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But the Government Said I Have Rights
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George Carlin:

> In 1942, there were a 110,000 Japanese American citizens in good standing, law-abiding people, who were thrown into internment camps simply because their parents were born in the wrong country. That's all they did wrong. They had no right to a lawyer, no right to a fair trial, no right to a jury of their peers, no right to due process of any kind. The only right they had, "right this way" – into the internment camps. Just when these American citizens needed their rights the most, their government took 'em away. And rights aren't rights if someone can take 'em away. They're privileges, that's all we've ever had in this country, is a bill of temporary privileges. And if you read the news even badly, you know that every year the list gets shorter and shorter and shorter.[1]

[1] Carlin, George. *You have no rights* `https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9-R8T1SuG4`.

An extension of the class system, societies draw clear lines between people with rights and people without them: Migrants versus citizens, educated versus uneducated, homeless versus homed, convicts versus non-convicts, men versus women, heterosexual vs homosexual, white versus non-white.

Governments create rights so they can meter them out to certain segments of the population, pitting everyone against each other in a vicious competition for civil liberties and economic advantage. So long as everyone has to fight for their place in the world, they'll have no time or energy to fight the system that creates and enforces these gross inequalities.

There are the two types of "rights" to consider:

1. Legal rights / civil rights / statutory rights.
2. Natural rights / moral rights / inalienable rights / human rights.

Legal rights depend on the rule of law within a nation. For legal rights to be granted to you, first a state must exercise its monopoly on violence to strip you of all your freedom, and then trickle-feed certain allowances back to you with stringent stipulations e.g. limiting credit to white capital owners or denying voting rights to people with criminal records.

The entire concept of legal rights depends on a state denying you all the possible freedoms they can think of, but then permitting you to file the paperwork to reclaim a few largely inconsequential ones: Usually voting, citizenship, schooling, taxation with representation, the pursuit of profit, land deeds, birth certificates, marriage certificates, copyright, driving licenses, passports and death certificates.

These are all things that cement the state's power and further its reach, while making citizens dependent on the state for survival. The statesmen always stipulate that they can strip citizens of these entitlements at their sole and absolute discretion, ensuring people

who live under the authority of the state will have little choice but to bend the knee and accept any and all atrocities committed on them to avoid further incurring the wrath of the pampered narcissists who rule the world.

Arrested for protesting a developer's destruction of your local lake? Killed your rapist? Dumpster dived for food? Crossed a border without the right passport? Blocked a pipeline from being built through your only water source? Occupied a vacant lot to grow a garden? Distributed food to homeless people without a license? The state can now strip you of your remaining morsels of freedom for violating its tomes upon tomes of laws.

So, for you to accept the authority of legislators to allocate rights to you, to permit you such luxuries as "free" speech and the right to vote to select the party who will take their turn ruling you, you're effectively accepting and legitimizing a violent, thieving, bloodthirsty gang's power over you. You're entering into a contract whereupon you exchange your freedom for a few privileges that can and will be taken back from you by the state without notice.

This is why the concept of rights ought to be rejected by people who seek freedom through anarchy. Why willingly accept a lifelong contract placing ourselves into the service of arrogant statesmen who promise us a modicum of mercy in exchange for this unadulterated control over our lives?

Among the much ballyhooed rights they coax us with, they offer us the amazing opportunity to be imprisoned but not tortured if we sign on the dotted line. But then they change the terms of the contract once we're in their custody and torture us anyway. Their authority allows them to set the terms and alter them as it suits them. Their sadistic power-hungry disposition will always lead them to pull away the rights they promised us, just because they can.

George Carlin:

> Yeah… sooner or later the people in this country gonna realize the government does not give a fuck about them. The government doesn't care about you, or your children, or your rights, or your welfare, or your safety, it simply doesn't give a fuck about you. It's interested in its own power, that's the only thing, keeping it and expanding it wherever possible.

In relationships of rulers and obeyers, the rulers have all the power: They decide what is and isn't a right and what does and doesn't violate the right. The people with the power can rewrite reality at will, they can torture you to death and never admit what they did to you was torture. The United States calls their torture of prisoners of war "enhanced coercive interrogation techniques". That's really all it takes to bypass rights: a person in power using craven euphemisms when they torture their prisoners.

