

POST-1960 U.S. ANARCHISM AND SOCIAL THEORY

by

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Abstract

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Relatively recent political mobilizations—such as the demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle (1999), the attempted uprising in Greece (2008), and the Occupy movement (2011)—have shown that anti-capitalist anarchists can be influential in political movements far beyond their small numbers. Recently, some have argued that anarchism has the potential for useful contributions to social theory; however, it has failed to make these. This study, using both theoretical and historical lenses, looks at the development of U.S. anarchism to answer the question of why this has not happened. First, a general political and theoretical history of anarchism is provided, including a focus on the implications of the transition between classical (1840–1939) and contemporary (1960 to the present) anarchism. Then the theoretical bases of several contemporary anarchist theorists are analyzed. Murray Bookchin is looked at in the light of post-Trotskyist and Hegelian Marxist traditions. John Zerzan’s indebtedness to a variety of intellectual strains, including various forms of heterodox marxism as well as the German interwar right, is analyzed. David Graeber’s work is shown to illustrate ideal type anarchism. Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt are seen as reviving syndicalist revisionism, and certain of the postanarchists are shown to deploy post-structuralist narratives that mask a rehashing of New Left anti-imperialism. This study concludes that in the contemporary period, anarchism has, instead of developing classical anarchist ideas, primarily borrowed its theoretical notions from

non-anarchist intellectual traditions—sometimes by combining them with classical anarchism, but at other times merely acting under the general political framework set up by it. In conclusion, some suggestions are offered of how a theoretically rigorous and intellectually freestanding left-wing anarchist social theory could be developed.

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# 1. Introduction

“anarchism...is simply not a social theory.”

—Murray Bookchin (1)

“With the exception of Kropotkin, it is not easy to think of an anarchist theorist who could be read with real interest by non-anarchists. There seemed, indeed, no real intellectual room for anarchist theory...if anarchists want to make a significant contribution they will have to do much more serious thinking than most of them have recently done.”

—Eric Hobsbawm (2)

“Nor has the present revival of interest in anarchism produced much in the way of serious political theory; the ideas, such as they are, of the New Left largely come from non-anarchist sources.”

—James Joll (3)

Relatively recent political mobilizations—such as demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle (1999), the attempted uprising in Greece sparked by the police killing of a young anarchist (2008), and the Occupy movement (2011)—have shown that anti-capitalist anarchists can be influential in political movements far beyond their numerically small base. But a number of writers have argued that anarchism has far more to offer than just tactics; it has the potential to make useful contributions in the field of social theory. However, it has failed to do so, especially in the post-Seattle era. This study seeks to both ask why this is the case, and ultimately to ask how this failing can be rectified.

This study holds that two factors underlie the failure to develop a contemporary anarchist theory. The first arises from the complicated relationship between classical and contemporary anarchism. In most countries, the classical movement had collapsed by 1940; when anarchism was revived in the 1960s, there was a theoretical rupture with the earlier tradition (which itself had contained quite disparate elements). Contemporary anarchism is

heavily based on borrowings from a variety of existing, non-anarchist traditions. This complicates the notion of there being any kind of separate anarchist theory itself.

The second is a result of post-Seattle developments in anarchist theory, and in particular two of the most popular academic strains: ideal type anarchism and postanarchism. Both give theoretical justifications for anti-intellectualism by subordinating theory to praxis—implicitly arguing that anarchism is limited to the way to organize a demonstration, but not a society—or by making what is defined as “anarchism” so broad that it includes irreconcilable theoretical elements.

Contemporary anarchism has lost its connection to the classical theories, and in their place utilizes a grab bag of different theories which are drawn from non-anarchist intellectual traditions, presenting the problem of an “anarchist theory” that is derived principally from non-anarchist sources. This means that not only does contemporary anarchism lack a coherent ontological and epistemological foundation—a necessary element of any social theory—but that the theories it has absorbed have ontological and epistemological frameworks that actually run counter to anarchism, creating a paradoxical and ultimately incoherent situation. This problem has not been confronted by anarchist intellectuals and will not easily go away.

## 2. The “Anarchist Minimum”

One of the perennial questions for both activist anarchists and scholars of anarchism (whether themselves anarchist or not) is how anarchism is defined. Not only are there conflicts between self-identified anarchists regarding this definition, but there is an ongoing question regarding which non-anarchist-identified actors or behaviors can or should be considered anarchist, if any. This question has been particularly intense in the contemporary period.

Unsurprisingly, one of the reasons that different definitions of anarchism have arisen is that the parameters of the subject matter are viewed with different criteria. For example, David Graeber claims that anarchist self-identity is irrelevant, and the term should be applied to any activists who use direct democracy and direct action; in fact, he excludes most self-identified anarchists from his definition of “new anarchists.” Meanwhile, Lucien van der Walt and Michael Schmidt in *Black Flame* also agree that self-identity is irrelevant, but define anarchism primarily by class struggle; therefore, their list of “anarchists” includes many non-self-identified anarchists in the labor movement, and also exclude the majority of self-identified anarchists today. This creates two lists that are almost entirely mutually exclusive. Other writers look only at self-identity, thereby including neoliberals, crypto-fascists, individualists, and syndicalists all in one basket. Even other writers include numerous political actors who did not identify as anarchists in any meaningful way but may have had something in common with particular elements of anarchist thought, for example Mahatma Gandhi or Georges Sorel; it has been suggested that even Margaret Thatcher might be included under this approach.

A study that wishes to seriously look at contemporary anarchist intellectual practices cannot proceed from a set of a priori's whose conclusion is already ordained by the initial approach

(as Graeber and *Black Flame* do). But this study does not cast its net so large as to include all self-identified anarchists; rather it looks specifically at those who are both *social* (e.g., not based on an individualist ontology) and *left-wing* and anti-capitalist. Therefore, this study insists on three points:

First, the self-identified, really existing, anti-capitalist anarchist milieu must be placed at the *center* of any narrative about contemporary anarchism or attempt to theorize about this milieu. A theory that excludes the majority of self-identified anti-capitalist anarchists, like Graeber or *Black Flame's*, is irrelevant (see their respective elaborations below). This study looks especially at theorists who are *writing from within the milieu itself*. In this point the study is in agreement with Uri Gordon's *Anarchy Alive!*, from which it otherwise diverges.

Second, mere *participation* in this anarchist milieu is not sufficient criteria for inclusion. Many of those who participate in this milieu do not identify as anarchists, and in many cases there are valid intellectual reasons for this: many of the more theoretically sophisticated activists are quite aware that they follow their own intellectual lineage (for example, situationism, council communism, syndicalism, Third World Marxism, or autonomist marxism). They do not call themselves anarchists because they do not understand themselves as anarchists. Obviously, there is no reason to include them in a study of anarchist *intellectual* practice.

Third, anarchist self-identification is a *necessary* but not *sufficient* criterion for inclusion. This is because some people identify as "anarchists" who have no connection to this milieu. The "anarcho-capitalists" and "national-anarchists" are specific cases in point.

I also openly and a priori exclude individualists from the question of anarchist theory as it is addressed in this study. I am not concerned whether the label "anarchist" fits them in other

contexts—in fact, they have perhaps an even more legitimate claim to the *term* than social anarchists, as individualists precede them. Furthermore, individualists should be recognized as historically having made many contributions to human liberation; contrary to their reputation as proto-libertarians, historically they were staunch abolitionists, feminists, and advocates of queer liberation while a number of social anarchists (as well as most of the left) was muddled, abstained from comment, or even opposed these politics. The individualists should be read and respected, but their ontological vision is many worlds apart from the topic under consideration. It should be noted, however, that few, if any, of the recent studies of anarchism that have attempted to define it have struggled over the question of individualism—although this was a more important issue for anarchist literature before Seattle. Additionally, individualists rarely attempt to create comprehensive social theories, preferring to elaborate ontological claims about individuals.

Since this study is interested in self-conscious political actors, two further objections must be dealt with. It is true that there may be many anarchists who, for political expediency, hide their politics while working in non-anarchist groups. However, there is no convincing argument that any of them have produced *theoretical* work that will be excluded by this definition. The second objection is that many people who may engage in a practice that is substantively identical to anarchism may not identify as “anarchists.” They need to be disregarded for two reasons: the first is that if this study is first looking at what self-identified anarchists do and believe, it cannot accept that other actors are acting in accordance with a definition not yet established; the analysis has to precede the conclusion. The second is that it is unlikely that many non-self-identified actors have developed political beliefs that are thoroughly consistent with (what we will conclude is) anarchism; in fact, offhand the Tolstoyans are the only group who are regularly seen this way. In any event, we wish (as noted above) to place the *self-identified anarchist movement* at the center of this study.

We must be clear that this is not a general commentary on everything that has been included under the name “anarchism,” but a specific study concerning social, left-wing thought (including the post-left tendency). This study does not concern itself with individualist anarchists, or with the many non-left currents which have adopted the anarchist label since the 1960s, for example laissez faire liberals who call themselves anarcho-capitalists. That others wish to include non-anarchist identified actors in their studies is not an object of criticism, although this skews the conclusions of those studies, for numerous reasons that will be examined at various points in this study. This is also not meant to disparage these other movements, to discourage the study of them, or even to dissuade anarchists from political work alongside or in these movements. This study intends only to argue against labeling them as anarchists themselves, and specifically for the purpose of exploring the theoretical content.

Therefore, when this study addresses “anarchists,” they must fulfill all three of these criteria.

Another clarification needs to be made explicit: this study is a purely *intellectual* exercise. Too often theoretical questions regarding anarchism are subsumed from the very beginning to practical organizing questions, and this distorts a clear approach to the complicated issues at hand—in particular, conflating “Who should anarchists work with politically?” for “What is anarchism?” The tendency to equate something that is labeled as “anarchist” with “good”—and therefore what is “non-anarchist” as “bad”—is one of the more pernicious problems that has created a immense amount of theoretical distortion.

Furthermore, this study holds that it is perfectly logical to be a *political* anarchist while not being an *intellectual* anarchist; one can politically act like an anarchist, and even call

themselves an anarchist, without holding anarchist *intellectual* views. This study will take specific care to analyze the position of those who accept the label, even though they do not accept anarchist intellectual formulations, in relationship to the question of anarchist theory.

Finally, the question of anarchist theory needs to be understood as being different from a mere *philosophical statement of belief*. Numerous anarchist writers have offered intricate descriptions of how they see things—but this is not the same as offering a theoretical analysis of the social world.

### **Anarchic vs. Anarchistic vs. Anarchist**

“Anarchism & Anarchy are two different things.... None of us are ready for Anarchy, though many are for Anarchism.”

—Alexander Berkman, letter from prison to Emma Goldman (1)

“We are not anarchists *per se*, but *pro-anarchy*...”

—*Fifth Estate*, “Renew this Earthly Paradise” (2)

Related to the parameters above is a triadic schema this study will use to classify different groups, activists, and theorists. There are many variations of approach, although they are usually dualistic—like Berkman, they typically cast “anarchy” versus “anarchism,” while others prefer the “anarchist” versus the “anarchistic.” This study will use the terms “anarchic,” “anarchistic,” and “anarchist.”

The “anarchic” (what is usually referred to as “anarchy”) are the forms of human behavior that many anarchists, as well as commentators, have claimed that anarchism is merely the intellectual expression of. A related view is that “anarchism” is a harnessing, codification, and sometime reification of “anarchy” into a more static form. The “anarchic” includes many things: the self-organization of humans and uncoerced practice of mutual aid; the rejection of authority; the desire for communalism and social justice; the will for transgression and

experimentation; and the urge to rebel. Included in this are families, friendships, and all voluntary social activities; bandits, thieves, and vandals; sexual libertines; primitive Christians; aesthetic rebels and negationists; nudists, vegetarians, and hermits. Georges Bataille, the Marquis de Sade, James Dean, Spartacus, the Buddha, Jesus, neighbors who come to each others aid in a storm, and parents who take it upon themselves to look after other people's children at the playground—all of these variegated behaviors fit into this category.

The "anarchistic," meanwhile, refers to those self-conscious anti-authoritarian political actors who do *not* self-identify as anarchist. Therefore this includes all the pre-1840 movements that have been identified as "anarchist" by historians, for example the Ranters, the Diggers, the Enrages, rebel peasant movements, etc. It also includes other left anti-authoritarian groups that exist alongside self-identified anarchists but do not identify as such: the same Peoples Global Action (PGA) groups—such as the EZLN—that Graeber wishes to make into "anarchists" are, instead, "anarchistic" in this schema. So are council communists, German autonome, Italian autonomists, More Gardens, ACT UP, Queer Nation, Reclaim the Streets, Food Not Bombs, Ella Baker and the direct action wing of SNCC, bioregionalists and deep ecologists, Foucaultians and network theorists, leaderless Leninist community organizers, and the Invisible Committee.

This distinction therefore preserves these groups' own self-identity and intellectual self-understanding while making their proximity to anarchism readily identifiable. (Some of these groups may be more properly understood as "anarchist-inspired," if they were formed by self-identified anarchists or took ideas at their founding from anarchism, even though the groups themselves do not identify as anarchist. This could arguably include syndicalism at its origins, and many chapters of groups like Food Not Bombs, Critical Mass, and Reclaim the Streets.)

Therefore, when this study refers to “anarchists,” they must be consistent with the definitions above. When otherwise “anarchistic” political actors self-identify as “anarchists,” they will be treated as “anarchists” proper. So for example, theorists who follow the Italian autonomous marxist intellectual tradition will be referred to as “anarchists” when they self-label as such (Stephen Shukaitis and Silvia Federici), but as “anarchistic” when they do not (Mario Tronti, Antonio Negri, and Michael Hardt).

### **Reasoning for this Approach**

To outsiders, These may seem like arbitrary definitions in the ongoing discussion of “who is an anarchist.” This approach is maximally inclusive within the bounds of both what is being considered—in opposition to most contemporary literature on anarchism. Regarding self-identified anarchists, it excludes only individualists, open proponents of capitalism, crypto-fascists, and those anarchists who refuse to refer to themselves as such (the latter, in our mind, thereby ruling themselves out of consideration for this matter).

All other factions of anti-capitalist anarchism—primitivist, syndicalist, pacifist, religious, post-left, insurrectionist, platformist, etc.—are included in the scope of this study. Even those anarchists whose ideological backgrounds may include ethnic separatism (as long as this is by non-white groups, and does not arise genealogically from the fascist movement) are included. (This follows traditional left-wing approaches to tolerating or incorporating a “nationalism of the oppressed”—but not of the dominant group.)

Last, this also refuses to expand the definition of anarchism to cover those who do not identify as anarchists (or who even reject the label). Those who do so come uncomfortably close to some kind of definitional imperialism, and in some cases open Eurocentrism—e.g., using European political labels to name and categorize movements that developed in other

contexts, without paying attention to their own particularities, lineages, and self-identification.

### **3. Political and Intellectual Overview of Anarchism (and Immediate Precursors): 1798–2013**

This study will argue that anglophone anarchism can be divided into three periods: classical anarchism, the interim period, and contemporary anarchism. “Classical anarchism” is roughly the century between the publication of Proudhon’s seminal *What is Property?* in 1840, and the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Following George Woodcock, the years between 1940 and 1964 will be referred to as the “interim movement.” (1) “Contemporary” anarchism will refer to the (primarily anglophone) forms of anarchism which were revived starting in the mid-1960s and continuing to the present.

Classical anarchism will receive a relatively brief overview, as there are many readily available works that cover this period. The post-1940 period has been very thinly documented, and as it centrally concerns the focus of this study, will be examined more closely. The thumbnail sketch of post-1960s U.S. anarchism is weighted towards non-workerists and counterculturalists (this is the reverse of Michael Hargis’s account of post-1940 U.S. anarchism, which is focused on workerist currents). Since this framing history includes both ideas and political movements, it includes the “anarchistic” groups (otherwise excluded from the scope of this study) that are directly related to the really existing anarchist political movement.

This history is recounted for two reasons. One is to provide a longer historical view as a context for the theoretical arguments that will be presented later on. The second and related reason is to show how some of these arguments are historically without basis. This refers in particular to the Graeber–Gordon perspective, which assumes that anarchism arose either from a blank slate starting with Seattle—or that anarchists were simply “relabelled” activists from other social movements like ecology or animal rights.

From a national perspective, this history starts by concentrating on Europe for the classical period, and then moves to a focus on the United States after 1960. This follows much of the existing historiography; much of this is for simple logistical reasons. As noted, there are also separate tracks of development in the post-1960 era between anglophone anarchism versus, in particular, Continental and Latin American development.

### **Classical Anarchism (and Immediate Precursors): 1798–1940**

The first classical anarchist theorist is usually identified as William Godwin, although he did not use this term. Godwin's 1798 book *An Inquiry Concerning Political Justice* was very influential—although soon forgotten—and Godwin was not associated with a political movement; he was only rediscovered later in the nineteenth century. Godwin took classical liberalism to its logical extreme, and came to condemn the State and other institutional forms as unnecessary and harmful to human liberty. However, he also was critical of capitalism; Rocker stated that "Godwin's idea of a stateless society assumed the social ownership of all natural and social wealth, and the carrying on of economic life by the free co-operation of the producers; in this sense he was really the founder of the later communist Anarchism." (2) Godwin's ideas demonstrated how anarchist ideas were percolating in the West well before anarchism became a political movement.

After Godwin, a number of early socialists incorporated themes that would be picked up by later anarchists. These included the cooperative-based socialism of Robert Owen, as well as the sensual fantasies of Charles Fourier. Marx and Engels would deride these thinkers as "utopian socialists," as opposed to their own "scientific" approach.

