies act only by direct contact, and that contact was what "matter" *meant*. Descartes, unable to reduce the ordinary creative use of language to any such mechanism, posited a second substance, thought, and with it a real scientific question: how do the two touch?
2. **Newton dissolved the body, not the mind.** Gravity acts at a distance, through no contact at all, an "immaterial" force Newton himself judged an "absurdity" and never accepted ("I frame no hypotheses"). Leibniz and Huygens denounced it as a lapse into the occult. It was correct. What science expelled was therefore the machine, not the ghost; *body* is what vanished from the picture of the world.
3. **Materialism is therefore empty.** To say the mental "reduces to the physical" you need a prior notion of the physical, and since Newton there is none. "Matter" now means whatever the reigning theory invokes: fields, curved space, ten-dimensional strings, whatever is concocted next. Priestley drew the honest conclusion: not that all is matter, but that "the kind of matter on which the two-substance view is based does not exist." Thought is simply what a certain organised system, the brain, does.
4. **So study mind as nature.** Treat language and mind by ordinary empirical inquiry, with no metaphysical wall between the "mental" and the "chemical." Seek *unification*, not *reduction*: chemistry joined physics only after physics was overturned to receive it. Expect to leave common sense behind, exactly as physics left common-sense body behind.
5. **And keep the genuine mystery.** The *creative aspect* of language (speech endlessly novel, apt to the moment yet uncaused by it) was for the Cartesians the best proof of other minds. Of it, and of consciousness, we still have "only description and illustration," no theory. Not the routine irreducibility science keeps absorbing, but perhaps a permanent bound on a biological creature's reach.

The message is at once deflationary and immense. The mind-body problem was never solved; it was dissolved, the moment the body dissolved. We are not ghosts trapped in machines: there are no machines, only a nature far stranger than common sense allows, of which thought is one more unexplained part. The confident materialism of our age mistakes its own vocabulary for the structure of the world; the hard-headed naturalist who swaps the old God for natural selection and pronounces nature transparent has merely inherited a faith on worse credentials.

Newton's lesson, still unlearned three centuries on: it is not mind that defies physics, but our idea of what physics is.

How does anarchism typically die

21 June 2026

Anarchism is often said never to have been tried, or to be internally unstable. It has been tried, several times, at some scale. This is no study, the record is too thin and the sample too hand-picked for that; it is only a narrow attempt to refute the second charge: that anarchism dies of its own contradictions, at its own hand.

A word on what counts, before the tally. The test here is functional, not a label:

A case qualifies if it governed a population and territory, however briefly, through stateless, federated self-organization: directly-democratic assemblies or councils, recallable delegates, no standing state and no vanguard party over the whole, and existed with a population of 2,500 or more.

What follows is that *sample*: the 22 cases in the appendix below, not exhaustive but enough to suggest a shape. Sorted by cause of death, they fall unevenly.

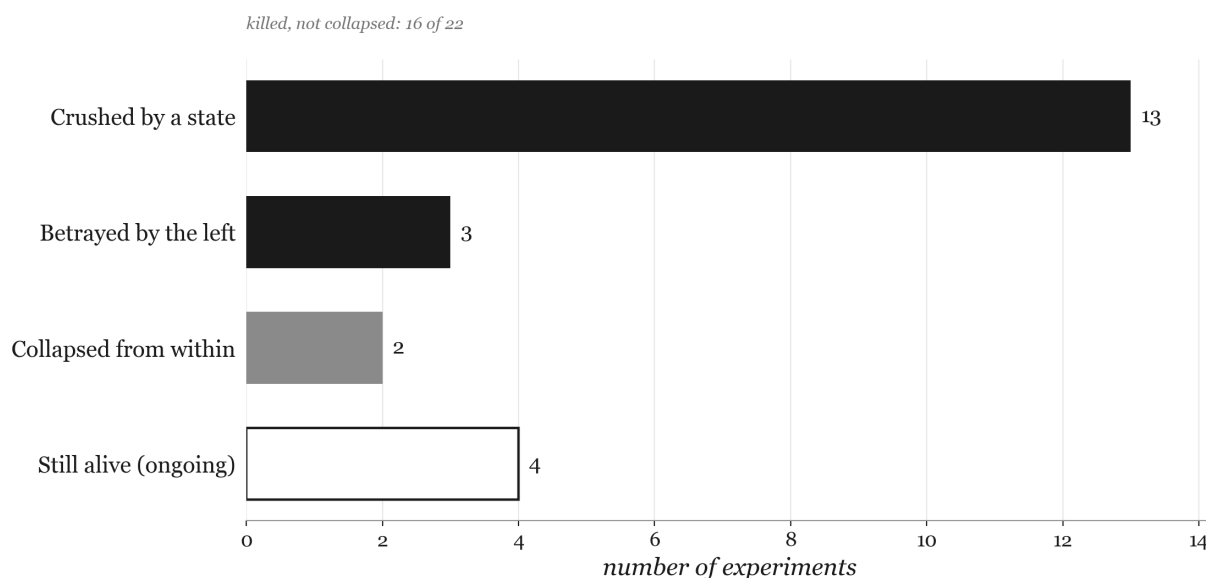


Figure 1: How the 22 anarchist experiments ended, tallied by cause. Crushed by a state is the most common ending; collapse from within is the least.