If slavery conflicts with the rights they claim we have, they can just substitute the word "slave" for "inmate" and it's all good. If every prisoner has a right to due process, they can just have military commissions spend decades putting on show "forever trials" that never attempt to convict the prisoner, but keep them in custody in perpetuity.[2]

Legal rights are a paper thin safety blanket in the face of an icy authority blizzard that freezes everything in its path. Our rulers take our freedom and then ration small pieces of it back to us in a highly controlled environment if we agree to follow their laws, obey their enforcers, pay them daily tributes and do a lifetime of menial labor in exchange for the right to exist while they live in the lap of luxury on our backs.

Legal rights are a few minor and temporary exemptions to the state's absolute rule over you. These exemptions are only permitted to you by the ruling class so long as they don't interfere with their

[2] Sorkin, Amy Davidson. *The Forever Trial at Guantánamo.* https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/09/20/the-forever-trial-at-guantanam

including dignity, liberty, and equality. It prohibits slavery and torture, guarantees freedom of movement and residence, the right of property, the right to an adequate standard of living and the right to a nationality.

It's plain to see none of these things are actually upheld by UN member states. Slavery is still rampant all over the world, including state-sponsored slavery (in prisons), torture such as waterboarding is commonplace for prisoners of war, and no one in the lower classes has anything resembling dignity, liberty, equality, an adequate standard of living or freedom of movement and residence. If this document had any value at all, its most powerful member states like the USA wouldn't be openly violating every one of these rights every day of the year.

Neither natural rights nor legal rights are compatible with anarchy because anarchy recognizes no authority. Anarchists reject the power our rulers grant themselves to decide which privileges to bestow on the groups and individuals who are able and willing to meet their impossibly strict standards, and which privileges to deny.

No one should have the power to stand on a pedestal and decree to us what we do and don't deserve, what we can say and can't say, when we get to eat and where we ought to sleep.

Rather than swallowing mythic tales about human rights and gaslighting ourselves into believing governments will ever grant us anything resembling freedom, why not reach for something real? Something that has shape and substance. There are no rights, no universal laws that will magically protect us from the people who write the laws. No. There are only desires. And the thing all anarchists desire most is freedom. Freedom from rule, from law, from authority, from the wrath of the rights-giver.

We don't need rights, we need anarchy.

ill and can no longer work to pay our bills, cast out into the cold to freeze and die.

Our rights were never anything more than hot air pouring out of the mouths of the well-heeled hustlers who rule the kingdoms of democracy.

Bob Black:

> There are fashions in clothes and music. And there are fashions in politics. One current fashion in politics, all over the world, is human rights: "Human rights is the idea of our time." Everybody likes human rights. Not everybody respects them. I will make the claim that human rights are never respected, as human rights. Because human rights have no objective reality, there is nothing to respect. Some humans are worthy of respect, but not their imaginary rights.
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> Today, it's scandalous to disbelieve in human rights. A prominent social philosopher named Joel Feinberg is appalled that there are, as he says, "even extreme misanthropes who deny that anyone in fact has rights." These extreme misanthropes would include Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammed, Thomas Aquinas, Johann Gottlieb von Herder, Edmund Burke, William Godwin, Jeremy Bentham, Peter Kropotkin and Friedrich Nietzsche. Until about 500 years ago, everyone must have been an extreme misanthrope, which is certainly not how Jesus Christ and Prince Kropotkin, among others, are regarded.[7]

The UN's "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" is a document that purports to enshrine a long list of privileges for all people

[7] Black, Bob. *The Myth of Human Rights.* https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bob-black-the-myth-of-human-rights

economic interests and so long as you remain wholly subservient to them, never threatening their absolute authority over you.