Despite these precursors, anarchism can be considered to have begun as a self-identified political movement in France with the work of Proudhon, who in 1840 (half-ironically)

dubbed himself an “anarchist” to characterize his blend of mutualist economics, decentralized political structures, and atheism. (3) Although others had been derisively called “anarchists” by their political opponents, he was the first person to self-identify in this fashion. During his time, however, Proudhon was only one of many socialist writers, and they in turn were connected to transnational circles of democrats, nationalists, feminists, and other radicals in mid-nineteenth-century Europe.

The socialists in particular were reacting to the failure of liberalism and electoral franchise to engender fundamental social changes, and were looking at the primacy of the economy (often called the “social question”). They continued to champion the Enlightenment’s belief in progress and reason, and uphold the French Revolution’s ideas of “Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité.” Perhaps most importantly, they inherited the notion that political movements can precipitate sudden and dramatic shifts in power that fundamentally change social relations: they believed in Revolution. A popular writer, Proudhon engaged in dialogue with other socialists and radicals, such as the neo-Jacobin Blanqui as well as the young Marx. It is more appropriate to think of Proudhon as the most libertarian radical theorist of his time rather than as the “first anarchist.” (4)

Proudhon was a critic of capitalism and nationalism, but opposed both unions and electoral politics. Dual emphases can be found on a social, anti-capitalist message, as well as on an individualist one. The latter is typified by his famous adage, which could easily have come from rightist members of today’s militia movement: “Whoever lays his hands on me to govern me is a usurper and a tyrant: and I declare him my enemy.” (5) His economic schema championed small-scale production, which preserved commodity-production and markets while attempting to severely curtail the role of finance capital; Marx quite adroitly accused him of being “petty-bourgeois”—Proudhon’s socialism was that of small shopkeepers and worker-collectives. He championed local communities against the

increasing centralization of his age, and laid out federalist schemas which Bakunin, the syndicalists, and Bookchin later made much of; it was in this way that locally controlled decentralized groups could coordinate and make decisions on a larger scale. Proudhon also thought that morality was something innate in humans, and we had progressed historically to the age in which this could be developed fully. Because of this, the State was no longer necessary. This idea continues as “natural law” in Bakunin, and becomes biologized in Kropotkin. Many anarchists wish to see something innate in human nature that justifies their political theories. As Paul McLaughlin said, “the project of naturalizing freedom is fundamental to anarchism as a whole.” (6)

However, other than a connection with a group of mutualist workers in Lyons in the 1830s and a brief stint in the French parliament during the 1848 uprising, Proudhon mostly remained an isolated—albeit popular—intellectual. But his influence continued to spread through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and not just in anarchist circles: for example, the first Spanish President in 1873, Francisco Pi y Margall, was strongly influenced by Proudhon. (7)

By the 1850s self-identified anarchist politics were evident. In 1850, Engels denounced the “friends of anarchy,” which included those who held the ideas of both Proudhon and Stirner. (8) (Marx himself had first praised and then courted Proudhon, before penning a searing critique of him, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, in 1847; two years earlier he had savaged Stirner in *The German Ideology*.) Other writers, including Joseph Déjacque and Anselme Bellegarrigue, also began referring to themselves explicitly as anarchists and/or espousing political programs very similar to that of Proudhon. Bellegarrigue, for example, briefly published a newspaper called *Anarchie, Journal de l'Ordre* in 1850; a young Elisée Reclus referred to his political goals as “anarchy, the highest expression of order” in an

unpublished 1851 manuscript; and in 1853 Proudhon reiterated that "*I am an anarchist.*"  
(9)

However, classical anarchism assumed its mature ideological and political form around the figure of Mikhail Bakunin. (10) A Russian aristocrat and Christian who went to Germany to study Idealist philosophy in the 1840s and was radicalized, Bakunin became an atheist and, in succession, a democrat, a communist, and a revolutionary Pan-Slavist. (11) Captured after the 1848 uprisings, he was deported to Russia and imprisoned by the Tsar under terrible conditions. His family was able to get his prison sentence commuted to exile in Siberia, from where he later escaped and returned to Europe by traveling eastward around the world. Once back he joined the League of Peace and Freedom, but quit when his attempts to radicalize the organization failed. In the intervening years, Bakunin's ideas had changed; he adopted many of Proudhon's ideas, but later synthesized them with Hegel, Comte, and Marx. (12) Bakunin formed his own International Alliance of Socialist Democracy which entered the First International. During this period he adopted many of Marx's ideas, translating the "Communist Manifesto" into Russian and even agreeing to translate *Capital* (although he did not complete the task).

Bakunin's theoretical work is largely understudied, especially in the English-speaking world. He wrote in a variety of languages and his collected works are available in French, but only a few English anthologies exist, all of which are limited to a single volume. G.P. Maximoff's *Political Philosophy of Mikhail Bakunin* consists of quotes from different periods spliced together by topic, while Robert M. Cutler's *Basic Bakunin* only covers the time Bakunin was in the International. Arthur Lehning's *Selected Writings* and Sam Dolgoff's *Bakunin on Anarchism* are much better, but out of necessity each of these single volumes only includes a fraction of his work. There are some secondary texts of varying quality; Mark Leier's recent biography *Bakunin: The Creative Passion* is notable, but it is primarily a political work

which highlights Bakunin's time in the International. The best philosophical work is Paul McLaughlin's *Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of His Anarchism*, whose main flaw is probably that Bakunin is made out to be more coherent than he was.

Bakunin's anarchism was strongly influenced by Feuerbach's approach to reification, Comte's notion of the social body, and Hegel's dialectic of destruction and transformation. From Hegel, Bakunin took the importance of the dialectical negation of the present to transform it into the future; as he famously wrote in an early essay in the 1840s, "The passion for destruction is a creative passion." (13) From Feuerbach, Bakunin took the idea that institutional forms were really reified notions that existed in people. Just as people took the human family and projected it onto the "holy family," people took their own self-organization and assumed that the State was the real organizer of the social. And from Comte and others of his time, Bakunin took the idea that the social body was a coherent whole prior to any division; humanity already existed as an organic body without the necessity of it being organized into one. (Durkheim, in particular, also was influenced by this, and his notion of the social being a priori derived from the same sources from which Bakunin drank.) Like many of his time, Bakunin thought "natural law" was inherent in humanity; unlike others of his time, he took this idea to its logical conclusion and thought that institutions like the church and the State perverted humanity's understanding of this law. In the 1860s, Bakunin also read Marx closely and was heavily influenced by his understanding of capitalist economics, as well as his materialist analysis of society; this was reflected in his writings during the period he was in the International.

But most importantly Bakunin absorbed many ideas from Proudhon, who he once called "the master of us all." (14) These ideas include Proudhon's emphasis on decentralization and federalism, the importance of atheism to radicalism, and the centrality of freedom. But Bakunin's break with Proudhonism was illustrated by the conflict in the International

between the Proudhonists, Bakuninists, and the marxists; the factions around Bakunin and Marx united against the Proudhonists. The later split in the International between Marx and Bakunin marked what, in retrospect, would be anarchism's real birth as an independent political movement, as opposed to merely being one amorphous end of a larger radical movement. Nonetheless, anarchists continued to attend socialist conferences until they were finally forcibly excluded in 1896 by those who were committed to having a social democratic international with a focus on parliamentary gains. (The anarchists had wished to keep an umbrella organization that included all factions.) This exclusion marked the final parting of ways in the socialist movement between the anarchists and democratic socialists, who were to remain the two main socialist factions until the Bolshevik seizure of power rearranged the left's political forms, splitting the state socialists into social democrats and Communists.

In the mid-nineteenth century there were also a number of individualist thinkers espousing ideas that in retrospect are clearly identifiable as anarchist. The United States produced figures like Josiah Warren, Lysander Spooner, and later Benjamin Tucker. These Americans were largely influenced by the liberal tradition and their work developed alongside, but generally not with, the European left anarchists. (There were very few native-born U.S. left anarchists until later on.) But in Germany, Max Stirner, who had been part of the "Young Hegelian" circle that included Marx and Engels, wrote the influential *The Ego and Its Own*, which was published in 1844; Marx would later spend much of *The German Ideology* attacking "Saint Max." Stirner was an anti-authoritarian radical but rejected Proudhon's approach; in a reaction to Hegel, Stirner championed the expression of each individual's unique self as the highest value. He thought that collective values were irrelevant; and while this on one hand is the highest expression of liberalism's championing of the autonomous individual over any social obligations, on the other Stirner's ego rejects Christian morality and private property, and many feminist and queer radicals were drawn

to individualism. Although his book was soon forgotten, it was revived in the 1890s by John Henry McKay and remains an influence on anarchists to this day. Proudhon in turn remains today the common point of departure for both individualist and social anarchists.

Bakunin died in 1876, a few years after the collapse of the International. However, before his death he gathered around him figures such as Errico Malatesta, Max Nettlau, and James Guillaume, all of whom continued to be politically active into the twentieth century. Some of the members of the Bakuninist faction of the International, including Malatesta and Kropotkin, later attempted to purge anarchism of marxist influences. (15) And so—although there were notable exceptions, such as the Chicago anarchists (the “Haymarket Martyrs”)—the anarchist movement in general moved away from labor politics for some decades. (16)

In the 1870s Kropotkin, another young Russian aristocrat, joined Bakunin’s wing of the International and became an anarchist. A natural scientist, he later developed anarchist theory by giving it a firmer naturalistic (and hence materialist) basis. He wrote a number of books on topics as varied as history, philosophy, politics, urban/rural planning, autobiography, and science. His little-known but highly influential *Fields, Factories, and Workshops* advocated a decentralized economic structure based on light industry dispersed throughout the countryside, in an attempt to overcome rural/urban binaries and create human-scale economies. Lewis Mumford was particularly influenced by this work (calling it “almost half a century in advance of contemporary economic and technical opinion”), (17) and Kropotkin’s direct and indirect influence can be traced both to contemporary mixed-use urban planning of the Jane Jacobs variety, as well as the small-scale, environmentally sustainable schemas of E.F. Schumacher and Murray Bookchin.

However Kropotkin’s most famous book, *Mutual Aid* (a reply to Thomas H. Huxley and to the ideas of the social darwinists), was particularly influential in its adaptation of existing

evolutionary theories to counter both Huxley's arguments and give a biological basis for anarchist politics. Huxley had vigorously promoted a hyper-individualistic version of Darwin's theories of evolution, which later became known as social darwinism. Kropotkin, an accomplished physical scientist who was making his living as a popular science writer, countered Huxley's arguments. Drawing on an existing body of work by Russian scientists who observed high levels of cooperation among members of some species (especially under hostile climatic conditions), (18) Kropotkin argued that viewing evolution primarily through the lens of individual interspecies competition was missing the larger picture—that cooperation within a species was highly advantageous to evolutionary survival and reproduction. This "mutual aid" was therefore an evolutionarily advantageous attribute, and most of the book consists of copious examples of mutual aid among different animals and different human societies throughout time. *Mutual Aid* never went out of print and is still read today by some scientists as a reminder that while genes are passed on individually, an advantageous trait may manifest itself in a group rather than in an individual setting. (19)

This idea had clear anarchist political implications as well. It dovetailed nicely with Bakunin's naturalistic claims that human society functioned like an organism; it did not need to be organized from the outside, and in fact was harmed by such actions. Left to their own devices, people would self-organize in an egalitarian and communal fashion. Kropotkin's claims now lent a biological basis to the philosophical claim, further strengthening the position that anarchism was merely "natural human behavior."

In terms of anarchism, Kropotkin was an advocate of communist economics and was one of the main figures to advocate that anarchists abandon Bakunin's collectivist model and move to full communism. Kropotkin also had little interest in individualists, and he described anarchism as the "left wing" of socialism. (20)

Between the 1880s and 1930s anarchism continued to spread around the world. It gained adherents all over Europe from east to west, but was strongest in France, Spain, and Italy. It spread around the Mediterranean basin, including to Egypt and Lebanon. Jewish émigrés brought it to Palestine. Asian students studying in Paris took it home, and it gained significant footholds in Japan, China, and, especially, Korea. European immigrants spread it to Indonesia, South Africa, and Australia, while others spread it all over the Americas, from Argentina to Canada. Spanish expatriates in particular spread it throughout the colonial empire, bringing it to the Philippines, Puerto Rico, and Cuba. Workers on the Panama Canal became an unlikely hotbed of anarchist organizing. Latin America became a stronghold. S. Fanny Simon says the biggest pre-war anarcho-syndicalist Latin American unions were in Argentina (the FORA—Argentine Regional Workers’ Federation—with up to 100,000 members) and Uruguay (the FORU—Uruguayan Regional Workers’ Federation—with up to 25,000). Chile, Brazil, and Peru also had anarcho-syndicalist unions, and smaller ones could be found in Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia, and Paraguay. In Mexico there was also an anarchist-inspired uprising led by the Magón brothers during the Revolution. (21)

Different political tendencies and theorists within the movement arose, especially in the period before the Russian Revolution. Alongside Kropotkin, theorists like Emma Goldman, Gustav Landauer, Errico Malatesta, and Elisée Reclus were reconceptualizing anarchism. Goldman was influential in incorporating Nietzschean ideas into an experimental anarchism that spoke to Americans. She was deeply anti-capitalist and worked with unions, including the IWW, but did not see anarchism as focused solely on the working class, and she also worked closely with and incorporated ideas from the individualists. She made a special emphasis on liberation in terms of sexuality and gender, with a strong focus on the importance of culture; today she is remembered equally as an early feminist icon and her works, almost uniquely among anarchists, have a contemporary feel. Nietzschean ideas were influential because Goldman believed that both individuals and social groups could

engage in a “transvaluation of values” to break hierarchical, authoritarian society and move, intentionally and consciously, towards a future in which social justice and complete individual freedom were possible. New forms and ways of living could be created in a liberated society.

Malatesta also was reconsidering anarchist ideas. He forcefully argued that while anarchists should work inside the unions, anarchism was a much more comprehensive political perspective (see the *Black Flame* section below). Like Kropotkin, Malatesta was a former member of the First International, but unlike Kropotkin, he was a lifelong pragmatic organizer in popular movements, and they crossed swords over questions of science and naturalism—and later World War One. Malatesta thought Kropotkin had a “rigorously mechanistic” scientific philosophy and believed that all scientific research backed his preordained view that “anarchy is the form of social organization which is imposed by natural laws.” (22) Malatesta said:

At bottom Kropotkin conceived Nature as a kind of Providence, thanks to which there had to be harmony in all things, including human societies.

And this has led many anarchists to repeat that “*Anarchy is Natural Order*”, a phrase with an exquisite kropotkinian flavour.

If it is true that the law of Nature is harmony, I suggest one would be entitled to ask why Nature has waited for anarchists to be born, and goes on waiting for them to triumph, in order to rid us of the terrible destructive conflicts from which mankind has always suffered.

Would one not be closer to the truth in saying that anarchy is the struggle, in human society, against the disharmonies of Nature? (23)

Malatesta emphasized that while he agreed with anarchism’s post-revolutionary *goals* (unlike many of those grouped together by today’s ideal type anarchists), he did not necessarily accept its conceptual *theories*. Peter Marshall said he was the “first major anarchist thinker to reject the notion of a prior natural order, a notion which had formed the bedrock of previous anarchist philosophy, and which had habitually been counterpoised to the artificial disorder of government.” (24) Malatesta said:

I am an anarchist because it seems to me that anarchy would correspond better than any other way of social life, to my desire for the good of all, to my aspirations towards a society which reconciles the liberty of everyone with co-operation and love among men, and not because anarchism is a scientific truth and a natural law. It is enough for me that it should not contradict any known law of nature to consider it possible and to struggle to win the support needed to achieve it. (25)

Gustav Landauer also formulated a different vision of anarchism. Landauer had been a member of the German SPD (Social-Democratic Party) who, becoming disillusioned with the party's rigid economism, turned towards a kind of left-völkisch communitarian anarchism that drew heavily from Proudhon and Kropotkin. (26) Disenchanted by the problems of modernity, industry, and mass organizations, Landauer sought the formation of intentional living and working communities. These would allow "organic communities" to develop new forms that could then multiply and replace the current society in a peaceful transition. Like many of his time, Landauer had mystical agrarian views and utopian hopes. Despite his relative social conservatism, Landauer is the grandfather of countercultural anarchism, and via his friend Martin Buber (a Hasidic theologian and author of the Landauerian *Paths in Utopia*), Landauer's ideas influenced the Kibbutz movement in Israel.

A religious pacifist anarchism also arose, usually associated with Tolstoy, although he rejected the anarchist label; later a secular pacifist version also developed. Both trends continue to the present day.

In the 1890s, two distinct trends of anarchism came into public conflict, especially in France: syndicalism and individualism. Individualist writers had been around for decades, and in fact were clear predecessors to Bakunin, but there was a flowering of this style of thought in the 1890s. In France, it became associated with the artistic avant-gardes of the Symbolists and neo-Impressionists, as well as with the attentats. These assassinations of high-ranking government officials and royalty were intended as "propaganda of the deed" to inspire people to rise up, or acts of revenge for the deaths of workers during strikes or the

executions of anarchists. The main effect of the attentats was that France passed laws illegalizing advocacy of anarchism.

Partly in reaction to this, but mostly as an indigenous emergence from the labor movement, syndicalism arose in the mid-1890s. This labor current stressed workers' self-organization, abstention from politics, and bottom-up federal structures. While anarchist activists were pivotal in the founding of this movement, syndicalism was controversial since its embrace of formal organization and, especially, its narrow focus on the working class and labor unions departed from many traditional anarchist beliefs. At the 1907 International Anarchist Congress in Amsterdam, some syndicalists attempted to convince other anarchists to dissolve anarchism en toto into the syndicalist movement. Although many of the anarchists who attended were supporters of syndicalist organizing, they by-and-large rejected this idea. However syndicalist unions were able to garner millions of adherents globally and became the most effective organizing tool available to anarchists.