Of the 18 experiments that ended, only 2 actually *collapsed* from within. The other 16 were killed: 13 crushed by an enemy state, 3 betrayed by the authoritarian left they had fought alongside. The remaining 4 are still alive, and nearly all of them are small.

This runs against the usual explanation. Anarchism is generally expected to fail because it cannot scale. Without a state, the thinking goes, it dissolves into disorder. In this sample, though, collapse from within is the rarest ending. More often the experiments were ended from outside: usually by a state, and in the two largest cases by the authoritarian left they had allied with. Makhno's Free Territory and revolutionary Catalonia, the biggest on the list, were dismantled by the Bolsheviks and Stalinists rather than by their declared enemies.

One caveat carries most of the weight. Counting only experiments that grew large enough to govern territory selects on the outcome: it conditions the sample on having already survived the fragile early phase where internal collapse does most of its killing: schism, drift, economic failure, exhaustion. Most anarchist projects die there, small and unrecorded, at no hand but

their own, and almost none of them reach this table. So the honest claim is the narrow one: *once* an experiment is large enough to rule, it is far likelier to be crushed than to collapse. That is a fact about the survivors, not about anarchism as such.

Whether a case called itself “anarchist” is neither necessary nor sufficient. That functional test keeps assembly-run cases anarchists merely joined, like Oaxaca and Cherán, on the strength of their form, and drops self-styled ones that kept a state or a strongman. Cases that meet the form only halfway, with a dominant party or a mixed governing council, are marked † and treated as borderline. Whether the survivors represent endurance or retreat is left open.

Appendix

The full record behind the chart, sorted by peak scale.

The **bold** phrase in *How it ended* is the load-bearing claim each source is cited for — the manner of death (or survival) that the chart and the central argument rest on. Start there when checking a reference.

† *Borderline on the functional test — meets the form only halfway: a dominant party over the councils (Rojava’s PYD, Bakur’s PKK), a governing council with non-anarchist majorities (the Paris Commune, Bavaria’s second phase), or federal-republican rather than anarchist leadership (Cartagena, where the anarchist FRE-AIT abstained). Korea sits here too: fronted by a nationalist general, its self-governing programme is thinly evidenced, and the “2 million” is the Manchurian Korean diaspora, not the number it actually governed. Counted, but flagged. Iceland is the pre-modern outlier: stateless but chieftain-ranked rather than assembly-run, and cited mostly by anarcho-capitalists.*

Experiment	Where / when / how long	Scale	Death	How it ended	Source
Revolutionary Catalonia & Aragon	Spain, 1936–1939 · 3 yrs	≈5–8 million in collectives	Be-trayed	Undermined by Stalinist allies , then defeated by Franco	source
Free Territory (Makhnovshchina)	Ukraine, 1918–1921 · 3 yrs	Up to ≈7 million	Be-trayed	Used then liquidated by the Bolsheviks once the Whites were beaten	source
Rojava (AANES) †	North-east Syria, 2012–present · 14 yrs	≈2–4 million	Alive	Survives under constant military threat from Turkey and others	source
Hungarian workers’ councils	Hungary, 1956 · ≈3 months	Millions, briefly	Crushed	Crushed by Soviet tanks within weeks	source
Paris Commune †	Paris, 1871 · 72 days	≈2 million	Crushed	Crushed by the French Army ; ≈10,000–20,000 killed in the <i>semaine sanglante</i> (toll disputed)	source
Korean People’s Association †	Manchuria, 1929–1931 · 2 yrs	Unknown; ≈2M diaspora	Crushed	Caught between Japanese imperial forces and Stalinists	source
Gwangju Commune	Gwangju, South Korea, 1980 · ≈6 days	≈730,000	Crushed	Retaken by army paratroopers at dawn after ≈6 days of self-rule	source
Bavarian Council Republic †	Munich, 1919 · ≈4 weeks	≈600,000	Crushed	Stormed by the Freikorps ; Landauer murdered	source
Asturian Commune	Asturias, Spain, 1934 · ≈2 weeks	≈500,000	Crushed	Crushed by the Army of Africa after ≈2 weeks	source