Pëtr Kropotkin:

> This is what these so-called liberties can be reduced to. Freedom of press and of meeting, inviolability of home and all the rest, are only respected if the people do not make use of them against the privileged classes. But the day the people begin to take advantage of them to undermine those privileges, the so-called liberties will be cast overboard.
>
> This is quite natural. Humanity retains only the rights it has won by hard struggle and is ready to defend at every moment, with arms in hand.[3]

Natural rights are even more ridiculously fantastical than legal rights, if that's even possible. They're supposedly fundamental to existence, granted to us by nature or God, universally accepted by all and can't be contradicted by any legal entity. These are the three "natural universal rights", based on the idea that all people are created equal:

1. The right to liberty
2. The right to the pursuit of happiness
3. The right to life

Thomas Jefferson, a plantation-owner and serial rapist[4] who owned more than 600 black people, complained that England's King George III failed to recognize the natural rights of American

[3] Kropotkin, Pëtr. *Words of a Rebel, Chapter 5: Political Rights.* https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/petr-kropotkin-words-of-a-rebel-1#toc

[4] Steinberg, Neil. *A Rapist and Slaver Who Did Other Things.* https://chicago.suntimes.com/columnists/2021/5/27/22456533/thomas-jefferson-r

colonists and drafted the American Declaration of Independence to right this dreadful wrong.

In the first two paragraphs of this historic rights document, Jefferson outlines these natural rights, mentioning that "all men are created equal", have "inalienable rights," and are entitled to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." The irony was apparently lost on him, as it's lost on all authority figures who tell us sweet lies about our amazing God / government-given rights while sapping our blood, sweat and tears to enlarge their plantations and mansions.

Mahatma Gandhi, who also happened to be a serial sex pest[5] and a racist, was another big pusher of human rights. While he promoted his philosophy of nonviolence and equal opportunity, he went out of his way to rob the Dalit (people belonging to the lowest caste in India) of their agency[6], declaring he would go on a hunger strike to the death if they were given anything resembling equality. If even the people most associated with the promotion of natural rights spent their lives brutalizing women, children and racial minorities while facing zero consequences for it, at what point does the rights charade fall apart? How can rights ever be real in a world with such rigid hierarchical social relations?

George Carlin:

> Boy, everyone in this country is always running around yammering about their fucking rights. I have a right, you have no right, we have a right, they don't have a right… Folks, I hate to spoil your fun but-there's no such thing as rights, okay? They're imaginary. We made them up! Like the Boogie Man… the Three Little Pigs, Pinocchio, Mother Goose, shit like that. Rights are an idea, they're just imaginary, they are a cute idea, cute… but that's all, cute, and fictional. But if you think you do have rights, let me ask you this, where do they come from? People say, well, they come from God, they're God-given rights… Aw fuck, here we go again… here we go again. The God excuse. The last refuge of a man with no answers and no argument, it came from God. Anything we can't describe, must have come from God.

Natural rights aren't upheld by nature or a higher being, they're just as artificially constructed and deceptive as legal rights, but with even less utility since they have no solid, corporeal form that can be petitioned for mercy like a courtroom judge in the case of legal rights. God isn't going to enforce your God-given rights, no matter how much you beg.

We have no perceivable right to liberty when all the resources we depend on to survive are owned by someone else, who will cruelly withhold those resources if we don't live by their laws and forever humble ourselves at their feet… Praying they'll agree to fulfill our basic needs and permit us to survive another day.

Likewise, the pursuit of happiness is clearly reserved for the upper classes, while us poors have no recourse but to accept an endless parade of humiliation, coercion and violence in service of their colossal egos. The noblemen spend their lives erecting impenetrable barriers to prevent us from eating even a single crumb from their organic blueberry pie, so the idea that they have ever allowed us to pursue our own happiness is offensive. We live only to serve the moneyed class and staff their lavish properties.

Finally, our supposed right to life is forfeit the moment a policeman, settler or soldier decides we're resisting their authority and takes away either our freedom or our life. It's forfeit when we fall

[5] Banerji, Rita. *Gandhi Used His Position To Sexually Exploit Young Women. The Way WE React To This Matters Even Today.* https://www.youthkiawaaz.com/2013/10/gandhi-used-power-position-exploit-your

[6] Sen, Mayukh. *Gandhi Was a Racist Who Forced Young Girls to Sleep in Bed with Him.* https://www.vice.com/en/article/ezj3km/gandhi-was-a-racist-who-forced-young-