By World War One, syndicalism had split into revolutionary and reformist currents. After the war, some of the (mostly non-anarchist) Italian syndicalists around the USI (Italian Syndicalist Union) helped form the fascist party in Italy. Elsewhere, many joined the protean Communist movement. After some early flirtations with Moscow, the remaining anarchists in the syndicalist movement tended to explicitly identify as anarcho-syndicalists to designate their differences from reformist syndicalists, Communists, and non-syndicalist anarchists. Rudolf Rocker is the one intellectual of note who emerged from this movement; the Spanish anarchists were practical activists but were not known for their theoretical production.

During the Russian Civil War there was a powerful rural anarchist movement in the Ukraine led by Nestor Makhno, who was ultimately defeated by the Bolsheviks as they consolidated

their dictatorship. The Bolsheviks banned the anarchist movement shortly after attaining power; Kropotkin's funeral in 1921 was the last public anarchist demonstration in Russia until Glasnost. Soon afterward, fascist Italy and then Nazi Germany crushed the significant anarchist movements in those countries. In Korea, anarchists were active in anti-colonial warfare against the Japanese, and there was briefly an anarchist commune in the Shinmin province in Manchuria. By the 1950s, however, the Korean movement was caught in an impossible position between the capitalist South and the Stalinist North. Everywhere anarchists were trapped between Scylla and Charybdis.

Other anarchist variants arose in the interwar period. In Japan some advocated "pure anarchism," which was hostile to any of the anarchist forms which had been influenced by marxism. (27) The notion of "anarchism without adjectives," a kind of pluralistic live-and-let-live attitude to soothe debates between collectivists and anarcho-communists, was advanced starting in the late 1880s. (28) In 1926 Makhno, living in exile in Paris, was one of the authors of Delo Truda's controversial "Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists," the founding document of a semi-vanguardist anarchist school called platformism. It called for a tightly organized anarchist group with political and theoretical unity. The Platform's analysis was pure economism: it claimed that the world was divided into two classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie; that history was the history of class struggle, which has defined all societies; and the "only creator of social value is labor." Platformism did not catch on with most anarchists, but has remained a small but extremely vocal trend to the present day. (29)

Opposed to platformism was the notion of "synthesis," championed by, among others, Makhno's former comrade Voline. In its original form, synthesis offered a "big tent" perspective, but one that was specifically individualist in its notion of the person, communist in its economics, and syndicalist in its organization. This united many differing factions into

a single group. (30) However, synthesis groups were notoriously ineffective on a political level due to their lack of common vision.

As a radical movement, anarchism was eclipsed by the rise of the Soviet Union, and although globally syndicalist union membership actually peaked after the Russian Revolution in the mid-1920s, it was shortly thereafter in decline almost everywhere except Spain, some Latin American countries, and Sweden (which possessed a large syndicalist union, the SAC—the Central Organization of the Workers of Sweden). The CNT-FAI (the National Confederation of Labor and Iberian Anarchist Federation), which had between one and four million members, led a brief anarchist revival with the Spanish Civil War. But after their compromise with the Republicans and Socialists and entry into the government (they took four ministerial positions in the Popular Front government), the anarchists were consistently marginalized by the Communists, particularly starting in 1937. At one point, internecine armed conflict broke out with the Communists, but the anarchist leaders convinced the rank and file to end the conflict. By the end of the war, the anarchists were completely marginalized among the Republican ranks, and finally crushed by Franco's victory. Anarchism then went into eclipse. The fascists had destroyed the German and Italian movements. The Soviets suppressed the Russian movement early on, and later when they occupied Eastern Europe, the anarchists who lived through the Nazi occupations were suppressed by the Stalinist governments. (Support for Bulgarian anarchists imprisoned in the Gulag was a popular issue for U.S. anarchists in the 1950s.) Where they remained in the Western countries, however, anarchists were either sidelined by social democracy (which actively took part in the post-war boom), remained illegal in Francoist Spain, or were completely overshadowed by the strong Communist parties in France and Italy—anarchism's former centers in Western Europe.

## **Interim Period: 1940–1959**

### **1940s**

During the classical period, the anglophone world had been on the margins of anarchism, with the exception of Britain, which offered a refuge for anarchists expelled from their home countries. Outside Sweden and Latin America, from the 1940s to the early 1960s anarchism was largely confined to Western aesthetic and pacifist circles, especially in Britain; Woodcock calls this the “interim movement...because it represents a transition between nineteenth-century and late-twentieth-century anarchism.” He wrote, “There ensued a situation quite new in anarchist history, for during the Second World War it was in the English-speaking countries that anarchism developed the greatest vitality and the tradition was interpreted in completely new ways.” (31)

Unlikely as it may seem today, World War Two divided anglophone anarchists between pacifists and those who took pro-Allied positions. For example, the editors of *Why?*, founded in 1943 in New York, split over this issue. Pro-interventionists Sam and Esther Dolgoff left the magazine, while the pacifist faction (including David Thoreau Wieck) continued on, later changing the periodical’s name to *Resistance*. Other important publications of the time included *Liberation* (founded by pacifists around A.J. Muste), *Retort!* (an arts magazine), and Dave Dellinger’s *Direct Action*. In 1945 the Libertarian Book Club was founded and became one of the only U.S. anarchist book publishers. Two organizational newspapers, the IWW’s *Industrial Worker* and the *Catholic Worker*, continued to be published.

In the 1950s, the majority of U.S. anarchists were an aging immigrant population whose children were assimilating by taking advantage of the post-war boom and the assimilation of Jews and Southern Europeans—until that time the overwhelming social base of anarchists—into the category of “white.” (32) A number of foreign-language newspapers served these communities and continued for a number of years before closing, including *Cultura*

*Proletaria* (Spanish, closed in 1953), *Delo Truda-Probuzhdenie* (Russian, 1963), *Controcorrente* (Italian, 1967), and *Fraye Arbeter Shtime* (Yiddish, 1977). (33)

During this period, a handful of native-born political writers—in particular, a number of whom were linked to the post-Trotskyist milieu of the “New York Intellectuals,” such as Paul Goodman and Dwight Macdonald—looked to anarchism as an alternative to both Soviet Communism and Western capitalism. Macdonald’s *Politics* was one of the more important publications of the time, helping to introduce existentialism to the United States, and they published a number of anarchist writers, including C. Wright Mills (who once wrote, “way down deep and systematically I’m a goddamned anarchist”). (34) The Living Theater, also drawn to anarcho-pacifism, was formed during this period as well; in the 1960s, their play *Paradise Now* would be especially influential.

### **1950s**

Samuel Dolgoff, a protégée of G.P. Maximoff (who, like Rocker, had come to the United States from Europe and continued to write), helped found the Libertarian League in New York City, which published *Views and Comments* from 1955 to 1965—making it the most consistent English-language anarchist publication during this period. With affiliated groups they held a 1959 conference in Youngstown, Ohio, but there was insufficient interest to launch a national federation.

A number of younger figures who were attracted to anarchism came from the Beat movement and related visual and literary avant-gardes. These included poets Allen Ginsberg, who mentioned the IWW in his poem “America” (with lines like “America I feel sentimental about the Wobblies” and “America Sacco and Vanzetti must not die”) and Diane di Prima, who co-dedicated *Revolutionary Letters* to her Italian anarchist grandfather (a friend of Carlo Tresca). (35) Gary Snyder published his essay “Buddhist Anarchism” in 1961,

while Kenneth Rexroth had stronger connections to the anarchist movement dating back some years. Some abstract expressionists such as Clyfford Still, Mark Rothko, and Barnett Newman were involved with anarchism, as were musicians and writers like John Cage and Jackson Mac Low. Beat generation writer Kerry Thornley also later wrote spiritual anarchist texts.

Anarchists participated in the pacifist movement, which had a tradition of mass non-violent direct action, and showed some influence on the Civil Rights Movement. (36) These pacifists were also counterculturally oriented, which helped them make anarchism receptive to the emerging beat and then hippy cultures. In Britain, anarchism retained a higher profile, especially around the magazine *Freedom*; there it was also oriented towards both pacifism and the literary and art milieu. Figures like literary critic Herbert Read (later knighted), Alex Comfort (whose numerous political texts were eclipsed by his best-seller the *Joy of Sex*), and George Woodcock (author of the seminal history *Anarchism*) were part of this circle of writers.

## **Contemporary Anarchism: 1960–2013**

### **1960s**

Starting in the early 1960s commentators noted that anarchism has started to reemerge on a larger political level. In 1961 Karl Shapiro, in "On the Revival of Anarchism," noted that "I have become increasingly aware in recent years of the spread of anarchist thought among the rising generation. They do not call it by that name, or any other name; they do not philosophize about the State or Non-violence or Disaffiliation, but the interest is unmistakable there." He notes this impulse not just in the Beat and civil rights movements, but in the "human right of insubordination against industrial society, colonialism, militarism, and the entire cult of the Western Tradition (religious, sexual, esthetic)." (37) By 1966 this influence has become explicit; Lewis Perry and Leonard I. Krimerman noted that, in addition

to attention from young activists, "A spate of books and articles on anarchism suggests that reawakened concern is not restricted to enthusiastic undergraduates." (38)

David Stafford pointed out that Anarchism had absorbed "quality of life" issues in the 1960s—including ecology, urban planning, education, prison reform, and sexual liberation—and "anarchists themselves tend to consider that it had been a 'good decade.'" He tried to quantify the growth of anarchism in Britain during the 1960s, showing that *Freedom* listed six anarchist groups in the country in 1962, but eighty-five in 1968. (39)

Paul Goodman—a writer who had previously published in Macdonald's *Politics* and was sensitive to many of these same issues—became influential with his bestseller *Growing Up Absurd* in 1960. Publishers brought his old works back into print; *Communitas*, an urban planning book written with his brother Percival and originally published in 1947, was reprinted in 1960, while *Drawing the Line*, originally published in 1946, came back in print in 1962. Paul Goodman's famous later political essay, "The Black Flag of Anarchism," appeared in 1968 in the *New York Times Magazine*. (40)

Chicago was the location of a unique crossover scene which was forged by a group of Beat generation high schoolers, including Penelope and Franklin Rosemont, who joined the IWW in the early 1960s. Influenced by anarchism and syndicalism—as well as the emerging counterculture, jazz, surrealism, heterodox marxism, and black nationalism—they published the *Rebel Worker* from 1964 to the end of 1967. Meanwhile in New York, the band the Fugs and bookstore Peace Eye combined a proto-hippie Beat Generation outlook and pacifist anarchism.

Anarchists were critically supportive of the ongoing Civil Rights movement; Bookchin, for example, was active in CORE, and the *Rebel Worker* group supported it as well. Articles

appeared in *Views and Comments* critiquing the charismatic leadership model of the movement as well as warning against an electoral (as opposed to social and economic) focus. (41) Pacifist anarchists like Dave Dellinger continued to be active. But it is as the counterculture and the anti-Vietnam War movement moved into full swing, anarchism again assumed a higher public profile as some countercultural students, in particular, gravitated towards it.

The early SDS, based as it was on direct democracy and an opposition to the Old Left, always had something of an anarchist feel. Dwight Macdonald delivered a speech, "The Relevance of Anarchism," at the founding SDS convention in June 1960. (42) In the spring 1966, several SDS chapters, such as Buffalo, New York, declared themselves to be anarchist, and in Chicago some of the *Rebel Worker* group formed the SDS affiliate the Louis Lingg Memorial Chapter. (43) One of the organization's early leaders, Carl Davidson, was a self-identified anarcho-syndicalist in the early 1960s; at the August 1966 SDS convention, he delivered his paper "Toward a Student Syndicalist Movement or University Reform Revisited," which was later produced as a pamphlet. Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers became an SDS affiliate, and disrupted a debate between the PLP and others at the SDS national conference in 1968; they were also involved in the Columbia University takeover in April 1968. Jason McQuinn, who later founded *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, was involved in the St. Louis SDS group (then under PLP control) in 1970 at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. (44) Bookchin's Anarchos group came to the last SDS conference in June 1969 and passed out 2,000 copies of his "Listen, Marxist!" pamphlet, which led to the formation of the Radical Decentralist Project (RDP), an SDS caucus with about 250 members. It was sidelined as the feuding Marxist-Leninist factions destroyed the organization. Two hundred people attended a follow-up RDP conference in September in Black River, Wisconsin, but they were unable to produce a statement—much less a new group to lead the anarchist-leaning rump of SDS members. (45)

Despite the rhetoric of anti-imperialism and Marxist-Leninism, there was a libertarian feel to much of the 1960s New Left, especially the wing coming from the counterculture and the early SDS. Even the eventual tendency for many of the student activists to gravitate towards Maoism rather than Stalinism or Trotskyism is indicative of this as the Maoists, in particular, emphasized non-proletarian revolutionary subjects, mass popular movements (versus elite vanguards), and the role of culture in creating revolutionary consciousness. At its time, the Cultural Revolution was seen by some as a counterpart to the counterculture in the West. It is even arguable that Maoism was influenced by anarchism, which had been the primary revolutionary movement in China before marxism, and Mao (and other Chinese Communist Party leaders) had been involved in political movements like the May Fourth Movement, which was dominated by anarchism. (46)

In the counterculture, there were a number of anarchistic political groups, including the Diggers, Black Mask/Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers (BM/UATMF), the White Panthers, and the Yippies. But with the notable exception of the BM/UATMF group (whose main figure, Ben Morea, was an anarchist, even though some members identified as anarchists and others didn't), how specifically ideologically "anarchist" any of them were is in question; many of them were closer to the ideas of the Situationists, Herbert Marcuse, Wilhelm Reich, or various avant-garde currents from the theater and visual arts. Their European equivalents were the Dutch Provos (and later the Kabouters), and Kommune 1 in Germany. The Chicago 8 trial involved a number of these anarchist or anarchistic counterculturalists, including David Dillinger, Abby Hoffman, and Jerry Ruben.

In terms of more traditional anarchist politics, Murray Bookchin took part in the Lower East Side Anarchists (later just the East Side Anarchists) group in the early 1960s, and later

helped publish four issues of *Anarchos* magazine. In 1969, the SRAF (Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation) was founded.

In Detroit, the husband-and-wife team of Fredy and Lorraine Perlman founded *Black and Red* magazine in 1968. Fredy Perlman had spent time around the Living Theater and C. Wright Mills before going to Yugoslavia to get a doctorate in marxist economics, and he was in France for the May-June events of 1968. The couple also launched the press Black & Red, and issued translations of Situationist texts (including the first English-language edition of Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*) and later ultra-left pamphlets, such as John Zerzan and Jacques Camatte. Nonetheless—and despite the “black and red” name—they refused the label “anarchist.”

In France in the early 1960s there had been much friction between the more traditional anarchists who followed the classical traditions (in particular the Anarchist Federation, who were synthesists), and the more libertarian and non-Orthodox Marxists (as well as those influenced by them), especially Socialisme ou Barbarie and the Situationist International. Some of these arguments were over the support for national self-determination, an issue raised by the Algerian Revolution, which was politically problematic for anarchists. Danny Cohn-Bendit, one of the younger activists associated with the untraditional anarchist Noir & Rouge group, became a famous figure in the May-June 1968 events that brought Paris to a standstill, and was a supporter of the pro-national liberation faction. David Miller says “Cohn-Bendit's ideas were eclectic, drawing on anarchism, situationism and to some extent Trotskyism, as he himself was perfectly willing to admit.” (47) The Situationists took as much credit as possible for the rest of the goings-on.

There was also an informal, overlapping, and complicated alliance between a number of international heterodox marxist, anarchist, and countercultural groups in the late 1960s.

These included *Socialism ou Barbarie*, the Situationist International, and the ICO (Information Correspondence Ouvrieres) in France; Solidarity and *Heatwave* (Britain); the Zengakuren in Japan; the Provos in Netherlands; and *Heatwave, Resurgence*, Black Mask/Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers, and the Diggers in the United States. Franklin Rosemont wrote, "As 1966 came to a close, we all felt a new revolutionary international was in the making." (48) However, this was not to be as the groups fell out with each other for various complicated reasons.

Similar disputes occurred in the United States; just as the New Left and the older anti-Stalinist marxist left was unable to come to an agreement (as documented in the film *Arguing the World*), the older anarchists and those late 1960s students and counterculturalists were also unable to overcome their differences. One archetypal story is that of anarcho-pacifist Dave Dellinger, who in 1964 was giving a talk in New York City about the Cuban revolution, of which he was a vocal supporter. Sam Dolgoff and others who were supporting Cuban anarchists in exile, as well as those being persecuted by the Castro regime, formed a picket line outside the venue. Ben Morea, an anarchist in the new militant Black Mask group, approached the line, and, after some consideration, crossed it—to Dolgoff's horror but Dellinger's delight. (49) This shows how "neo-anarchists," as they were sometimes called at the time, rejected the orthodoxies (but also coherence) of the older anarchist tradition in exchange for a pragmatic politic that, while in tune with its time and politically expedient, lacked internal consistency.

The 1969 SDS convention was the focal point of the decline and splintering of the New Left as a whole; and while the histories of many of the 1970s and 1980s Marxist-Leninist and Social Democratic factions that emerged from this splintering have been recorded, almost none have been of the anarchist movement—the other heir to the U.S. New Left.

## **1970s**

In the 1970s, U.S. anarchists attempted to rebuild a coherent movement, largely without connection to the older activists. Anarchist collectives began to reappear at the end of the 1960s. The IWW was revived, and rebuilt itself from a virtually moribund organization with an influx of younger activists. The anarchist movement was heavily countercultural, and the vast majority of anarchists continued to come out of this countercultural movement until after Seattle, when the number dropped perhaps to half. The Yippies, with their paper *The Yipster Times* (later *Overthrow*), and Zippies were also anarchistic groupings.