Experiment	Where / when / how long	Scale	Death	How it ended	Source
Bakur self-rule †	South-east Turkey, 2015–2016 · ≈8 months	≈400,000	Crushed	Turkish military operations; districts destroyed, trustees imposed	source
Zapatistas (EZLN)	Chiapas, Mexico, 1994–present · 32 yrs	≈300,000	Alive	Survives , encircled and pressured by the Mexican state	source
Oaxaca Commune (APPO)	Oaxaca, Mexico, 2006 · ≈6 months	≈200,000	Crushed	Federal police (PFP) crushed the Commune	source
Icelandic Commonwealth	Iceland, 930–1262 · 332 yrs	≈50,000	Collapsed	Collapsed into feuding chieftains; absorbed by Norway	source
Strandzha Commune	Ottoman Thrace, 1903 · ≈20 days	Tens of thousands	Crushed	Crushed by the Ottoman army after ≈20 days	source
Cartagena Canton †	Spain, 1873–1874 · ≈6 months	≈26,000	Crushed	Besieged and crushed by the central army , Jan 1874	source
Kronstadt Soviet	Russia, 1921 · ≈16 days	≈18,000	Betrayed	Stormed by the Red Army; rebels executed or exiled	source
Cherán	Michoacán, Mexico, 2011–present · 15 yrs	≈16,000	Alive	Survives , legally recognised indigenous autonomy	source
Alcoy insurrection	Alcoy, Spain, 1873 · ≈5 days	≈10,000	Crushed	Retaken by the federal army within days	source
Magonista Baja California	Mexico, 1911 · ≈6 months	Thousands	Crushed	Defeated by federal troops; the PLM suppressed	source
Alt Llobregat rising	Catalonia, Spain, 1932 · ≈6 days	≈3,000	Crushed	Retaken by army and Civil Guard; militants deported	source
CHAZ / CHOP	Seattle, USA, 2020 · ≈3 weeks	A few thousand	Collapsed	Collapsed in ≈3 weeks; cleared by police	source
Marinaleda	Spain, 1979–present · 47 yrs	≈2,700	Alive	Survives as a functioning cooperative	source

Grounding the sources

A claim-verification companion built with the demolab *ground-claims* runbook: for each cited source I could retrieve, the verbatim sentence(s) that back that row’s manner-of-death claim. Quotes are agent-located pointers, self-checked for verbatim match but **not** independently verified — confirm against the source before citing.

Lawrence D. Taylor (1999) — The Magonista Revolt in Baja California

Journal of San Diego History (1999)

Summary. A narrative history of the 1911 PLM (“Magonista”) armed incursion into Baja California — the Liberal columns’ capture of Mexicali and Tijuana, the movement’s internal fragmentation, and its military defeat by Mexican federal forces. Taylor weighs and rejects the “filibuster / capitalist conspiracy” reading, treating it as a genuine if disorganised revolutionary episode.

Claim it supports. *“Defeated by federal troops; the PLM suppressed”* (Magonista Baja California).

Quotes.

- *“After a three-hour combat, the small Liberal force, outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the federals, was routed.”* (§ the June 1911 defeat at Tijuana) — the federal military defeat the claim names.
- *“With the defeat of the Second Division, the formal Magonista campaign in Baja California came to an end, even though armed Liberal parties continued to stage cross-border raids into the territory up until early 1914.”* (§ end of the campaign) — the suppression of the PLM campaign.

Seattle Office of Inspector General (2021) — Sentinel Event Review, Wave 3

seattle.gov · OIG Sentinel Event Review, Wave 3 (PDF)

Summary. The report reviews the Seattle Police Department’s response to protests from 8 June to 1 July 2020, when SPD vacated the East Precinct and the Capitol Hill Organized Protest (CHOP) — originally the Capitol Hill Autonomous Zone (CHAZ) — was established. The zone persisted 23 days until the Mayor ordered police to clear it following several shootings.

Claim it supports. *“Collapsed in ≈3 weeks; cleared by police”* (CHAZ / CHOP).

Quotes.

- *“The CHOP existed for the next 23 days.”* (p. 11) — the ≈3-week (23-day) duration.
- *“The CHOP existed until July 1, 2020, during which time several shootings occurred, prompting the Mayor to order SPD to clear the area.”* (p. 6) — the end date and the police clearing.

