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Before we get swept away by their revolutionary aesthetics, one-size-fits-all plans, and lefty lingo, we should talk about authoritarian and vanguard communist groups. We don't need to recreate the very power dynamics we're struggling against to win. But we do need you in the fight.



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These are just a few excerpts! The full zine describes more authoritarian behaviors and provides examples of notable vanguard groups to watch out for.

**DOWNLOAD THE FULL ZINE AT:**

**UNSALTED.NOBLOGS.ORG**

**ITSGOINGDOWN.ORG**



## COMMON TACTICS, PATTERNS, & TENDENCIES TO WATCH OUT FOR

The next few slides share some **red flags** to watch out for. You'll probably also see some of these in non-profits, advocacy groups, or other top-down organizations that operate like a business. However, it's the ideological motivation that sets the vanguard apart and leads to some of their worst harms. We use "**vanguard**" to mean a person or group who deems themselves the necessary leader of the masses toward "revolution." If you're noticing these red flags, it's best to stay away and ask others about their experiences with the group.



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## HEAVY EMPHASIS ON RECRUITMENT

Vanguardist groups constantly need new members: to pay dues, volunteer their labor, recruit for the group, and replace burnt-out members. **Waves of new people** and energy help make a group feel active and relevant, and mask the steady trickle of people leaving.

## HYPER-FOCUS ON BUREAUCRACY

Getting the group stuck in loops of committee forming, decision-making, writing points of unity, establishing cadre leadership, etc. Most likely during power struggles and **Entryist** takeovers. Often causes non-vanguard members to leave in frustration.



## SO, SHOULD I EVER WORK WITH AUTHORITARIANS?

Fuck no. At least not intimately. At the end of the day, we're working toward different goals.

"Left Unity" is a farce. But, our aim isn't to be purists, and we don't want to silo ourselves into obscurity.

The world is complex. It's possible to participate in coalitions and broad efforts with liberals and authoritarian communists alike without losing sight of our values. In fact, we can have a really positive impact in those spaces by **nurturing anti-authoritarianism**.

Above all, we recommend forming visible and accessible projects with your comrades and neighbors. Fuck "infighting." Focus on building **insurrectionary mutual aid** with people who aren't concerned with the titles of "activist" or "organizer."



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## WHY ARE THEY LIKE THIS?

Political ideologies play a big role in the world of radical politics, activism, and revolutionary organizing in what's called "the left." Vanguardist thinking generally comes from Marxist schools of thought. Though, there are some corners of Marxism that move in anti-authoritarian directions, like **anti-state Marxism**.

Authoritarians ignore that "the masters tools will never dismantle the master's house." You make the path by walking. We cannot decolonize or abolish the capitalism within the **Euro-settler framework of the nation-state**.



## ENTRYISM

**Taking over groups** or coalitions that are independent of the vanguard. This is most easily done to groups that are new. Frequently, this is done by abusing and manipulating internal decision-making processes, like seizing positions of authority or having vanguard members join in large numbers.

## FRONT GROUPS & COALITIONS

**Creating a new mass org** to tap movement energy and re-direct it to their own ends. The front is dominated by members of the vanguard without clear connection to the vanguard group, to better allow the vanguard to hide their politics and intentions.



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## SHUTTING DOWN DISSENT

This sometimes appears as "Democratic Centralism," often with some kind of executive committee making decisions for the group.

Historically, this has lead to one-sided "crit sessions" and purges within notable vanguard organizations when members cross the "party line."

## SHELTERING ABUSERS

Patriarchal violence is a serious recurring problem - including within anarchist spaces. Vanguardist groups often treat attempts at accountability as an attack on the group and their ideology, or a distraction from "the cause." They become defensive, and in practice shield abusers while dismissing survivors of abuse.



## DEFENDING & GLORIFYING AUTHORITARIAN LEADERS & GOVERNMENTS

Vanguards in the West often uncritically support governments and leaders in the name of "anti-imperialism". In extreme cases, this ends up basically being a kind of conservative patriotism.

This comes from the history of authoritarianism in left-wing politics, and specifically the influence of a tendency called "Marxist" or "Campist" (or "tankie"), which encourages uncritically supporting governments the "US" opposes. The result can be ugly.



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