Many of the non-Leninist, culturally oriented politics of the 1970s lent themselves well to anarchism; this included feminism, the environmental movement, the back-to-the-land movement, and the profusion of worker-owned collectives, especially food co-ops. Also of special importance were the mass organizing direct action tactics of the anti-nuclear movement, especially the Clamshell Alliance. Murray Bookchin participated in the Clamshell actions of the later 1970s and founded the Institute for Social Ecology, which was to have many effects on anarchist theory and organizing.

The Movement for a New Society (MNS), which included pacifist writer George Lakey, also worked with the Clamshell Alliance. While only some members were self-identified anarchists, they had a deeply anarchistic approach. MNS folded in 1988 but many of its ideas and approaches were picked up by later anarchists: it was based in the counterculture and had an emphasis on personal transformation; stressed forming alternative institutions like collective activist houses, social centers, and cooperative businesses; had a multi-issue political analysis (including focuses on race, gender, and environmentalism); emphasized mass direct action, featuring affinity groups, spokescouncils, and consensus decision-making; and had a decentralized model of both political organizing and vision of a future society. (50)

The intellectual trends of the 1970s were different than the post-Seattle period. Situationism, in particular, was disseminated in the United States. In the Bay Area a particularly lively political scene emerged with dozens of grouplets; theorist John Zerzan was deeply influenced by this milieu.

In Detroit, where the Perlmans had been active, was the *Fifth Estate* newspaper, which became associated with them. Founded in 1965 as one of the first five "alternative weeklies," this counterculture/New Left paper was taken over by a group of radicals in 1975 (including Peter Werbe and David Watson) and transformed into an explicitly anti-authoritarian periodical, exploring new directions in politics. Influenced by ultra-leftism, the Situationists, and cultural pessimism in the context of the emerging environmental and anti-nuke movements, the primitivist position genesised in their pages.

A number of other publications started up as well. The existing *Our Generation* in Montreal, Quebec became an anarchist publication, and was affiliated with the Black Rose press; Boston's *Black Rose* (no relation) started publishing in 1979. In Canada, the anarchist-feminist *Kick It Over* started, while in New Orleans *Bayou La Rose* focused on support for indigenous groups. The journal *Telos*, which explored the Frankfurt School and other left anti-authoritarian thought, was also open to contributions from anarchists; their affiliated press published Landauer's *For Socialism* in 1978, for example.

The SRAF continued, like many of the 1970s projects, well into the 1980s. It was a classic synthesis group which contained anarchists of many different stripes; in 1972 there were twenty-five participating groups. Its affiliated groups published a number of periodicals, including the *SRAF Bulletin* and *Black Star*. SRAF members who wanted a more workerist

direction founded the North American Anarchist Communist Federation in 1978, which included at least fifteen different groups; they published the *North American Anarchist*.

Punk rock also started in the mid-1970s, but it remained more culturally (as opposed to politically) radical; in the United States there were only a handful of openly left-wing bands (the Dils in particular)—but no explicitly anarchist ones until the 1980s. In the UK the band Crass, formed in 1977, was pivotal in introducing “serious” anarchist politics into the punk movement, and they spawned a subgenre of “anarcho-punk.” Crass were anarcho-pacifists who were also feminist, atheist and vegetarian; they lived collectively on a commune outside London and ran their own record label. Bands connected directly to them included Conflict, Poison Girls, Zounds, D.I.R.T., Flux of Pink Indians, and more loosely related bands included Chumbawamba, the Subhumans (UK), and the Apostles. Reality Asylum’s singer Ramsey Kanaan later founded AK Press. Holland produced the avant-garde punk band The Ex, who, for example, did a concept record about the anarchists in the Spanish Revolution. These explicitly anarchist bands were working alongside culturally radical punk bands that were using anarchist images and slogans (such as the Sex Pistols and the Exploited), as well as leftist bands like the Clash, the Gang of Four, the Tom Robinson Band, and the Mekons (whose singer Jon Langford would later form CNT Records). There were also other politically charged bands with vague populist or utopian politics, like Sham 69 and the Avengers, and others like the X-Ray Spex who attacked the consumer society, although curiously outside a larger critique. The Rock Against Racism (RAR) concerts were the most politicized version of this 1970s punk radicalism, and many of these bands played RAR shows. Britain churned out many left-wing bands in different genres throughout the 1980s; even more pop bands like Durutti Column and the Communards made reference to anarchist politics, at least in their names.

Finally, in the 1970s and 1980s, many left-wing anarchists also had closer ties to the Libertarian Movement, something which later becomes much more marginal. Some anarchists, such as Karl Hess (Barry Goldwater's former speechwriter) and Richard Kostelanetz embraced a combination of left- and right-wing anarchism, and Murray Bookchin spoke at a Libertarian Party conference in 1980. (51)

## **1980s**

The expansion of the punk rock and hardcore movement in North America in the 1980s (and through the 1990s) becomes a major vehicle for anarchist politics, especially through punk magazines like *Maximum Rocknroll*, which reached far beyond traditional radical circles. In the 1970s and 1980s, the United States had its share of political bands who certainly had, if not ideologically anarchist, then anarchistic politics (notable bands included the Dead Kennedys, MDC, the Dicks, the Feederz, and the Crucifucks), and some referred directly to anarchist themes or slogans (TSOL's "Property is Theft" and the Dead Kennedy's "Anarchy for Sale") or symbols (Black Flag's very name, as well as their "bars" symbol, are both references to the anarchist black flag). Out of the deeply influential Washington, DC hardcore scene came the anarchistic political group Positive Force, which was closely connected to Dischord Records, and later the Riot Grrrl movement partly came out of the same city. (52) However, it was rare for there to be an explicitly anarchist band in the United States until the late 1980s. Other bands included Nausea, A.P.P.L.E., Destroy!, Crucifix, and Reagan Youth. The folksinger Michelle Shocked was also an anarchist; she presaged other anarchist folkies such as David Rovics, as well as the folksingers around Earth First!(EF!) like Casey Neil, Judi Bari, Darryl Cherney, and many others. In Canada, there was D.O.A. and the Subhumans. The bassist of the latter, Gerry Hannah, was involved in the underground action group Direct Action, which bombed a Litton weapons components plant in Toronto. Adjacent d.i.y. to the punk scene was an avant-garde music and arts scene that was also influenced by anarchist politics. Industrial bands like Missing Foundation

occasionally had anarchist politics, and David Lester, half of the duo Mecca Normal, was an editor at *Open Road* (see below). Mecca Normal did several Black Wedge tours, an anarchist version of the Red Wedge tour in Britain, in which Billy Bragg and others built support for the Labour Party. (53) Anarchist politics were also welcome in the fanzine network, which spanned a variety of subcultural niches. *Factsheet Five*, a magazine whose sole purpose was to review any fanzine sent to them, was run by the individualist anarchist Mike Gunderloy, who co-edited the anthology *Anarchy and the End of History*. Likewise, these ideas spread into the BBS and hacker culture, which presaged the internet's present form.

Anti-authoritarian radicals in Canada formed *Open Road* in 1976, which addressed anarchist and related left anti-authoritarian perspectives. Its high production values gave a boost to the anarchist and related movements in North America. The Canadian militant group Direct Action also engaged in a number of high-profile attacks, including the bombing of a Toronto factory which produced components for nuclear missiles. In 1980, the journal *Social Anarchism* was founded by moderate anarchists in the academy. The German autonome movement—an extra-parliamentary marxist movement which had similar interests (such as the counterculture, anti-nuclear occupations, feminism, and squatting)—influenced U.S. anarchists, whose important borrowing from the autonome was the “black bloc” form. A vibrant squatting scene developed in New York City's Lower East Side, where it was deeply linked to the punk rock scene and the visual arts. Political artists such as Seth Tobocman and Eric Drooker came out of this milieu, which was tied to the radical community center ABC No Rio. Later this milieu became involved in direct action in defense of the neighborhood's community gardens, and many of the tactics used to defend the squats were deployed to defend the gardens.

Although the sectarian grouplets disappeared, pro-Situ thought became very popular. Situationism was closely linked to punk rock in its outlook and becomes practically

synonymous with anarchism in the United States; enfant terrible writers like Bob Black and Stewart Home were some of the better known in this milieu. In 1997, John Moore claimed there was now "a second-wave of anarchism" (e.g., after classical anarchism), and that the Situationists "serve as origin" for it. (54)

Murray Bookchin also published many of his major writings during this decade, including the *Ecology of Freedom* in 1982. In New York City, Autonomedia press was founded in the early 1980s, originally as a political imprint for Semiotext(e), then one of the major disseminators of the new Continental thought in the English-speaking world. Primitivism, itself influenced by situationism, developed as a mature intellectual movement in the pages of *Fifth Estate*. Columbia, Missouri's *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed* started publishing in 1980; it combined situationist thought with, among other things, Stirnerite individualism. The councilist-leaning *Processed World* was published in the Bay Area and attempted to reach out to workers in the new digital sector. AK Press was founded in the UK by Ramsey Kanaan in 1987, but soon after established U.S. offices; by the early 1990s, Left Bank Distribution went bankrupt and AK Press, which was a joint publisher and distribution company, became both the dominant anarchist press and distribution in the United States.

Popular organizing that anarchists were involved in included Central American solidarity work, such as with CISPES (the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador). Radical environmental work in particular became a locus for anarchist activism, and many anarchists were involved in Earth First!, especially in the 1990s. Food Not Bombs spread across North America and was particularly popular among punks. The pagan movement, as well as related eco-feminist strains, developed crossovers with anarchists (as did a wave of "joke" religions like Discordianism and the Church of the SubGenius). Pagan writer Starhawk, one of founders of the political Reclaiming tradition, later became a famous anti-globalization movement figure.

The Greens started to develop as a political force in the United States, and had a network of 200 groups by the late 1980s. Bookchin was the keynote speaker at their first 1987 conference. Anarchists (especially the Left Green Network, founded in the late 1980s) were involved in the more decentralized Green factions; however, they lost out in the internal fights to the parliamentarians. Later the more centrist factions triumphed among those involved in electoral politics, leading to Ralph Nader's 1996 and 2000 presidential runs on the Green ticket. (55)

In the United States, the Nazi skinhead movement (which had its origins in the UK in the late 1970s, as something of punk's dark side), flourished as part of a more general resurgence in the far right. In reaction a militant anti-fascist movement formed to fight the Nazi skinheads, within the punk scene in particular, including ARA (Anti-Racist Action), SHARP (Skinheads Against Racial Prejudice), and RASH (Red and Anarchist Skinheads). Groups from the Third World Marxist milieu, such as the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee and the Sojourner Truth Organization (the former connected to the May 19 Communist Organization), were involved in anti-fascism, and so became linked with the punk and anarchist movements. At this time, radical indigenous struggles, sometime linked to anti-nuclear work, gained support from anarchists. (The New Communist Movement groups had made links to Black, Latino and Asian-American nationalist movements, but rarely to Native struggles; anarchists did the exact opposite.) (56) One of the more interesting ties was with ACTUP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power), which was engaged in sustained direct action campaigns. This presaged the later, much stronger, crossover between the anarchist and radical queer movements.

In the anarcho-syndicalist milieu, the ACF's *North American Anarchist* became *Strike!* when the group that published the ACF paper left the organization. In 1982, *Ideas and Action* was

founded, and it later became the journal of the Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA) when it was founded in 1984 from ACF remnants. For many years the WSA held the U.S. affiliation of the IWA/AIT (the syndicalist international that Rudolf Rocker helped found in 1922, and which was affiliated with the CNT-FAI); this was an issue of great contention for many anarcho-syndicalists, as the WSA was a small, ideologically based group, and not a functioning union like the much larger IWW. In 1986, Sam Dolgoff founded the *Libertarian Labor Review* (later the *Anarcho-Syndicalist Review*), which subsequently became the best-known theoretical syndicalist publication.

Events in the United Kingdom were of interest to, and an influence on, U.S. anarchists. The 1970s anarcho-punk trend emerged from there, and was far more developed than in the United States throughout the 1980s. Some larger actions like the Stop the City marches came out of that milieu, and there was widespread support for the 1984 Miner's Strike. Another influence was *Class War*, a tabloid-style anarchist newspaper that gained a large circulation outside of traditional quarters, and later became a national federation. Anarchists were also able to take credit for a large demonstration against the Poll Tax in March 1990, which included street-fighting with the police and attacks on stores.

There were also a series of North American anarchist gatherings in the late 1980s: in Chicago ("Haymarket '86 Anarchist Gathering," 1986), Minneapolis ("Building the Movement," 1987), Toronto ("Anarchist Survival Gathering," 1988), and San Francisco ("Without Borders," 1989). These gatherings increased in size almost every time, growing from hundreds to well over a thousand in 1989. Among other things, the Love and Rage project emerged from the gatherings.

Last, the collapse of the Soviet Union had a deflationary effect on political Leninism of all varieties (including those strains deeply critical of "really existing socialism") and academic

marxism. This provided what looked like an opening for many anarchists (especially those working in conjunction with radical environmentalism) to make anarchism the dominant radical movement, and also was a boon to marxist councilism.

## **1990s**

A number of ideological strains of U.S. anarchism come into conflict in the 1990s.

Out of the national gatherings came a proposal to form a national anarchist newspaper, which became *Love and Rage*, which also became a political grouping. Originally consisting of some 300 activists in the Love and Rage Network, the group became increasingly centralized and in 1993 became a structured membership organization, the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation (LRRAF), with about 100 members.

The 1990 Redwood Summer campaign—a joint effort, at least on paper, of the IWW and Earth First! to organize loggers in Northern California—culminated with a bomb exploding in a car driven by two core organizers, Judi Bari and Darryl Cherney. (57) The *Earth First! Journal* became an important publication with a reach far beyond traditional anarchist circles. The continuing importance of radical environmental politics also combined with increased interest in the radical wing of the animal rights movement. In April 1990, the Earth Day demonstration on Wall Street had strong anarchist participation from various anarchist factions. The Unabomber, influenced by primitivist anti-technological (but not anarchist) ideas, briefly became a media sensation in September 1995 after the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* published his manifesto “Industrial Society and Its Future” in exchange for the cessation of his bombing campaign. Later in the decade Earth Liberation Front (ELF) actions developed in the United States; the largest was the destruction of a ski resort under construction outside Vail, Colorado in 1998. Debates about the role of technology and ecology continued to take center stage as well. The actions of the Animal

Liberation Front continued throughout the 1990s, and animal rights gained a firm place in the anarchist movement, often with a crossover into environmental politics.

In many cities, it became popular to start infoshops—a cross between a bookstore and an anarchist community space. Pirate radio, community gardens, Copwatch programs, and bicycle advocacy (especially support for Critical Mass) showed the continued anarchist interest in cultural work, as well as a turn towards urban planning and popular issues affecting the everyday lives of communities; these focuses were by-and-large ignored at the time by both the Leninist and social democratic left, and eventually had more influence in liberal-oriented environmental circles.

In 1991 Autonomedia published Hakim Bey's *Temporary Autonomous Zone* (a collection of works that had previously appeared); it became the decade's best-selling anarchist work. Influenced by elements of situationism, Surrealism, and an array of spiritual influences (including Sufism, Taoism, Christian gnosticism, and perennial philosophy), the "temporary autonomous zone" or TAZ—a transitory space where people are supposedly liberated from outside influences and can express their true desires—influenced, among many things, the politics behind Reclaim the Streets (RTS). Situationist ideas continued to be of importance throughout the decade, and the "critique of everyday life" (which blended well with the decades' focus on cultural politics) remained an important notion until after Seattle. In 1993, *Anarchist Studies* (which emerged out of the earlier *Bulletin on Anarchist Research*) became the first peer-reviewed journal focusing on anarchism. In 1996 the Institute for Anarchist Studies (IAS), a grant-giving organization, was established; later projects affiliated with it included the Renewing the Anarchist Tradition conference and *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*.

In January 1994, the EZLN rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico was supported by all anarchist factions. U.S. anarchists attempted various solidarity projects, including participating in a U.S. group directly affiliated with the EZLN; although none quite panned out, thousands of North American activists went to Chiapas—especially to the 1996 Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism—and were inspired by what many of them considered to be “really existing anarchism” (although the EZLN never identified as anarchist).

Meanwhile, many members of LRRAF were influenced by the politics of the New Communist Movement, and the group endorsed national liberation struggles alongside anti-fascist, queer, and feminist politics. The group eventually coalesced into three factions; they were clear illustrations of three main ideological tendencies in the anarchist movement. The first were workerists, which included former members of the Revolutionary Socialist League (RSL). (The RSL was a Leninist group that emerged from the Schactmanites but steadily moved away from vanguardism. They dissolved the day before the founding Love and Rage conference and about twenty members entered the new group.) They were opposed by an alliance of advocates of the white privilege thesis (Noel Ignatiev had briefly been a Love and Rage member) and those moving towards a feminist, pro-queer Third World Marxism. Amid the tensions, the group folded in 1998, one year before Seattle. A number of groups arose from the ashes and the platformist NEFAC (originally the Northeast Federation of Anarcho-Communists) was the intellectual successor of the workerists (after the organization was established, former RSL member and LRRAF ideologue Wayne Price joined). Joel Olson founded Bring the Ruckus in 2001, based on the white privilege analysis he had advocated in LRRAF. They positioned themselves as a cadre group somewhere between a vanguard organization and a network. (58) The Third World Marxists briefly founded Fire By Night (FBN), with groups in the Bay Area and New York. FBN quickly collapsed and many members entered Freedom Road Socialist Organization (FRSO), a Third World Marxist refoundationalist group (refoundationalism was an attempt to bring together the scattered

Third World Marxist sects and individual activists that remained after the 1970s under a broad banner).