Candón-Mena & Domínguez-Jaime (2020) — La Autoconstrucción de Viviendas en Marinaleda

ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies (2020)

Summary. Analyses Marinaleda’s (Andalusia) self-built housing programme through Ostrom’s commons-governance framework, as a case of the Social Production of Habitat built on self-management, mutual aid, and collective property. From long-term fieldwork, it argues the scheme functions as a self-governed common good sustained by an organised community. (Quotes are in the original Spanish.)

Claim it supports. *“Survives as a functioning cooperative”* (Marinaleda).

Quotes.

- *“el pueblo se ha caracterizado por mantener durante años una intensa movilización que se ha materializado en grandes logros sociales, sobre todo en materia de empleo (Cooperativa El Humoso, Escuela Taller) y de vivienda (autoconstrucción)”* (p. 690) — years of sustained mobilisation yielding lasting cooperative achievements in work and housing.
- *“el papel preponderante de las formas de autogestión (asamblea del pueblo y de beneficiarios); el principio de ayuda mutua (recursos públicos cedidos por el Ayuntamiento y trabajo voluntario de la comunidad); y la propiedad colectiva”* (p. 698) — the case is defined by ongoing self-management, mutual aid, and collective property.

Julián Casanova (1987) — Anarchism and Revolution in the Spanish Civil War: The Case of Aragon

European History Quarterly 17(4) (1987)

Summary. A study of the roughly 450 CNT/anarcho-syndicalist agrarian collectives set up in Republican Aragón after July 1936. Casanova argues the experiment was destroyed not by Franco but from within the Republican camp — dissolved by decree in August 1937 and broken by the Communist-led XI Division under Líster.

Claim it supports. *“Undermined by Stalinist allies, then defeated by Franco”* (Revolutionary Catalonia & Aragón).

Quotes.

- *“The preparation of a Republican offensive on the Aragon front justified the deployment there of the XI Division, commanded by the Communist Enrique Líster.”* (p. 443) — the Communist military instrument turned on the anarchist Council of Aragón.
- *“On 11 August 1937, the Gaceta de la República published the decree dissolving the Council and relieving of their posts the Government Delegate in Aragón, Joaquín Ascaso, and the remaining members of the Council.”* (p. 443) — the Republican government’s formal dissolution of the collectives’ governing body.
- *“similar methods were used to dismantle the new organization being tried out by the anarchists. In both cases, armed groups from outside - first the Catalan militias and then Líster’s XI Division burst violently into Aragón.”* (p. 446) — the armed dismantling of the collectives before Franco’s victory.

Peter Arshinov (1921) — History of the Makhnovist Movement, 1918–1921

theanarchistlibrary.org · Arshinov (1921)

Summary. A participant history by Peter Arshinov, himself a Makhnovist, of Makhno’s anarchist insurgency in Ukraine. It documents the October 1920 military-political pact with the Soviet government against Wrangel, the Whites’ November defeat, and the Bolsheviks’ 26 November surprise attack that destroyed the Makhnovists once they were no longer needed. (A committed partisan source — it asserts Bolshevik bad faith throughout — used because the neutral scholarly article was paywalled and unavailable.)

Claim it supports. *“Used then liquidated by the Bolsheviks once the Whites were beaten”* (Free Territory (Makhnovshchina)).

Quotes.

- *“This was said on November 16, and on November 26th the Bolsheviks treacherously attacked the Makhnovist staff and troops in the Crimea and in Gulyai-Polye”* (p. 105) — the Bolshevik surprise attack, days after Wrangel’s rout.
- *“For the Bolsheviks this agreement was nothing more than a military and strategic step calculated to last at most a month or two — the time needed to defeat Wrangel. Once this was accomplished, they were determined to resume slandering the Makhnovists as bandits and counter-revolutionaries, and under this pretext to make war on them.”* (p. 106) — the “used” half: a cynical alliance meant only to last until Wrangel fell.
- *“Thus the agreement between the Makhnovists and the Bolsheviks was doomed from the very beginning and could not have lasted after the defeat of Wrangel.”* (p. 106) — ties the betrayal directly to the Whites’ defeat.

Ahmad, MacTavish & Christie (2024) — The de facto Autonomous Governance and Stability in the Middle East: The Case of Kurds in Rojava

Journal of the Middle East and Africa 15(1) (2024)

Summary. Argues the Kurdish-led de facto autonomous region of Rojava, established after ISIS created a power vacuum in north-east Syria, offers a comparatively stable, multicultural model of governance — while cataloguing the risks that threaten it: foreign intervention (especially Turkish incursions), isolation, and detention-camp crises.

Claim it supports. “*Survives under constant military threat from Turkey and others*” (Rojava (AANES)).

Quotes.

