What Is Anarchism?

In democratic countries, individuals naturally believe in liberty rather than top-down authority or force. But when the pro-liberty person calls themselves an anarchist, their views are often described as treasonous and dangerous. Anarchists have been compared for centuries to terrorists, bomb-throwers and extremists. No other system is more misunderstood or negatively portrayed than anarchism. In reality, anarchism is a synonym for "free socialism" or "social anarchism." As the term "social" implies, anarchism is a community of people who are free and live together and cooperate without the control of groups of rulers or hierarchy. The movement wants to promote the idea of creating a world with no borders, no social classes and no government. Anarchists believe in independent thought, international solidarity, voluntary association and helping each other.

One example of an anarchist community is Twin Oaks Community. Twin Oaks is an anarchist community that is based in rural central Virginia, made up of around 90 adult members and 15 children. The community does not have a group religion; their beliefs are diverse. They do not have a central leader; they govern themselves by sharing responsibility among every member of the group. They have a self-supporting economy and share their incomes. Each member works 42 hours a week in the community and each of them receives housing, food, healthcare, and personal spending money from the community. The members of the Twin Oaks Community did not participate in any violence or protests, proving the stereotypes wrong.

The association of anarchism to violence, gang, and assassination attempts started in the 19th century. At that time, the anarchist labour unions began using the tactic of a general strike, which resulted in violence between the government and the workers and even in the deaths of strikers. In this climate, a small group of anarchists began to advocate and commit terrorism and assassinations. In many cases, newspapers blamed anarchists for mass killing events. Because of this, groups of Anarcho-pacifism promoters, which support a form of anarchism that completely rejects the use of violence, are seen as dangerous. Adding on to that, as anarchism promotes a world where there is no leader, the government bodies become scared of potential revolutions, which provokes them to disseminate propaganda against the anarchist ideology. However, the world needs to understand that anarchism is not synonymous with gangs and violence; it is a political ideology and should be considered the same as systems like "democracy."

Anarchism is probably considered "extreme" in the eyes of the majority, especially those in charge; however, don't schools always teach us to listen to and consider classmate's ideas? Why are we not doing that in society? Isn't democracy all about freedom of speech, opinions, and religions? We should start following what we believe, and ignore the government propaganda.