There were an number of opponents of the 1993 centralizing move towards a formal, membership-based federation in Love and Rage, and Chicago's A-Zone became the most prominent center of opposition. They helped found the Network of Anarchist Collectives (NAC), which published *(Dis)connection*. Although NAC quickly became moribund, members of A-Zone and NAC helped put together the 1996 Active Resistance counter-convention (to the Democratic Party convention). Active Resistance was important because it can be seen as a "trial-run" for Seattle. It included a large "Festival of the Oppressed" street demonstration (which ended in a clash with the police), which featured the giant puppets that would later be so prominent in the anti-globalization demonstrations. Many activists participated who would later be core organizers in the anti-globalization movement. And like Seattle, it was also specifically *not* billed as an anarchist event, even though it came directly out of the self-consciously ideologically anarchist movement.

In 1995, Murray Bookchin published his polemical essay, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*. Introducing a variation on claims by syndicalists from the first decade of the twentieth century, Bookchin claimed there were two varieties of anarchism: one, "social" (which, in his permutation of the original, included those who rejected workerism—i.e., social ecologists—and also, implicitly, pro-organizationalists who focused on race); and the other "lifestylists," a term he invented to cover a variety of factions including the pro-Situs, primitivists, mystical anarchists (especially deep ecologists), and counterculturalists. (Some "lifestylists" responded by claiming "Social Anarchism is Our Lifestyle.")

The d.i.y. punk/hardcore scene continued to grow in size. It could be seen as an anarchistic cultural and social movement that was based on themes that praise the anarchic; and numerous political bands, magazines, and everyday participants were self-consciously anarchist in their politics. In the late 1980s, the loosely organized Anarchist Youth Federation consisted primarily of youthful punks. Punk and hardcore periodicals included *Profane Existence*, *Slug & Lettuce*, *HeartattaCk*, and *Maximum Rocknroll*, each with distributions in the tens of thousands. There were an uncountable number of anarchistic political bands, as well as many specifically anarchist bands; notable ones included Fugazi, Chumbawamba, Nausea, Citizen Fish, Aus Rotten, Propagandhi, Naked Aggression, J. Church, Born Against, Submission Hold, Avail, Los Crudos, Spitboy, Econochrist, Nation of Ulysses, Dystopia, and others. (Some bands that came out of this general d.i.y. punk scene, in particular Nirvana and Green Day, achieved stardom after signing to major labels.) The “third wave” feminism of the Riot Grrrl, most closely connected to the band Bikini Kill and the Kill Rock Stars label, were directly part of this milieu; it in turn was connected to queercore (queer hardcore bands). In the mid-1990s, the propaganda organization and publisher CrimethInc began, which became an important countercultural/post-Situ locus especially after Seattle. (59)

By the late 1990s, anarchists—often acting as the core organizers behind anarchistic social movements—were able to bring thousands of people into the streets. In San Francisco in 1997, a Critical Mass ride attracted 5,000 participants. In late 1997, the longstanding anarchist band Chumbawamba had an unexpected international hit song, “Tubthumping.” The 1998 Jericho march to free political prisoners in Washington, DC also drew over 5,000 people with strong anarchist support; this was an unprecedented number as many of these leftist and nationalist prisoners were jailed for armed actions. In May 1998, a Prague RTS/RTS/EF! “global street party” attracted 3,000 participants. In April 1999, the ILWU shut down West Coast ports in support of political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal, who had gained

much support in anarchist circles. And just before Seattle, on June 18, 1999, the PGA called a global day of action, which occurred in forty cities. London's event, the "Carnival Against Capitalism," drew thousands of people to an action that practically shut down the City; streets were blocked by junk cars, buildings were scaled with ladders, and traders from the London International Finance Futures Exchange (LIFFE) briefly scuffled with protestors who stormed the exchange. The radical anti-authoritarian left was quickly gaining momentum and even moving into the mainstream, through its popular organizing, alliances with liberal groups, and public sympathy for its campaigns around environmentalism, urban planning, and opposition to neoliberal global trade pacts.

In November and December 1999, demonstrations organized by a coalition of anarchists and left-liberals (with moderate support from mainstream unions) disrupted the Seattle meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and attracted widespread media coverage and a moderate level of popular support. During the first day of the demonstrations (Tuesday, November 30), a black bloc destroyed selected businesses in downtown Seattle while a number of non-violent blockades, organized under the rubric of the Direct Action Network, temporarily disrupted the morning sessions on the first day of the WTO meeting. A much larger march by mainstream unions completed the events, which all told involved 30–40,000 people. The police eventually tried to clear the blockades with tear gas and heavy-handed tactics. As they tear gassed wealthy liberal neighborhoods and physically assaulted city officials on their way to emergency meetings, much of the population of Seattle who were otherwise neutral or even hostile to the demonstration became alienated and sided with the protestors. The protests continued all week until Friday, when (largely due to a revolt by some of the Global South countries) it was announced that no accord was reached by the WTO leaders. It was an unprecedented victory for U.S. anarchists. For the first time, they were catapulted past the Communists as the main radical faction and had deployed a successful mass-mobilization organizing model.

The anarchist movement had been growing steadily throughout the 1990s—but attracted almost no attention from either the mainstream or the traditional left media until Seattle. This changed during the next two years. Until September 11, the anarchist movement upstaged the other left factions and grew very quickly, perhaps tripling in size. The IWW, for example, went from 500–1,000 members before Seattle to 3,000 after. (By 2005, the numbers were down to pre-Seattle figures.) Many of the anarchist magazines experienced similar growth spurts, often tripling in size, in addition to the formation of new magazines with larger circulations, such as *Green Anarchy* and *Clamor*. During this period, there were perhaps 30,000 anarchists in the United States.

## **2000s**

The anti-globalization movement was supported by all anarchist factions and the majority of organizing was subordinated to anti-globalization for the next few years. Participation in the movement resolved prior ideological disputes (but at a great intellectual cost) and became anarchism's long sought-after practical organizing tool. "Summit-hopping" to large mobilizations, roughly organized on the same lines as Seattle, became the main focus for the next few years. (60)

The rise of the internet also greatly enabled anarchist organizing; on one hand anarchists were particularly well-suited to the internet's decentralized structure, and on the other the internet was well-suited to help overcome obstacles in disseminating propaganda and facilitating discussion, which had been a particular problem for U.S. anarchists. Unlike, for example, the Communist press, the anarchist press had never enjoyed a following outside its core adherents, and anarchists never organized politically around a newspaper the way Leninists had (with the exception of *Love and Rage*). Websites, blogs, and later social media came to displace the centrality of anarchist magazines, which were often a mixture of news,

history, and theory (Marxist-Leninist groups tended to have newspapers oriented towards a popular readership, and a separate theoretical journal). Florida's *Onward* was probably the last attempt to launch a national anarchist newspaper; it existed from 2000 until just after 9/11. Infoshop.org was originally founded in the mid-1990s and after Seattle became the single most prominent U.S. anarchist webpage; in 2005 anarchistnews.org started to provide more ideologically anarchist content, and it soon became the house organ for insurrectionists and other post-leftists. By the 1990s, Noam Chomsky has gained prominence as a visible anarchist figure and was one of the only ones with ready access to the greater media outside anarchist circles.

The Independent Media Centers (IMCs), the first of which was established in Seattle for the WTO protests, also quickly multiplied. They were locally based webpages (usually by city, although sometimes covering a larger area) designed to carry self-generated content about protests and other political events affiliated with the anti-globalization movement; users could upload their own stories. In the time before blogs, the IMCs could quickly multiply because they were based on a template that allowed others to avoid building webpages from scratch.

The first annual World Social Forum was held in 2001 in Porto Alegre, Brazil as a meeting of non-party left and progressive grassroots groups from around the world, and has been held every year since. The forum was initially closely associated with the anti-globalization movement, but over the years has become more closely associated with NGOs and political parties.

The Argentinian economic collapse at the end of 2001 resulted in a wave of business takeovers by workers, who transformed the companies into worker-run cooperatives. Naomi Klein's 2004 film *The Take* captures this.

After Seattle, the platformist NEFAC group formed and was followed by numerous smaller copycat federations. NEFAC published the *Northeastern Anarchist*, but in 2011 changed their name to Common Struggle, reflecting a shift in politics along with their adaptation of “especificismo” (a turn to community-organizing among platformists).

The 9/11 attacks brought a rather abrupt end to the larger, militant mobilizations; it also enabled the sudden rise of ANSWER (Act Now to Stop War and End Racism), a national coalition controlled by the Workers World Party (WWP), a Leninist vanguard party with crude anti-imperialist politics. To counter them, United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) was formed. While many anarchists joined the latter, it was a traditional left-liberal anti-war coalition with no place for anarchist organizing structures. The Iraq War in 2004 continued the trend towards anti-imperialism and away from the anti-globalization-style politics. The UFPJ and ANSWER continued to duel for control of the anti-war movement, and later were joined by yet another Leninist front group, NION (Not In Our Name)—which was controlled by the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP), a Maoist holdover from the New Communist Movement.

Largely anti-authoritarian international uprisings also influenced the U.S. anarchist milieu. The anti-globalization movement became intertwined with anti-zionist politics especially with the Second Intifada, starting in 2000. This was largely through the activities of the International Solidarity Movement, which facilitated Western activists going to the Occupied Territories. In 2001, Argentinean workplace occupations, as well as the Brazilian MST (Landless Workers Movement), drew North American support. Massive labor demonstrations occurred in Oaxaca, Mexico in 2006 and the movement was dubbed the “Oaxaca Commune”; during the demonstrations, U.S. anarchist journalist Brad Will was murdered by rightist paramilitaries.

In December 2008 in Greece (long possessing a militant anarchist movement), confrontations, lead by anarchists, rocked the country for weeks after police murdered a teenager in the Exarcheia district of Athens, a neighborhood in which many anarchists lived. In addition to huge demonstrations, police stations were burned and public buildings were occupied; it would not be wrong to call it an unsuccessful insurrection. Many anarchists were inspired by these events, especially the protean U.S. insurrectionist movement.

After Seattle, Hardt and Negri's *Empire* became the best-known left anti-authoritarian theoretical text and Italian autonomism (previously very marginal in the United States) gained considerable influence. Situationist-inspired politics, although influential on the origins of the anti-globalization movement, soon become very marginal (and, to lesser extent, the same happened with environmental politics). Leninist-influenced anti-imperialism became a major influence, in addition to identity politics around race, gender, and sexuality. The previous emphasis on eco-feminism and civil-rights style anti-racism was replaced by a post-Third Wave feminist politics, heavily tied to the queer and trans scenes, while the racial politics shifted to neo-Leninist perspectives of white privilege and Third World Marxism. In 2003, the first APOC (Anarchist/Autonomous People of Color) conference was held; local APOC groups were founded in many cities and they frequently reflected these political influences. In 2009, a strongly Third World Marxist-influenced APOC local group disrupted the annual CrimethInc convergence in Pittsburgh.

Besides Italian autonomism, one of the intellectual results of the anti-globalization movement was the popularity of postanarchism (a combination of anarchism and post-structuralism), especially in the mid-'00s. Primitivism also gained a brief ascendancy after Seattle as well; the "black bloc" was identified closely with anarchists from Eugene, Oregon, and in particular theorist John Zerzan (who for a moment gained national attention), and

*Green Anarchy*, where he was one of the editors, became popular. More politically moderate was the semi-anarchist *Clamor*, with a distribution of 10,000 at its peak. In 2002, Murray Bookchin publicly broke with anarchism and called his new political philosophy Communalism.

By the mid-'00s, primitivism faded into the more general "anti-civ" perspective. The FBI declared the ALF and ELF as the "number one domestic terrorist threat," and in 2005 a series of arrests of activists charged with ELF or ALF actions began. Many of these activists were anarchists; under the PATRIOT Act they were prosecuted using terrorism laws. This became known as the Green Scare. Primitivism and anti-civ later were eclipsed by insurrectionism and then by "communisation" theory, largely a revival of many older ultra-left ideas, and most frequently associated with the Invisible Committee's *The Coming Insurrection* (which became a popular boogeyman for FOX News commentator Glenn Beck).  
(61)

The Common Ground project was founded in 2005 in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina; based on anarchist principles and involving many anarchists, it provided direct aid (including a medical clinic) to residents impacted by the storm who were essentially abandoned by the government. Tens of thousands were reportedly involved in the project over the years. (In NYC in 2012 and 2013, the OWS-related "Occupy Sandy" provided similar services after Hurricane Sandy.)

Students re-established the Students for a Democratic Society (the "new" SDS) in 2006, and for several years it became a locus of activism for younger anarchists.

Also, for the first time a substantial number of anarchists entered the academy, as activists who started graduate school after Seattle began to take academic positions. The number of

peer-reviewed journals and academic books increased. The most well-known anarchist academics, David Graeber (at one point a professor at Yale), spent most of the decade promoting his idea of the “New Anarchists,” a kind of ideal type of anti-authoritarian direct democrat whose purpose was to re-label other non-anarchist-identified activists as anarchists, while suppressing all critical debate about long-term strategy and theoretical issues. Later the British-based academic organization Anarchist Studies Network was founded, followed by NAASN (the North American Anarchist Studies Network).

## **2010s**

Like all leftists who see opportunity in crisis, the financial crisis of 2008 was viewed by anarchists as an opening. Anarchists were involved in anti-austerity protests across Europe, especially in Greece and Britain. The September 2011 Occupy Wall Street demonstrations and encampment (initially called by *Adbusters*, a Canadian magazine sympathetic to anarchism and situationism) became the next mass organizing opportunity for anarchists. The most moderate anarchists were one part of the initial organizing, and the encampments were largely run based on anarchist principles (they were independent of electoral parties and organized on directly democratic principles). (62) However, unlike the anti-globalization movement, different anarchist factions were not united in their support for the Occupy movement, and even those involved were sometimes at odds. In Oakland, California especially, militant anarchists were the primary elements, and acrimonious discussions about the Black Bloc became part of the larger left’s internal debates.

## 4. Anarchist Theoretical Issues, 1968–1998

“We are so poor, we don't even have a language, just a stupid accent!”

—Madame Defarge, played by Cloris Leachman, in *History of the World*

### **Tension Between Existing Anarchists and “New Left Neo-Anarchism” (1)**

Bob Black summed up the classical anarchist intellectual structure this way:

The classical anarchism of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and especially Kropotkin may be thought of as the original anarchist political paradigm. For all their differences, together they furnished many answers and a context for developing many more. Later figures like Malatesta, Goldman, Berkman, the anarcho-syndicalists, and the intellectuals writing for *Freedom* in effect engaged in “normal anarchism”—in restating, elaborating, updating and in details amending the paradigm. Men like Herbert Read, George Woodcock, Alex Comfort and Paul Goodman worked within this tradition in the inclement climate of the '40s and '50s. (2)

However, the transition from those who continued the traditions of the older, classical movement and those who came in from the counterculture and other movements in the 1950s and 1960s was often the source of great tension—especially as some of the younger anarchists were happy to absorb elements from the heterodox marxist traditions. Numerous biographical accounts attest to this. The tensions resulted from a two-fold transition between: 1) on a practical level, classical anarchism and the youthful counterculture with which it became affiliated after the 1960s, and 2) on an intellectual level, classical intellectual anarchism and heterodox marxism. Sociologist Alfred Willener, in *The Action-Image of Society* (a study of the May 1968 events in Paris), wrote that “it seemed to us that the double juncture between anarchism and marxism and between politics and culture was probably one of the essential features of the May events.” (3)

Many of these new political trends, which (particularly in a North American context) became synthesized as “anarchism” after the 1960s, arose in France. David Porter's *Eyes to the South: French Anarchists and Algeria* documents how these tensions were already present there in the 1950s. Porter says Maurice Joyeaux agreed to the inclusion of individualist

anarchists being in the synthesis Fédération anarchiste “to prevent another future infiltration and takeover effort by those attempting to fuse ‘nonsecular Marxism’ with anarchism—such as those influenced by Communist Sartre, Daniel Guérin, the *Socialisme ou Barbarie* group, and the Situationists.” Joyeaux said “The Algerian events first and those of Cuba afterwards brought to us turbulent young people among whom were our eternal anarcho-Marxists who wanting to serve themselves in order to revive the old politicians’ dream of transforming our movement into a political party, preferably Marxist, but simply with a touch of anarchist morale that sounded better in the salons.” (4)

Albert Meltzer’s autobiography *I Couldn’t Paint Golden Angels* documents his conflict with pacifists, counterculturalists, the New Left, anarchist punks, and others. He adopts syndicalist revisionism, saying “there were entirely different philosophies referred to as anarchism. It took me a time to find there were two contradictory theories, one working class and revolutionary, the other an offshoot of liberalism.” He rails throughout the book against pacifists, as well as anyone else not focused primarily on organizing the working class into unions. On the New Left, he says “There were a core of real anarchists among them, if a bare handful as compared with press exaggerations.” Regarding punk he says, “The effects of the ‘punk revolution’ were yet to come and to change the anarchist scene disastrously.” (5)

In his memoir *Fragments*, Sam Dolgoff similarly recounts his tensions with hippy youth drawn to anarchism. He cites approving one person who said “unfortunately, the irresponsible exhibitionism personifies and perpetuates the false image of anarchists as ultra-individualists, opposed to all organization. Trapped in the myth of the ‘counter-culture’ [escape to live like anarchists in communes and other lifestyle groups –S.D.] they are incapable of doing anything constructive.” (6)