- “*Although Rojava Self-Administration was declared in 2013, one of the region’s biggest obstacles, as noted by Saleh Moslem, is being under constant threat from foreign intervention.*” (p. 104) — constant external threat as the chief obstacle to the surviving administration.
- “*the Turkish incursion after the withdrawal of a majority of US support emboldened Turkish-backed armed groups such as Suleiman Shah Brigade and Hamza Division*” (p. 104) — Turkish incursion and Turkish-backed forces specifically.
- “*Open border points are also subject to closures due to pressures from other foreign actors, such as Turkey and Russian forces, on behalf of the Syrian regime.*” (p. 105) — threats from Turkey “and others”.

Johanna Granville (2002) — From the Archives of Warsaw and Budapest: A Comparison of the Events of 1956

East European Politics and Societies 16(2) (2002)

Summary. Uses declassified archives to compare the 1956 crises and explain why the USSR intervened militarily in Hungary but not Poland, tracing events between 23 October and the second Soviet invasion of 4 November 1956. (This source was a scanned PDF; the quote below is OCR-transcribed.)

Claim it supports. “*Crushed by Soviet tanks within weeks*” (Hungarian workers’ councils).

Quotes.

- “*the final crackdown of 4 November*” (OCR-transcribed — verify against the scan) — names the 4 November 1956 second Soviet intervention that ended the revolution, weeks after the 23 October uprising.

Cohen-Skalli & Pisano (2020) — Farewell to Revolution! Gustav Landauer’s Death and the Funerary Shaping of His Legacy

The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy 28(2) (2020)

Summary. Centres on the violent death of the anarchist Gustav Landauer in May 1919 at the collapse of Munich’s Räterepublik, and how his friends reshaped the killing into martyrdom, read against his anarchist theory of revolution.

Claim it supports. “*Stormed by the Freikorps; Landauer murdered*” (Bavarian Council Republic).

Quotes.

- “*The execution of Landauer by the Freikorps rendered vivid the disparity between the expectations of Landauer as he threw himself into the Munich Revolution in late 1918, and the conflicted reactions of his close companions*” (p. 185) — names the Freikorps as his killers.
- “*They shot and beat Landauer to death.*” (p. 185) — the murder itself, from an eyewitness account.

Reşat Bayer and Özge Kemahloğlu (2023) — Democratic Backsliding, Conflict, and Partisan Mobilisation of Ethnic Groups
South European Society and Politics 28(1) (2023)

Summary. Studies how democratic backsliding and renewed PKK conflict in 2015–2018 curtailed the pro-Kurdish party’s control of south-eastern municipalities: after local self-governance declarations, the state answered with military operations, destruction, and the replacement of elected mayors by appointed trustees (kayyum).

Claim it supports. “*Turkish military operations; districts destroyed, trustees imposed*” (Bakur self-rule).

Quotes.

- “*The state responded with military operations. In addition to fatalities including civilians, urban armed conflict caused civilian dislocation and physical destruction.*” (pp. 27–28) — the state’s military response, causing destruction and displacement.
- “*mayors from the pro-Kurdish parties were replaced by government-appointed trustees*” (p. 28) — elected mayors replaced by imposed trustees.
- “*Executive decree #674 of September 2016 granted the central government the right to appoint non-elected trustees in the case of mayors’ removal due to terrorism-related reasons.*” (p. 32) — the legal mechanism for imposing trustees.

María de la Luz Inclán (2009) — Repressive Threats, Procedural Concessions, and the Zapatista Cycle of Protests, 1994–2003
Journal of Conflict Resolution (2009)

Summary. Models how repressive threats and procedural concessions shaped the 1994–2003 Zapatista protest cycle. After the 1994 uprising and ceasefire, the Mexican state kept a military siege while alternating concessions and repressive threats against the EZLN and Zapatista communities.

Claim it supports. “*Survives, encircled and pressured by the Mexican state*” (Zapatistas (EZLN)).

Quotes.

- “*it kept a military siege around Zapatista headquarters in the Lacandon Jungle*” (p. 2) — ongoing military encirclement by the state.
- “*the Mexican government granted procedural concessions and applied repressive threats to the EZLN and the Zapatista communities*” (p. 2) — sustained state pressure. (The article’s window is 1994–2003; “survives” to the present is beyond what it quotes — the encirclement and pressure are directly supported.)

Estrada Saavedra (2020) — The Popular Assembly of the Peoples of Oaxaca (APPO)
Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History (2020)

Summary. In 2006 a teachers’ union dispute in Oaxaca escalated into the APPO, which took territorial control of the state capital through barricades, seized media, and a self-managed popular government (the Oaxaca Commune). After failed negotiations, the federal government deployed the Federal Preventive Police (PFP); the experience ended in violent repression.