Not all of the older anarchists were so unsympathetic, however. George Woodcock welcomed the revival of British anarchism in the early- to mid-1960s. He called the younger radicals, who had come to anarchism largely through pacifist groups like the Committee of 100, "anarchists without traditions." Woodcock felt they were a refreshing change from the sectarian British anarchism of the 1940s that he had been politically involved with. (7) And Terry M. Perlin recounts how, in 1970, a group of anarchists in their seventies and eighties expressed their joy at witnessing the anarchistic expressions of the counterculture. (8)

The *Rebel Worker* group in Chicago reported very good relations with the older anarchists—even Dolgoff. After joining the IWW in 1962, Franklin Rosemont says "the entire Old Guard turned out to be very supportive" and that their entry into the IWW resulted in the union tripling their membership. The old IWW members, including "Fred Thompson, Carl Keller, Jack Sheridan, Charlie Velsek, Sam Dolgoff, O.N. Peterson, Guy B. Askew and Abe Wuori taught us a lot about history, philosophy, economics and poetry—to say nothing about point-of-production organizing, strike strategy and direct action." (9)

*The Fifth Estate* had up-and-down relations with the remnants of the Italian movement, at least as the 1970s went on. In 1978 they received a donation from a *cenas*, a political fundraising dinner held by elderly Italian anarchists in the United States. However, the group declined to donate further monies when the magazine disavowed self-identification as "anarchist." But they retained support from Marcus Graham, the editor of the 1930s anarchist magazine *Man!*, until his death. (10) *Fifth Estate's* David Watson also documented the good relations the magazine had with a number of veterans of the pre-war anarchist movement, including Graham, Attilio and Libers Bortolotti, Peter Puccio, Tony Bulgar, and Federico and Pura Arcos. (11)

In the introduction to the 1971 *Anarchism Today* anthology, David E. Apter—an adroit but occasionally unsympathetic observer—offers his commentary on this transition, saying the young radicals were influenced by Eric Fromm, Wilhelm Reich, Herbert Marcuse, Paul Goodman, and R.D. Laing. (12) Apter wrote, “As a matter of sheer continuity the new anarchists can have little in common with the old except in language.” He said, “Contemporary radicals read anarchism along with Tarot cards” and conduct “experiments in the simple life.” The student radicals were “anarchic or have anarchic tendencies” and the “counter-culture serves as the main carrier of anarchist ideas” (unlike the older, multigenerational movement)—but “anarchism lacks doctrinal continuity.” In sum, he said that “anarchism as a youth counter-culture is a genuinely different structural phenomenon than in the past.” (13)

### **Rethinking Anarchist Theory**

Since at least the late 1970s (but probably starting earlier) in the anglophone world there have been wide-ranging discussions regarding what form contemporary anarchist theory should take. However, no consensus has emerged.

Since the history of post-war anarchism is almost entirely unwritten, it is hard to pinpoint some of these discussions. Looking over the periodicals and movement literature, however, it seems that it is only in the 1980s that this move towards a fundamental self-conscious rethinking or recasting of anarchist theory really takes form. The 1960s and 1970s largely seemed to be a period of rediscovery of the classical traditions and attempts to put these into practice, whether in social/communal, individualist, or syndicalist forms—mixed in with the influences of situationism and Third World Marxism. Larry Giddings’s “Why Anti-Authoritarian?” illustrated the working of some of these tensions out. In the early 1970s, Giddings identified himself as an anarchist but was later influenced by feminism, indigenous thought, and black and Chicano nationalism, all of which he came to support. He then

denounced anarchism as “Eurocentric” and “ideologically suicidal classicalism.” Instead, Giddings adopted the term “anti-authoritarian” which, despite its vagueness (at the beginning of the essay, he lists almost twenty different possible meanings), he felt distinguished his views from an anarchism that was anti-nationalist and anti-separatist, and instead embraced various non-anarchist struggles by oppressed groups.

Punk rock and related “underground” cultural currents brought in thousands of new anarchists. But punk’s negationist attitude and hostility toward the larger society fit awkwardly with classical anarchist attitudes, which had had never developed a critique of alienation or the commodity form, and tended more towards an organicism or communitarianism. Classical anarchism thought of itself as the majority of society—not against it. Punk was closer in feel to the Situationists (and perhaps Adorno’s negative dialectic); the former excelled at these critiques of the post-war consumer society, offering both theoretical rigor and practical interventions. This was no coincidence. Malcolm McLaren, the manager of the Sex Pistols, and Jamie Reid, the band’s graphic designer, had both been involved in situationist circles in the U.K. around the King Mob group; Reid even designed the cover of the seminal Situationist anthology *Leaving the Twentieth Century*. (14) He also worked with a situationist magazine, *The Suburban Press*, from 1970 to 1974, and that graphic influence can be seen in his later work. Those coming under Situationist influence chafed at anarchism’s inability to present meaningful commentary on these and other theoretical issues, such as the notion of the “totality.”

Since anarchist theoretical development had also ground to a halt with World War Two, it had never grappled seriously with the consumer society. Workers’ self-management, which was the dominant anarchist economic position (even among the non-syndicalists), had little to say on this subject; some anarchists even rejected it as reactionary, calling it the “self-management of alienation.” Movements around the “refusal of work” and later “zerowork,”

influenced by post-scarcity theories and tied to Italian autonomist and situationist ideas, clashed directly with advocacy of the collectivization of industry. These anarchists asked: Was the goal of the IWW simply to turn the McDonald's into worker-owned collectives? Such questions helped push a segment of radicals towards rejecting the left altogether and forming primitivism (see the Zerzan section below).

Also posing deep problems for anarchists were identity politics, especially at their height in the 1980s and 1990s. Bookchin had argued that anarchism was able to incorporate the so-called "new social movements" better than marxism was; but it was easier to claim this broadly than to actually work out either the specifics of the theory or the practice. (15) It is dubious what anarchism had to offer theoretically to feminism, queer liberation, or anti-racism—although a case could be made that it was one of a myriad of forces pushing towards what later became called intersectionality. Anarchists had moved close to ACT UP at its height of utilizing direct action in the 1980s; but since ultimately its goal was to influence government policy (regarding funding for AIDS research and treatment), anarchists were in something of a bind. The same was true for queer politics; while there were strong aesthetic and cultural affinities with the radical queer community, the move towards legal non-discrimination protections and integration into the military (and later for same-sex marriage) put anarchists in a corner with the increasingly marginalized radical queer scene. Simultaneously, the realization of the deep roots of patriarchal and homophobic views—and hence the impossibility of abolishing them via the abrupt adaptation of some kind of revolutionary subjectivity, as Bakunin and others had championed—was also the source of rethinking what notions of "radical subjectivity" really were capable of.

Anti-racist politics were even a more hostile subject of discussion; while U.S. anarchists had historically been based in those European ethnicities that were at the bottom of the white racial hierarchy (Jews, Slavs, and southern Europeans), and had sizeable hispanic

membership (especially in the Southwest), there were few African-American members. (16) Anarchist participation in the Civil Rights Movement had been forgotten, and any lessons learned there had been lost. Anarchists in the United States in particular had traditionally rejected the two-pronged approach that characterized the Marxist-Leninist take on national self-determination: the endorsement of a multiracial revolutionary group and simultaneous advocacy of national self-determination for oppressed nations, which in the United States meant advocacy of a "black belt" state, or at least of racially separate groups. (Regardless of the improbability of this in practical terms, as a stance it had been important in attracting and retaining the membership of African-American radicals, as Harry Haywood's departure from the CPUSA showed). (17)

Adding to this problem was the lack of historical work on how anarchists had approached these questions, and anarchists were often painted in false terms, as either some sort of strict liberals or economic workerists. The boogeyman of "lifestylism" was raised to denounce the majority of anarchists as Eurocentrists who took advantage of the position of white people in the labor aristocracy. It specifically was offered in *Love and Rage* and other circles that anarchism had historically been almost entirely white, and that anarchists had not participated in the Civil Rights Movement. (18) The comparatively nuanced approaches that anarchists had towards issues of gender and minority ethno-linguistic groups were also forgotten, and are only in the process of being recovered today.

Last, in 1995, Murray Bookchin published a long polemic called *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: A Unbridgeable Chasm*. In it he revived the dualistic framework of "syndicalist revisionism," but recast it. He lumped a variety of differing thinkers and groups (primitivists, deep ecologists, mystics, anti-organizationalists, and others) into one group, which he accused of being focused on personal liberation and expression. He then counterposed them to more organizationalist trends, which (supposedly unlike those he

denounced) tried to organize the larger society for revolutionary change. While of dubious worth in theoretical or historiographical terms, it did put the questions of what historically had constituted anarchism, and what was the theoretical core of it, front-and-center.

Together, these pressures created an explicit move to rethink anarchist ideas. There were few remaining classical veterans, and they often had little to say on these issues; there was certainly a generational divide, especially on issues like the importance of counterculture. A love/hate relationship, and sometimes opposition, to the classical movement developed (openly disparaged as “old white men with beards”). This was especially because workerist readings of classical anarchism dominated; partly because of intentional misportrayals of it by activists who were had embraced Third World Marxist doctrines but continued to publicly identify as anarchist; and partly out of the frustration that many of these texts do not speak immediately to the situation of younger activists.

As discussed below, many different alternatives were offered. The younger Bookchin reconceptualized anarchism as centered around opposition to hierarchy and domination, and largely his idea was successful; its influence even on those who explicitly rejected Bookchin shows this. Others endorsed the toolbox idea. Workerists revived versions of classical anarchism like syndicalism and platformism. Several fusion versions gained influence—on one hand with Third World Marxism, and situationism on the other.

Most important was the number of people, often coming out of the counterculture or situationism, who advocated a kind of vague reading of anarchism, loosely based on classical anarchist politics but without a specific theoretical content. Fredy Perlman’s quip “the only -ist I am is a cellist” was a popular slogan. (19) These readings were somewhere between synthesis anarchism and Graeberism, the latter which inverted what Perlman was saying.

Despite these differing readings, there had long been a *feeling* in the air that a coherent theoretical position could emerge that represented the majority of anarchist activists. There was a real material basis to this feeling: the existence of a contemporary anarchist political milieu. This was a tangible thing which consisted of shared projects, aesthetics, norms, and a general agreement about certain political boundaries: no electoral politics or vanguardist parties, and a general avoidance of purely reformist goals. (There were, as there always are, exceptions to all of these.) This was particularly true after Seattle; Uri Gordon's work focuses on this milieu.

There seemed to be a real possibility of this theory emerging because it could have been based on the relatively coherent practices of a number of political actors working in tandem. It did not even have to be "anarchist" as such; but did need to be a left social theory that was independent of marxism and anti-authoritarian in nature. There was a pressing need for a theory as well, as the movement was grappling with questions about race, nationalism, imperialism, and global economics. I believe that a clever theoretical approach, able to incorporate thematics from existing anarchist currents, would have been able to succeed. Instead, Anarcho-Graeberism took much of this opportunity. It was deeply anti-intellectual; hostile towards all anarchists with specific views other than Graeber's own; and, in a certain way it was unrepresentative of the movement as a whole. The moment was ruined, and it passed by.

Anarchists have long been dismissed as wild-eyed romantics or followers of naturalistic social theories, and not without some basis. But there is no necessary contradiction between intellectual rigor and anti-authoritarian politics, as movements such as the Situationists, council communists, German autonome, Italian autonomists, eco-feminists, post-structuralists, and others have shown.

The theoretical reconceptualizations offered after Seattle, especially from Graeber and the postanarchists, all occurred in this intellectual context and attempted to answer these questions.

## 5. Different Approaches to Anarchist Theory

“anarchism has a broad back, like paper it endures anything.”

—Octave Mirbeau (1)

There is a large amount of material on anarchism, and little cohesion. There are numerous different theorists and schools of anarchism in both the classical and interim periods. Additionally, many of the theorists themselves, including Kropotkin and Rocker, also gave their own accounts of what anarchism as a whole is—aside from offering their own specific perspectives. There are secondary texts on classical anarchism, mostly written by non-anarchists, starting in the 1890s. There are also contemporary anarchist theorists who offer perspectives on classical anarchism, especially Bookchin.

Separately, there are also contemporary anarchist theorists and they can be divided into both partisans of specific theories that make no claim to generalizable theories (Zerzan, Bookchin, Alfredo Bonnano, or the postanarchists); as well as theorists who *do* offer what they claim are generalizable theories of contemporary anarchism (Graeber, Milstein, or Gordon).

Despite the many books, there are no widely accepted common agreements on how anarchism should be portrayed or defined. Some say that anarchism can be defined as simple anti-statism; some as a natural characteristic of human behavior; some as a historically specific political movement; some as focused on class struggle; some as a kind of ethics; and some as a kind of political practice and not a theory. Similarly, some limit the scope of anarchism to those who self-identify as anarchists, while others look at a broad range of political and social movements and individuals.

A comprehensive account of the different portrayals of anarchism would be a useful resource, but it is beyond the scope of this study. Because different but interrelated questions are at issue here, the literature on separate areas will be examined separately: the first are accounts of how classical anarchism is defined, and the second are accounts of what selected contemporary theorists claim anarchism is (or *should be*).

Classical anarchism had a number of different streams, which always created difficulties in characterization. The two main branches were individualist and social anarchism (with, as mentioned earlier, Proudhon often is the one figure in common for both). Later, anarcho-syndicalism arose; and around the same time, a religious pacifism which was followed by a secular variety. These are the five main branches, and there were numerous sub-branches—as well as some perspectives that were mostly tactical (like “synthesis,” a formula to reconcile individualist, anarchist-communist, and syndicalist views; or the “Sovietists,” anarchists who were supportive of the early Bolshevik state). This survey will include attempts by a number of writers to characterize the classical anarchist tradition, looking in particular at how they defined anarchism in terms of natural behavior and anti-statism.

In terms of contemporary anarchism, a different track will be taken. This study will look at *how* individual theorists have constructed their ideas, especially in relation to the classical movement’s ideas. That is, the *structure* of contemporary anarchist thought will be looked at, as opposed to its specific claims. Four different approaches will be identified: 1) restatements of classical anarchism (Sam Dolgoff; Colin Ward; *Black Flame*); 2) attempts to formulate an “ideal type” of anarchism based on an *imagined majority* (David Graeber; Uri Gordon); 3) those who are anarchist in self-identification and *politics*, but who *intellectually* clearly follow lineages other than classical anarchism (Shukaitis; pro-Situs; communisation; postanarchism; and Zerzan, who combines multiple non-anarchist perspectives); and 4) those who intellectually *combine* other theoretical lineages with classical anarchism to

create new hybrid theories, whether in a crude combination (Wayne Price; Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin; white privilege adherents) or in a sophisticated synthesis (Bookchin). (Obviously there can be a slippery line between 3 and 4.)

As a caveat, it should be clear that what is being looked at is the parent theoretical lineage, and not the object of study: and so, for example, "eco-anarchism"—a label applied to theoretical perspectives as varied as eco-syndicalism, social ecology, and primitivism—will not be addressed.

## 6. English-Language Secondary Literature on Classical Anarchism

The direct roots of classical anarchism are almost always traced to Proudhon's mutualist views of the 1830s and 1840s, with Bakunin's stint in the International usually considered to be the crystallization of the tradition intellectually and politically. By the 1870s, outsiders recognized a self-identified anarchist political movement in Europe. (1) By the 1880s secondary texts by non-anarchists—often by psychological or judicial authorities (as well as by political opponents like Georgi Plekhanov)—started to appear. (2) Paul Eltzbacher's *The Great Anarchists* (first published in 1900; the English translation appeared in 1908) is generally recognized as the most authoritative; Kropotkin called it "the best work on anarchism." (3) A number of secondary works by anarchists appeared that attempt to summarize anarchism, including Kropotkin's *Encyclopedia Britannica* article in 1910 and Rudolf Rocker's 1938 *Anarcho-Syndicalism*. (Max Nettlau's *A Short History of Anarchism*, a condensed version of his massive nine-volume set, was published in 1934 in Spanish, but the first English version only appeared in 1979.)

Two main secondary works appeared in the early 1960s, George Woodcock's *Anarchism* (1962) and James Joll's *The Anarchists* (1964), which were followed by Daniel Guérin's more ideologically loaded *Anarchism* (in French in 1965; an English edition appeared in 1970). A number of anthologies also appeared in the 1960s and 1970s; they included Irving L. Horowitz's *The Anarchists* (1964), Leonard I. Krimerman and Lewis Perry's *Patterns of Anarchy* (1966), Marshall Shatz's *Essential Works of Anarchism* (1971), and George Woodcock's *Anarchist Reader* (1977). (Although published in France in 1965, Guérin's massive *No Gods, No Masters* anthology only appeared in English in 2005.)

More secondary works were also published. April Carter's *The Political Theory of Anarchism* was published in 1971, and David Miller's *Anarchism* in 1984. Richard Sonn's book of the same name appeared in 1991, as did George Crowder's *Classical Anarchism*. Peter Marshall's massive *Demanding the Impossible* appeared in 1992, and Ruth Kinna's (unfortunately titled) *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*—the first scholarly book to equally combine the classical and contemporary anarchist traditions in detail—was published in 2005.