Claim it supports. “*Federal police (PFP) crushed the Commune*” (Oaxaca Commune (APPO)).

Quotes.

- “the federal government decided to send in the PFP to pacify the state, with assistance from the army and navy” (p. 8) — the federal Preventive Police deployed to end the uprising.
- “On November 25, one week before the swearing-in of the new President, the police operation began that would come to a bloody end with the Oaxaca Commune” (p. 8) — the police operation that violently terminated the Commune.

Daniels (1951) — The Kronstadt Revolt of 1921: A Study in the Dynamics of Revolution

American Slavic and East European Review (1951)

Summary. Analyses the March 1921 Kronstadt rising as a left-wing revolt against Communist rule, growing out of Petrograd strikes and fleet discontent; the regime denounced it as a White plot and crushed it by armed assault, pushing Lenin toward the NEP.

Claim it supports. “Stormed by the Red Army; rebels executed or exiled” (Kronstadt Soviet).

Quotes.

- “a resolution appearing in the last number of the *Izvestija* published before Kronstadt was stormed and captured on March 17” (p. 248) — dates the storming and capture.
- “The main body of troops employed were *kursanty* (‘officer cadets’) from Red Army training schools, and Cheka men: the assault on Kronstadt was officered by the top officialdom of the Communist Party” (p. 248) — the attacking force: Red Army cadets and Cheka.
- “From an interview with Kozlovskij after his escape to Finland” (p. 245, n. 18) — the rebel commander’s flight into exile. (This political analysis anchors the storming and the exile; the mass executions of the sailors — standard in the wider historiography — are not tabulated here.)

Gasparello (2021) — Communal Responses to Structural Violence and Dispossession in Cherán, Mexico

Latin American Perspectives (2021)

Summary. After illegal logging and criminal violence, the Purépecha community of Cherán rose up in 2011 and rebuilt its government around communal self-organization — abolishing political parties and, through a legal process, instituting a council-and-assembly structure governing by *usos y costumbres*.

Claim it supports. “Survives, legally recognised indigenous autonomy” (Cherán).

Quotes.

- “After a legal process in November 2011, the indigenous people of Cherán were able to appoint their authorities according to their *usos y costumbres*: the party system of local politics disappeared, and a council structure was promoted in its stead” (p. 12) — the court-won right to self-govern by customary law.
- “Cherán currently has a capillary structure for discussion and decisions that guides and controls the Communal Government” (p. 12) — the ongoing assembly-based communal government.

Moisand (2021) — « Cantonards » et « communeux ». La révolution cantonale espagnole dans l’ombre de la Commune (1873)

Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle (2021)

Summary. Reads Spain’s 1873 cantonal revolution against the shadow of the Paris Commune: dozens of towns declared autonomous “cantons,” run by revolutionary juntas and militias acting without Madrid, and monarchist generals of the regular army crushed them within weeks —

bar Cartagena, which held out six months. The FRE-AIT (anarchist International) judged only Alcoy (revolt of 9–13 July 1873) a genuinely social movement; from the federal-republican-led cantons it largely stood aside.

Claim it supports. “*Retaken by the federal army within days*” (Alcoy insurrection) and “*Besieged and crushed by the central army, Jan 1874*” (Cartagena Canton).

Quotes.

- “*Ces derniers abattent les Républiques cantonales en quelques semaines, mais ne parviennent à défaire celle de Carthagène, où se sont réfugiés les insurgés d’autres villes, qu’après six mois de résistance.*” (p. 58) — the army crushed the cantonal republics within weeks; only Cartagena held out, and only after six months’ siege — the Cartagena manner of death.
- “*la milice de Carthagène se soulève sans attendre les consignes du Comité de salut public de Madrid*” (Moisand 2021) — Cartagena’s own militia rose and governed without waiting on Madrid: the self-governing form. (Federal-republican-led, not anarchist — the FRE-AIT abstained — so Cartagena is counted on the functional test and flagged †.)
- “*seul le canton d’Alcoy (une ville textile dont les ouvriers s’étaient révoltés entre le 9 et le 13 juillet 1873) pouvait être interprété comme un mouvement social.*” (p. 60) — dates the Alcoy rising to a four-day span (9–13 July). (The article centres on Cartagena; it dates and situates Alcoy’s brief rising but has no sentence narrating its specific recapture.)

Matthew Kerry (2020) — Unite, Proletarian Brothers! Radicalism and Revolution in the Spanish Second Republic

University of London Press (2020) · open access

Summary. An open-access academic monograph on radicalism in the Spanish Second Republic, centred on the October 1934 Asturian insurrection, when miners and workers seized the coalfield towns and ran them through revolutionary committees before the state crushed the rising with the Army of Africa.

Claim it supports. “*Crushed by the Army of Africa after ≈2 weeks*” (Asturian Commune).

Quotes.

- “*The towns and villages of the narrow, steep-sided coal valleys lay in the hands of revolutionary committees staffed by local politicians and trade unionists drawn from the ranks of the socialists, anarchists and communists.*” (Introduction) — the self-governing form: committees running the mining basin.
- “*After two weeks, the movement was defeated by the Spanish army.*” (Introduction) — the two-week duration and defeat.
- “*the Army of Africa was drafted in to crush the insurrection, as it was believed to be more trustworthy and less tainted by domestic politics than the forces on the mainland.*” (concluding analysis) — the manner of death: crushed by the state’s colonial troops. (Agent-located in the open-access PDF; page numbers approximate — the governance and defeat quotes sit in the Introduction, the Army-of-Africa quote in the concluding chapter.)

Lee Jae-eui (1999) — Gwangju Diary: Beyond Death, Beyond the Darkness of the Age

Gwangju Diary (trans. Seol & Mamatas) · full text via libcom.org

Summary. The canonical documentary account of the May 1980 Gwangju uprising, compiled from participant testimony with the May 18 Memorial Foundation. After paratroopers were driven out on 21 May, the city of ≈730,000 governed itself for roughly six days through mass

rallies and a Citizens' Settlement Committee, until martial-law forces stormed it before dawn on 27 May. (An eyewitness/movement source, not peer-reviewed scholarship, but the standard primary account and fully open-access. Gwangju was a citizens' democratic uprising, not a self-described anarchist one — it is here on the functional test, not the label.)

Claim it supports. *“Retaken by army paratroopers at dawn after ≈6 days of self-rule”* (Gwangju Commune).

Quotes.

- *“In the absence of an administrative state, people relied on one another.”* (ch. 3) — self-organisation without a state.
- *“Power, water, and city telephone lines operated normally; there was no looting, no bank robberies, and low rates of crime.”* (ch. 3) — the liberated city functioning under citizen self-rule.
- *“At first, state forces shot their M-16s indiscriminately, at any sign of life, even in residential areas.”* (ch. 4) — the army's assault retaking the city on 27 May.

Francesco D'Alessandro (2020) — The Forgotten Anarchist Commune in Manchuria

theanarchistlibrary.org · D'Alessandro (2020)

Summary. After Japan's 1910 annexation of Korea, exiled Korean anarchists built autonomous self-governing districts in Manchuria (the Shinmin district among them), defended by the Army of the North under Kim Jwa-jin. This Manchurian commune of the late 1920s was destroyed by the early 1930s under combined assault from Japanese imperial troops and Moscow-directed Korean communists who assassinated its leaders. (A movement-sympathetic source. It says “communists directed from Moscow” (≈ Stalinists) and also names Chinese troops, so the row's “between Japanese and Stalinists” simplifies a fuller multi-party account. The one peer-reviewed study — Dongyoun Hwang, *Anarchism in Korea* (SUNY, 2016) — is far more cautious: the governing body was “strictly speaking, not an anarchist organization,” was fronted by the nationalist general Kim Jwa-jin, and its programme may have “existed only on paper”; the ≈2 million is the Korean population of Manchuria, not the number governed, which Hwang says is unknown. Hence the † and the “Unknown” scale.)

Claim it supports. *“Caught between Japanese imperial forces and Stalinists”* (Korean People's Association).

Quotes.

- *“The Japanese government sent 35,000 imperial troops into Manchuria and installed a puppet government, the Manchukuo in 1931.”* (§ “by the beginning of the 1930s”) — the Japanese imperial-forces pressure.
- *“At the same time, the Korean Communist Party, directed from Moscow, began infiltrating the Commune and systematically assassinating its anarchist leaders. Kim Jwa-jin was murdered in January 1930.”* — the communist / Stalinist pressure.
- *“Together, the Japanese Army, the North Korean Communist Army, and the Communist Party infiltrators, along with some Chinese troops surrounded the Commune from the outside and inside and eventually destroyed it.”* — the two-front destruction.

Georgi Khadzhiev (1992) — Down with the Sultan, Long Live the Balkan Federation

theanarchistlibrary.org · Khadzhiev (1992)

Summary. A partisan anarchist history of the Macedonian and Thracian liberation movement, recounting the 1903 Preobrazhenie (Transfiguration) Uprising in Ottoman Thrace and framing

the short-lived “Strandzha Commune” as a spontaneous experiment in libertarian communism, led in part by anarchists like Gerdzhikov. (A celebratory, ideological account, not neutral scholarship.)