As mentioned, there is no agreed upon approach to classifying and approaching anarchism. This is an almost inevitable conclusion, since intellectually what became called "anarchism" arose from a number of different strains. Miller said, "We must face the possibility that anarchism is not really *an* ideology, but rather the point of intersection of several ideologies"—which then overlap (for example, Guérin's left-anarchism is mixed with Stirner). (4)

Eltzbacher's study focused on seven thinkers who are considered anarchists (Godwin, Proudhon, Stirner, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tucker, and Tolstoy). This "procession of names" becomes a common trope to describe anarchism (with slight changes in which names are included); Rocker, Woodcock, Joll, Guérin, and Marshall follow it, at least in part. (Despite the obvious flaws in this approach, because of anarchism's highly decentralized politics—with few central organizations and only a handful of theorists who developed comprehensive bodies of work—it offers a helpful intellectual strategy to organize it conceptually with a minimum of work, especially in lieu of secondary sources about local movements.) The other issue that Eltzbacher raises is his conclusion that anarchism's defining notion is "anti-statism." (5) While that may be an obvious choice to outside observers because of the name, traditionally many of those thinkers labeled "anarchist" did not have a central focus on the abolition of the State, and therefore it begs the question whether a single tradition

exists—or was being created. The adoption of Eltzbacher's view by anarchists such as Kropotkin (who, despite this, described anarchists as the "left-wing" of socialism) problematized this even more.

Peter Kropotkin rejected historical materialism and, looking for a naturalistic basis for his theories, claimed that anarchism was a transhistorical element of human behavior. He found predecessors throughout history, going as far back as Laozi and Zeno. Woodcock noted that Kropotkin even pushed this notion to the extreme by finding anarchism in the "anonymous mass of the folk," and therefore looking even to the Stone-Age. (6) Bookchin claimed Kropotkin's views were "proto-sociobiological arguments." (7) Marie Fleming says that this approach can be found in secondary texts as far back as 1885, and that it was only later that both Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus adopted naturalistic views. (8)

Although Bakunin's work implied a naturalistic approach, it was not his explicit argument; and Proudhon thought it was only through the triumph of Progress that humans were approaching the anarchist moment. Kropotkin's views were not hegemonic, however, and Malatesta in particular forcefully rejected them. But the question of naturalism becomes one of the most important questions for the taxonomy of anarchism: Is it transhistorical, natural human behavior that is found in all times and in all places—or is it a historically specific social movement? And if the latter, what is its relationship to earlier movements with anti-authoritarian themes, as well as to examples of human behavior that resemble anarchism?

Different writers have proposed an array of different predecessors. Kropotkin offered Laozi, Zeno, early Christians, Rabelais, and parts of Rousseau and Diderot. Rudolf Rocker included other ancient Greeks (the Hedonists and Cynics) as well as the Gnostics, medieval Christian sects, fourteenth-century Christian theologian Petr Chelčický, and later Étienne de La Boetie and Sylvian Marechal. George Woodcock saw the first anarchist as the fourteenth-century

priest John Ball, and Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers as the first anarchist group. James Joll looked at French radicals like Étienne-Gabriel Morelly, Jacques-Roux, and Jean Varlet, and Richard Sonn added Nicolas de Condorcet. Jesus invariably ends up on some lists.

Certain syndicalists declared that anarchism was based solely around the class struggle—something that practically all the other anarchists (including those who are pro-syndicalist) rejected; these debates came to a head at the 1907 conference. This view also resurfaces in different contexts; usually it is deployed in workerist historiographies (Albert Meltzer, *Black Flame*), but it can also be found in Bookchin's notion of the "unbridgeable chasm" between "social" and "lifestyle" anarchism.

Rudolf Rocker, the best known anarcho-syndicalist thinker, does not follow this argument in his 1938 work *Anarcho-Syndicalism*. Like Kropotkin, he said "Anarchist ideas are to be found in every period of known history." Although his primary interest was in the potential of anarchism when it was tied to the labor movement, he also did not conflate anarchism and syndicalism, saying that syndicalism "developed quite spontaneously within the French working class." Rocker also conceptualized anarchism as a combination of liberalism and socialism. (9)

In Woodcock's seminal *Anarchism* (1962), he trod the line carefully between naturalism and historical specificity, even though he named a number of anarchism's historical predecessors. He said that "In general, the anarchist historians have confused certain attitudes which lie at the core of anarchism—faith in the essential decency of man, a desire for individual freedom, an intolerance of domination—with anarchism as a movement and a creed appearing at a certain time in history and having specific theories, aims, and methods." (10) However, he did not posit the movement as beginning with Godwin (or Proudhon).

Anarchism, he said, requires elements of both individualism and egalitarianism, and therefore it was not possible until the notion of the Individual arose in the post-medieval period. He saw the first expressions of the requisite combination of social justice and individual freedom in the English Civil War, with John Ball and Gerrard Winstanley's Diggers. Woodcock concluded that anarchist views "sprang from the spirit of the age"—which explained why they could be found in the many different thinkers in France, Germany, Britain, and the United States who simultaneously and independently constructed anarchistic philosophies. To show how widespread these notions were, Woodcock pointed to at least four French writers in the 1850s who used them—Proudhon, Anselme Bellegarrigue, Ernest Coeurderoy, and Joseph Déjacque. (11)

Although Woodcock had been a practicing anarchist, he ended by declaring the movement dead, saying existing anarchists were only "the ghost of the historical anarchist movement, a ghost that inspires neither fear among governments nor hope among peoples nor even interest among newspapermen." He acknowledged that "it is possible that the theoretical core of anarchism may still have the power to give life to a new form under changed historical circumstances." (12) Woodcock said that anarchism always ran against the tide of society's increasing centralization, and that syndicalism only succeeded in becoming a mass movement by compromising with these centralizing impulses. He asserted that lost causes are never won again, and so anarchism would remain mostly an inspiring personal ideal. (13) After the 1960s he acknowledged his miscall, and said that anarchism at that time was like "a phoenix in an awakening desert." (14)

James Joll in *The Anarchists* (1964) emphasized anarchism's social and psychological appeals, while situating it contextually. He said anarchism expressed a "recurrent psychological need" and pointed out its links to medieval eschatological Christian sects,

while simultaneously acknowledging that it was "a product of the nineteenth century. It is, in part, the result of the impact of machines and industry on a peasant or artisan society." Joll said that anarchists fought a two-front war: on one side, against the old landlords and priests, and on the other against the new revolutionary tyrants and bureaucrats. He argued that anarchism was "both a religious faith and a rational philosophy," and that this "double nature gives anarchism a wide and universal appeal." (15) He named a variety of Enlightenment figures and early socialists as predecessors.

Like Woodcock, Joll saw no place for anarchism in the modern world, since it is opposed to the "dominating trends of contemporary economic organization"—"mass production and consumption, and large industry under a centralized direction"—and therefore "it is hard to see how these could be adapted to anarchist ideas about production and exchange." Like Woodcock, he noted that anarchism's (but not syndicalism's) basic-but-unspoken assumptions were incompatible with large-scale industry, and that they were, in fact, based on "simplicity and frugality." (16)

Joll saw anarchism's intellectual contributions as challenging mainstream political and social assumptions, and in its warning of marxism's potential for dictatorship and the "dangers of making the wrong kind of revolution." However, he concluded that the "strength of anarchism has lain in the characters of those who have practiced it; and it is as an austere personal and moral code that will continue to attract people who want a total alternative to the values of contemporary society and politics and whose temperaments respond to the appeal of ideas carried to their logical conclusions, regardless of the practical difficulties involved." He also stressed the perennial appeal of individualist anarchism's notion of self-expression, transgression, and revolt, which would "have its disciples in every generation." (17)

Guérin in *Anarchism* said "Anarchism is really a synonym for socialism," and workers' self-management is its "most original creation." But Guérin's work was filled with contradictions: for example, despite the avowedly left-wing reading of anarchism, he included Stirner as one of the most important anarchists. And despite these historically specific claims, he also said that "anarchism can be described first and foremost as a visceral revolt. The Anarchist is above all a man in revolt. He rejects society as a whole along with its guardians." Guérin also said that the State is the primary enemy of anarchism. (18) In this sense, Guérin returned to the notion of anarchism as natural human behavior.

Richard Sonn's *Anarchism* is important in that it is one of the few secondary works by a non-anarchist that placed emphasis on anarchism's social and historical contexts. Sonn rejected transhistorical claims, saying that "despite precursors as varied as Lao-tze and Diderot, anarchism as an historical movement could not have emerged before the nineteenth century, nor outside Europe." Positioning anarchism as a reaction to the dual capitalist/industrial and liberal/democratic revolutions, he saw anarchism's sense of time as "simultaneously nostalgic, apocalyptic and utopian," and its goals as an attempt to preserve the individual freedom of the Enlightenment and the social solidarity of the medieval commune. (19) Coming after the failure of both liberalism and revolutionary nationalism to address social problems, anarchism became the negation of nationalism, imperialism, and monopoly capitalism—meaning that it swam against the stream of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (20)

Stressing anarchism's attempts to grapple with modernity, Sonn concluded (with the others) that syndicalism was anarchism's effort to "come to grips with modernity." (21) He also emphasized the influence of the Romantic tradition on both Bakunin and Landauer, and said that the major thinkers of the interim period (Woodcock, Goodman, Comfort, and

Read) followed a "neo-Romantic brand of anarchism" because of their stress on intuition, creativity, sexual non-repression, and social revolt.

Peter Marshall's nearly 800 page *Demanding the Impossible* was a return to some of the earlier conceptions of anarchism. He defined anarchism as "society without government," and therefore included individualists and the twentieth-century anarcho-capitalists. Whereas Woodcock had used trees as a metaphor for anarchism, (22) Marshall switched to water. Anarchism, he said, is "by its very nature...anti-dogmatic. It does not offer a fixed body of doctrine based on a particular world-view. It is a complex and subtle philosophy, embracing many different currents of thought and strategy. Indeed, anarchism is like a river with many currents and eddies, constantly changing and being refreshed by new surges but always moving towards the wide ocean of freedom." (23)

Although he does not go so far as to label the ancient and medieval religious and philosophical forerunners as "anarchists" themselves (Marshall said that "strictly speaking" these forerunners are "part of the prehistory of anarchism"), nonetheless the structure of his book strongly implied this reading. (24) There were extensive sections on these pre-nineteenth century Asian, Greek, medieval Christian, and Enlightenment movements.

Eric Hobsbawm, the marxist historian, saw anarchism largely through the eyes of orthodox marxism. In 1959's *Primitive Rebels*, he wrote about pre-Spanish Civil War anarchism in rural Andalusia, dismissing it as "perhaps the most impressive example of a modern mass millenarian movement or quasi-millenarian movement," which took the place of Catholicism for peasants who had been impoverished by social changes. He concluded that "classical anarchism is thus a form of peasant movement almost incapable of effective adaptation to modern conditions.... And thus the history of anarchism, almost alone among modern social movements, is one of unrelieved failure." (25)

Murray Bookchin offered readings of classical anarchism scattered in various places. He is most interesting for clearly differentiating between syndicalism and anarchism, emphasizing that the anarchists were not oriented towards class-based notions. In an essay on anarcho-syndicalism, he said:

Presyndicalist forms of anarchism were occupied with human liberation, in which the interests of the proletariat were not neglected, to be sure, but were fused in a generalized social interest that spanned a broad horizon of needs, concerns, and problems. Ultimately the satisfaction and resolution of these needs, concerns, and problems could be met only in the commune, not in a part of it, such as the factory, workshop, or farm. (26)

He also stressed how many classical anarchists took issue with syndicalism on a philosophical level. "These Anarchists saw in syndicalism a shift in focus from the commune to the trade union, from all of the oppressed to the industrial proletariat alone, from the streets to the factories, and, in emphasis at least, from insurrection to general strike." (27)

In terms of naturalism, at least early on Bookchin was an advocate of this position. In *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, he said that, "viewed from a broad historical perspective, anarchism is a libidinal upsurge of the people, a stirring of the social unconscious that reaches back, under many different names, to the earliest struggles of humanity against domination and authority." (28) Later, however, he moved away from this view; for example, he pointed out that the "legacy of freedom" was in no way guaranteed to succeed (see Bookchin section below). The naturalistic approach tends to look at pre-State, pre-industrial tribal societies (as Kropotkin did), and therefore, taken to its logical conclusion, can point towards primitivism. But it should be noted that none of the naturalistic anarchists came to primitivist conclusions; Kropotkin, for example in *Fields, Factories and Workshops*, embraced technological developments in his mixed industrial-agricultural proposal.

## **What Was Classical Anarchism?**

Anarchism draws from the same elements found in a variety of earlier social and political movements, which could be considered both “anarchic” (such as the urge to rebel) and “anarchistic” (such as decentralized rebel peasant movements). However, classical anarchism was a historically and culturally specific political movement. As Woodcock pointed out, it combined an orientation towards both the individual and the social, and that could only have arisen at a specific time in Europe. The majority of its major theorists did not see it as oriented either exclusively, or even centrally, towards the working-class, although as one of the largest and most oppressed social groups they were obviously included. Instead, it had a triadic focus on the sources of oppression: it was against capitalism, the State, and the Church; Proudhon called this the “trinity of absolutism.” (29) It is the third element—which included “morality” and not just the Church as a social or organizational structure—that opened anarchism to feminism, queer liberation, and other forms of opposition to oppression that today would be referred to as social or cultural.

However, overlooked by many of these commentators was that classical anarchism had three other elements. It was specifically 1) *cosmopolitan*, 2) *experimental*, and 3) *tied to the modern left*. It is also for these reasons anarchism is a historically specific movement.

First, anarchism was principally *cosmopolitan* in that it was predicated on a rejection of nationalism (revolutionary nationalism in particular) and had a universalist view of humanity. It always stressed a cosmopolitan vision of human society; when Kropotkin sided with the Allies in World War One, for example, he was condemned by anarchists like Malatesta for backsliding on the national question, by assuming that the victory of one nation (Germany) over another (Russia) would result in a gain or loss for ordinary people. In several published criticisms of Kropotkin’s position, Malatesta said of Kropotkin “anarchists have forgotten their principles” (as one article was titled), and that he “thinks

that the national questions must be solved before the social question.” (30) Anarchism, as a principle, never championed the maintenance (or victory) of an specific ethnic or national group as a radical political act that would negate problems in the present.

Second, anarchism was always *experimental*. It looked to the ability of the people to create new social forms, and often was tied to the most “advanced” cultural elements of its day, including the avant-garde arts. In this sense it must be separated from communitarian social movements that were focused on preserving traditional cultures.

Third, anarchism was something that emerged from and was tied to the *modern left*. It emerged from, was in dialogue with, and drew from other left-wing traditions—whether in agreement with or opposition to them. Anarchism makes no sense out of this orientation, and its incorporation today of the social struggles of the left (including queer and trans rights, feminism, anti-imperialism, anti-racism, and ecology) shows this continuing dialogue.

## 7. Contemporary Anarchist Theoretical Approaches

This study will focus on how contemporary anarchist thought is *structured*—as opposed to analyzing the specific theoretical claims of different theorists. The approaches of contemporary anarchist theorists can be roughly grouped into five categories:

1. Restatements of classical anarchist positions. These include Colin Ward, Sam Dolgoff, and *Black Flame*.

2. Those who are anarchist in *self-identification and general political framework*, but who *intellectually* follow directly in lineages other than classical anarchism. These include Stephen Shukaitis, pro-Situs, communisation theories, Saul Newman, and—in a complex way—John Zerzan.

3. Those who intellectually *combine* other theoretical lineages with classical anarchism to create new hybrid theories, whether in a crude combination (Wayne Price; Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin; white privilege adherents) or in a sophisticated synthesis (Bookchin).

4. Attempts to formulate an “ideal type” of anarchism that claims to elucidate an *imagined majority* of political practitioners. The most well-known proponents of this approach are David Graeber, Uri Gordon, and Cindy Milstein. (1)

Naturally there is some overlap; Graeber both restates classical anarchist themes and makes an ideal type analysis of contemporary anarchists; Day and May primarily channel poststructuralism but can also be seen as encroaching on ideal type territory; and some also claim anarchism as basically an ethical approach. (2)

## **1. Restatements of Classical Anarchism**

Some contemporary anarchists rely on restatements of one of any number of traditional anarchist positions. This position is more common in Europe and Latin America than in the United States or Canada; and it is more common to find this among activists and non-academic writers than university-based intellectuals.

Although often overlooked in the United States, the British writer Colin Ward is one of the best representatives of restatement; one of the major interim-period figures, his best known work is 1973's *Anarchy in Action*. He followed the works of Peter Kropotkin in many ways, stressing the "natural" human inclination toward mutual aid. He also shared Kropotkin's interest in urban planning, and stressed housing issues. His is basically a restatement of the potential of communities, left to themselves outside of the State structure, to engage in non-market-based self-organization to meet their own needs.

Samuel Dolgoff also engaged in this approach. Partly through his tireless propaganda work, for a period he was the best-known contemporary U.S. anarcho-syndicalist writer. While he did important work on Bakunin, assembling the best-known English-language anthology of his works, Dolgoff restated many of the classic claims of anarcho-syndicalism: anarchists should organize the working class into syndicalist unions; national liberation movements are cross-class alliances which simply replace old rulers with new ones; technology is neutral by itself, but once in the hands of the working class will be used for the benefit of all; and all while rejecting marxism as a crudely economistic theory of history. His work would hardly be out of place in 1920.

*Black Flame* also restated an orthodox workerist position with origins in the first decade of the twentieth century, which held that the only real anarchism was based on the working class and class struggle, and all other forms are pretenders to the name. Because this book

is the most developed example of this kind of work, its claims will be dealt with later in more detail.

## **2. Political Anarchists From Other Intellectual Lineages**

There are also those who are anarchist in their *self-identification and politics*, but who *intellectually* clearly follow theoretical lineages other than classical anarchism.

These approaches can fall into one of three sub-categories:

a) Political anarchists who, looking for theoretical grounding, adopt other theoretical traditions, but stay within the political framework of anarchism (Stephen Shukaitis, Jason Adams) or who intentionally set out to fit another theoretical tradition inside an anarchist framework (Saul Newman). For those who went to graduate school in the decade after Seattle, the two most popular traditions to look to were autonomous marxism and post-structuralism.