Claim it supports. *“Crushed by the Ottoman army after ≈20 days”* (Strandzha Commune).

Quotes.

- *“The Strandzha Commune lived and pulsated for more than 20 days in conditions of true communism”* (§ The Transfiguration Uprising and the “Strandzha Commune”) — the roughly-20-day duration.
- *“This reign of free communism was set up on the first day of the uprising and continued through until 21st August 1903, in some places until the end of the month, until it was crushed militarily by a 40,000-strong Ottoman army of infantry, cavalry and artillery”* — crushed militarily by the Ottoman army.

Ángel Herrerín López (2017) — El movimiento de enero de 1932

Les Cahiers de Framespa 25 (2017)

Summary. Reassesses the January 1932 CNT rising in the Alt Llobregat mining valley (Catalonia) — a spontaneous cenetista insurrection, or an anarchist (FAI) bid for control of the union? Herrerín traces the Fígols-centred revolt, its rapid military suppression, and the mass arrests and deportations that followed, which swept up well-known militants regardless of their actual involvement. (Quotes in the original Spanish.)

Claim it supports. *“Retaken by army and Civil Guard; militants deported”* (Alt Llobregat rising).

Quotes.

- *“los soldados y la guardia civil habían entrado en los pueblos poniendo fin al levantamiento, salvo en la barriada de San Cornelio, en Fígols”* (§ the suppression) — the soldiers and the Civil Guard entered the villages and ended the rising (bar the San Cornelio district of Fígols).
- *“militantes anarquistas que no habían participado en el movimiento pero que estaban fichados por la policía y eran de sobra conocidos, como Buenaventura Durruti o los hermanos Francisco y Domingo Ascaso”* (§ the arrests) — well-known anarchist militants (Durruti, the Ascaso brothers) were among those seized, even without having taken part.
- *“uno de los anarquistas deportados en el vapor Buenos Aires”* (§ the deportations) — the detainees were deported on the steamship Buenos Aires.

Robert Tombs (1994) — Victimes et bourreaux de la Semaine sanglante

Revue d’histoire du XIXe siècle 10 (1994)

Summary. Tombs re-examines the death toll of the 1871 Bloody Week, when the Versaillais army retook Paris and executed Communards. He traces how a high figure entered republican historiography (the ≈17,000 consensus; Pelletan’s higher counts) and argues it was inflated, proposing a downward estimate of roughly 10,000 — most of them victims of organised, quasi-legal mass killings. (In French.)

Claim it supports. *“Crushed by the French Army; ≈10,000–20,000 killed in the semaine sanglante (toll disputed)”* (Paris Commune).

Quotes.

- “*Avec Seignobos et Lavissee se dessine un consensus républicain, la répression entre dans les livres d’histoire et les manuels et l’on retient le chiffre de 17 000 morts.*” (§ the historiography) — the traditional republican figure of $\approx 17,000$ dead.
- “*il est possible de faire une estimation approximative de 10 000 victimes*” (§ Tombs’ estimate) — Tombs’ own downward revision to $\approx 10,000$, i.e. the toll is contested.
- “*il apparaît qu’une très importante proportion des morts de la Semaine sanglante, voire la majorité des exécutés, aient été les victimes de tueries organisées et quasi-légales*” (§ the killings) — the mass, organised killings by the Versaillais forces.

Jesse L. Byock (2001) — Viking Age Iceland

Byock, Viking Age Iceland (Penguin, 2001)

Summary. Byock’s study of the Icelandic Free State (c. 930–1264) as a stateless, feud-regulated society without king or army. Its final phase saw a new elite of “big chieftains” contend for overlordship as endemic feuding escalated into open warfare — the turmoil that ended the Free State in the thirteenth century. (Grounded from a partial, OCR’d scan: the “feuding chieftains” half is anchored below in clean English, but the source’s narrative of the 1262–4 submission to Norway sits in a later chapter absent from the provided excerpt, so the “absorbed by Norway” half is left unanchored, pending a full text-based copy.)

Claim it supports. “*Collapsed into feuding chieftains; absorbed by Norway*” (Icelandic Commonwealth).

Quotes.

- “*In the last phase of the Free State, the older two-tiered system of chieftains and farmers gave way to a more complex three-tiered political structure of big chieftains, big farmers and farmers.*” (§ Introduction) — power concentrating in a rising class of big chieftains at the end of the Free State.
- “*Only at the very end of the Free State did the endemic feuding reach the level of open warfare, and even then random violence was sporadic*” (p. 76) — the chronic feuding escalating to open warfare at the state’s collapse.