Saul Newman's *From Bakunin to Lacan* does this very self-consciously; Newman, interested in anarchist political practice but displeased with classical anarchist theory, intentionally jettisoned the theoretical underpinning for anarchism while maintaining the framework, and then offered a reading of poststructuralism (particularly Lacan) that gave an alternative theoretical framework to insert into a "hollowed out" political practice. Stephen Shukaitis's *Imaginal Machines* also works within the anarchist political framework but its ideas and concepts come directly out of the autonomous marxist political tradition (with perhaps some post-structuralism mixed in).

b) Followers of non-anarchist theoretical traditions who, on their intellectual or political journey, find themselves in broad agreement with anarchist politics (here, usually meaning

they take positions that are both anti-capitalist and anti-statist), and adopt the label. (These include Silvia Federici and John Zerzan; Zerzan is a particularly unusual case, as he combines a number of different non-anarchist intellectual traditions, and his case study looks at his intellectual structure very closely). Sometimes there are no readily identifiable political differences between those who call themselves anarchists and those who do not, such as Silvia Federici versus other autonomists. Conversely is the example of John Holloway, the marxist author of *How to Change the World Without Taking Power*, and who is by-and-large considered an anarchist by many anarchists—even though he himself vigorously rejects the label.

c) There are also a number of adherents to different left anti-authoritarian trends who, perhaps because of the particularities of the U.S. political scene, consider themselves anarchists—even though it is unlikely they would do so if they were in Europe. For example, pro-Situs (especially before 2002) and followers of insurrectionism and communisation theory (especially after 2005) are two of the more common examples.

However each of these actors or thinkers come to the position of calling themselves “anarchists,” what unites them all is that their parent theory comes from distinct, existing intellectual lineages which, in their original forms, are not and do not identify as anarchist. Neither the Situationists, ultra-leftists, Italian autonomists, nor any of the major post-structuralist thinkers, identified as either political anarchists or identified with the classical anarchist movement’s intellectual positions. Neither Debord, Deleuze, Foucault, Bordiga, nor Negri were (or are) anarchists. They had different ontological and epistemological stances which did not lead to anarchist conclusions—at least to their own opinions. Debord, the thinker from this list most closely associated with anarchism, explicitly distanced himself from it—as did Negri and Hardt. (3)

Being politically, but not intellectually, anarchist must require a kind of intellectual double-consciousness for some, especially for those in category (a). Classical anarchism is (or should be) important because it offers a philosophical grounding which is consistent with its political practice; that is, if its ideas are taken to their logical conclusions, one should end up with consistent anarchist political conclusions. What gets offered, so often, in its place is a faith-based politics—where the “faith” is in anarchism. People believe in anarchism without a reasoning for it; the answer is already preordained. If any of these varying, non-anarchist theoretical ideas are taken seriously, there is no reason that an anarchist political practice should result. Political anarchists who support this approach end up with a kind of double-consciousness: they base their theory on any number of other theoretical perspectives, even while their political practice is pre-ordained as anarchist, making it a kind of faith-based political perspective.

### **3. Hybrids of Anarchism and Other Traditions**

There are quite a number of thinkers who intellectually *combine* other theoretical lineages with classical anarchism to create new hybrid theories. This is a common occurrence when already politicized actors come from other traditions (often, but not limited to, marxism) and then move to anarchism intellectually, but retain or combine elements of their previous theoretical tradition. Former marxists Wayne Price and Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin both provide examples, while Murray Bookchin forged a particularly complex version of this type of approach. (4)

Price and Ervin both took boilerplate elements of the Marxist-Leninist schema and then combined them with anarchism. For example, Price saw the importance of an ideologically coherent activist grouping as the center for the dissemination of revolutionary subjectivity (only instead of a vanguard party, it is a bottom-up federation); working-class organization and class struggle as central; and endorsed national self-determination for oppressed

nations. Ervin had similar views, but was more influenced by Third World Marxism. He argued that anarchists should organize either as multiracial anarchists or as ethnically separate groups of oppressed nationalities with the right to national self-determination; and argued that it was these oppressed nations who were the key to revolutionary transformation. However, both of them—unlike Orthodox Marxists—acknowledged the need for a multi-issue struggle around other issues, including homophobia, sexism, and environmentalism. Joel Olson, an anarchist who later adopted white privilege theory (in a manner similar to those in 2b), also can be included in this category. While he continued to identify with anarchism (see, for example, his contribution to the Nathan J. Jun and Shane Wahl’s 2010 anthology *New Perspectives on Anarchism*), Olson adopted views that, like Ervin and Price, were at different points in theoretical opposition with anarchist views. In his case the neo-Leninist views seemed to simply “trump” the anarchist ones, as the parent theory was the white privilege analysis—and not an anarchist critique, which otherwise was the general practice and framework.

#### **4. Ideal Type Anarchism**

The last approach to contemporary anarchism is “ideal type” anarchism. David Graeber’s formulation is the best known. It is also developed by Uri Gordon in *Anarchy Alive!*, and a loosely comparable version of it is offered by Cindy Milstein in *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*.

Ideal type anarchism claims to represent the basic beliefs of the majority of really existing anarchists, from which it derives its authority. Adherents can offer a simpler or more complex version of anarchism, and may or may not claim that this amounts to a theory (although the results are the same). Despite its claims to represent the majority of anarchists, in fact, it is usually at odds with the majority of other contemporary anarchist theoretical stances.

In general, it can be seen as an inversion of the classical “synthesis” approach. Synthesis sought to create a structure which united different approaches to anarchism under one big tent. Ideal type inverts it; the tent becomes a trap to include all “different” kinds of approaches, whose theoretical content is then evacuated; at its core, especially in Graeber’s works, is an anti-intellectual attack on political theory itself, and in theory’s place offers merely groundless statements of belief. As mentioned before, these beliefs remain roughly consistent with the political framework of classical anarchism, even though it—especially for Bakunin and Kropotkin—had theoretical systems from which their framework was derived. Now, in ideal type, all that is left is the framework. Like postanarchism (with which it has a number of affinities), ideal type can also expand the notion of what is “anarchist” to include some entities with views and conceptions that are distinctly in opposition to classical anarchist beliefs. However, the very frameworks of both postanarchism and ideal type justify the inclusion of these new elements, as well as demobilize any internal debate as to where the boundaries are to be set for inclusion. (As Foucault once supposedly quipped about Derrida’s epigones—“They deconstruct everything except their masters’ beliefs!”) Ideal type anarchism, and to a lesser extent postanarchism, have a tendency to include everything except view which *directly* challenge their own belief structures. Graeber’s conception of anarchism will be addressed at length below, as his has been the most influential.

Below, this study will examine a number of the most coherent contemporary anarchist perspectives to show how they relate to this schema.

## **7a. Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt's *Black Flame* (restatement of classical anarchism)**

*Black Flame* is of particular interest for several reasons: one, it offers a structured approach to understanding what anarchism means on a theoretical level, with close attention paid to self-identified anarchists; two, it addresses both classical and contemporary anarchism; and three, it is the most well-developed statement of one of the older anarchist strains—it is a classically sectarian version of anarcho-syndicalism. It seeks not just to polemicize with other anarchists, but to literally *write them out* of the narrative of anarchism.

First, however, a brief historical detour is required.

### **Syndicalist Revisionism**

The proceedings of the 1907 Anarchist conference in Amsterdam are the earliest evidence of “syndicalist revisionism.” Today the conference is remembered for the debate between Errico Malatesta (one of the “old Bakuninists”) and Pierre Monatte (a young revolutionary syndicalist who would later join the French Communist Party). However, Maurizio Antonioli, in his introduction to the conference transcripts, argued that it was actually Amédée Dunois who was the main proponent of the syndicalist position, both before and after the conference. Dunois argued that there were two kinds of anarchism, “workerist” and “pure.” (Pure anarchism was completely non-marxist; it was distinguished from the later synthesis position, which explicitly included marxist-influenced anarchists under its umbrella). He said, furthermore, that “revolutionary syndicalism is anarchism.” (1)

Malatesta, who had been in the First International with Bakunin, disagreed with Dunois and Monatte. Whereas Monatte, citing the CGT Charter of Amiens, held that “syndicalism is sufficient unto itself,” Malatesta countered that “this is, in my opinion, a radically erroneous

doctrine." While repeating that he supported syndicalism, Malatesta clarified that, "I refuse to take this means as an end, and I would reject it if it were to make us lose sight of the other elements of our anarchist ideas, or more simply other means of propaganda and action." (2) Malatesta goes on to say that there "are no class interests"—and so there are no classes. (3) He ends his argument with a forceful renunciation of workerist anarchism's ontology:

I used to deplore the fact that comrades isolated themselves from the workers' movement. Today, I deplore the fact that many of us are going to the opposite extreme and allowing ourselves to be absorbed by that movement. Once again I repeat, workers' organization, the strike, the general strike, direct action, the boycott, sabotage and armed insurrection are all simply *means*. Anarchy is the *goal*. **The anarchist revolution that we want goes far beyond the interests of one class: what is proposed is the complete liberation of humanity, which is currently in a state of servitude, from an economic, political and mental point of view.** So, let us be wary of any unilateral, simplistic means of action. Syndicalism, an excellent means of action because of the worker forces it places at our disposal, cannot be our only goal. And even less so should it allow us to lose sight of the only goal that is worth the effort: Anarchy. (3) [Emphasis added]

Shortly thereafter, this dualistic structure—the our-way-or-the-highway syndicalists, versus all other anarchists—apparently became "individualists versus syndicalists." The so-called individualists included anarchists who were interested in the visual arts, in violent actions (including the attentats), and in cultural work. Essentially all anarchists who were not focused primarily on organizing the working class into unions became labeled as individualists, regardless of their actual views about class struggle, the role of the individual, etc.

According to Alexandre Skirda, in France in the 1890s syndicalism was directly counterposed to individualism. At that time, individualism was tied to advocacy for education (including adult night classes), birth control and abortion rights (and on the darker side, neo-Malthusianism and eugenics); veganism; anarchist "colonies" and free spaces; as well as anti-patriotic and anti-militarist activities. (4) (Ironically, today few of these activities would be seen as characteristic of individualism.)

Murray Bookchin later made this dualistic “social versus individual” conception the basis of his *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* polemic. One of the more curious elements of his argument that has confused many readers is that, according to him, “lifestyle anarchism” consists of many explicitly political trends, often post-marxist in origin, which have elements of organizing on a mass scale (these include primitivist, situationist, and ultra-left politics), or are social anarchist but with mystical or religious elements (like Landauer or Dorothy Day). Therefore “lifestyle anarchism” became a kind of boogeyman for everything Bookchin did not like (except perhaps syndicalism, with which he also disagreed). A more in-depth description is provided below.

Looking at the origins of his dualism clears up a lot of this confusion. If “individualism” was originally used as a (negative) term to include everything from educational experiments to birth control to veganism, and these cultural elements had a much greater prominence in the post-1960s era (even if they are most closely connected to post-marxism), then Bookchin’s labeling makes much more sense. *Black Flame* structured its narrative around this same dualism; but instead of declaring the other “lifestylism,” it simply declared all other things to be “non-anarchist” (including Murray Bookchin himself).

*Black Flame* is essentially a restatement of Dunios’s century-old argument: revolutionary syndicalism *is* anarchism. Starting with this claim, the book then goes on to gerrymander anarchist history. What it refers to as the “broad anarchist tradition” included all class-struggle anarchists (including non-syndicalists who saw class as central), and almost all syndicalists. (5) Contra almost all other historians, the authors explicitly excluded Godwin, Stirner, Proudhon, Tucker, and Tolstoy in their definition of anarchism. They said, “Nor do we use terms like ‘philosophical anarchism’...‘individualist anarchism’...‘Christian anarchism’...or ‘lifestyle anarchism’...as we do not regard these currents as part of the broad

anarchist tradition.... 'Class struggle' anarchism, sometimes called revolutionary or communist anarchism, is not a type of anarchism; in our view, it is the *only* anarchism." (6)

However, they did include non-anarchist marxists and syndicalists like Daniel DeLeon, James Connolly, and "Big Bill" Haywood as anarchists. (7) They also enrolled hundreds of thousands of syndicalist union members without subjecting them to any ideological criteria. Last, they included anarchists who forcefully disagreed with their vision of anarchism as centered on class, including Errico Malatesta, Emma Goldman, and Peter Kropotkin.

They claimed their work proceeded on firm, even necessary, methodological grounds. They started out on solid ground, rejecting naturalistic descriptions:

The tendency to project anarchism onto all of human history has related problems: on the one hand, no serious examination of Lao-tzu, the Anabaptists and Bakunin can maintain that they shared the same views and goals, so it is not clear why they should be grouped together; and on the other hand, if anarchism is a universal feature of society, then it becomes difficult indeed to explain *why* it arises, or to place it in historical context, to delineate its boundaries, and analyze its class character and role at a particular time. To claim that anarchism is universal is a useful legitimizing myth for an embattled movement; to take such a claim seriously, however, does little to advance the analysis and activities of that movement. It fails to historicize the broad anarchist tradition, or explain why it arose as well as why it appealed to particular classes. (8)

They went on to a methodological arguments:

A good definition is one that highlights the distinguishing features of a given category, does so in a coherent fashion, and is able to differentiate that category from others, thereby organizing knowledge as well as enabling effective analysis and research. The usual definition of anarchism fails on all these grounds.... Definitions, however, serve an important purpose besides simply classifying data. They provide the basis for analysis and research, and there the standard definition of anarchism is also not effective.... A tendency to project anarchism on to a wide range of disparate figures also results in serious problems for the theoretical analysis of the tradition." If it includes so many disparate things, "then anarchism *must* seem incoherent and therefore cannot be subjected to rigorous theoretical investigation. This was the problem Eltzbacher faced, and it remains real today. (9)

So far so good. Then they claimed that anarchism "emerged from the 1860s onward within the context of the modern working class and socialist movement, within the womb of the

First International,” and that the platform was merely a “*restatement* of the Bakuninist approach.” (10)

They did this by picking the brief period that Bakunin was in the First International and was making some rather narrow workerist statements (in fact they concentrated on just two articles; for context, Bakunin’s *Oeuvre* includes 350 works), and made this the defining, set-in-stone moment of anarchism. (11) (Bakunin made many inconsistent statements over his life, partly because his ideology fundamentally changed and partly due to his activist tendency to tailor his views to whatever audience he was speaking to.) This ignored many things: what Bakunin said directly before or after the International; his vast and deep intellectual debt to Proudhon; and what the other anarchists around him in the International believed (particularly Malatesta and Nettlau). The fact that numerous other radicals, including but not limited to Proudhon, Bellegarrigue, and Élisée Reclus, were referring to themselves as “anarchists” in the 1840s and 1850s, is irrelevant. In an 1850 article, Engels even denounced the “Friends of Anarchy.” Even other workerist anarchist historians such as Dolgoff and Guérin considered Bakunin to have become an anarchist well before his entry into the First International. Workerists Albert Meltzer and Alexandre Skirda also see anarchism as developing much earlier. (12) All of these facts were irrelevant to *Black Flame*’s supposedly historical sweep. Therefore *Black Flame* completely ignored the actual historical record on the genesis of anarchism. Like Athena, it apparently sprang fully formed from the head of Bakunin at a brief moment chosen by the authors, and henceforth was frozen in time forever.

They went on to repeat what is a largely vulgar marxism as the basis for anarchism (although at times they admitted that syndicalist unions could be formed for the unemployed, peasants, students, youth, housewives, women, artists, and academics). (13)

Nonetheless, these unions (but not issues) revolved around the lodestar of a largely economic, Second International-style worldview.

## **7b. Murray Bookchin (hybrid)**

Murray Bookchin offered contemporary anarchism's most comprehensive and wide-ranging theoretical framework. Like a number of writers influenced by Hegel (Marx not being the least of them), Bookchin attempted to construct a sweeping theory that included historical, anthropological, philosophical, and political elements as part of a unified whole.

Intellectually, Bookchin's work can be seen as a sophisticated combination of Hegelian Marxism with ecology and classical anarchism (particularly Kropotkin).

### **Bookchin's Marxist Period: The Young Communist League, the Socialist Workers Party, and the Movement for a Democracy of Content**

Born in 1921, Bookchin was a red diaper baby who grew up in the Bronx. At age nine he joined his first leftist group, the Young Pioneers, and in 1934 became a member of the Young Communist League. In 1939, he joined the new Trotskyist group the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP), which included leading leftist intellectuals such as Sidney Hook, Max Shachtman, C.L.R. James, and Dwight Macdonald. In the same year he took a job in a New Jersey factory and joined the UE union, and was soon elected to the District Council; later he got a job at a GM plant in Manhattan and joined the militant United Auto Workers (UAW) union. He did not leave the SWP in the Workers Party split along with the libertarian-leaning intellectual core; however, shortly thereafter he joined a minority faction in the party, and became influenced by fellow party member Josef Weber, a German Trotskyist émigré. Triply disillusioned by his own failure to radicalize the workers in his plant, the larger failure of the post-war strike wave to break capitalism, and ultimately by the UAW's 1948 contract with GM, Bookchin (along with many other wartime Trotskyists) abandoned the notion of the revolutionary position of the proletariat and left the SWP. Unlike many of the others, however, he did not leave politics or move to the right; instead, he joined Weber and others in a new project: the Movement for a Democracy of Content (MDC), which published

*Contemporary Issues*. (1) Janet Biehl noted that Leon Trotsky had said that if the workers did not make a revolution after World War Two, marxism would have to be rethought. And that is what Weber and Bookchin—two Stalinists turned Trotskyists who were now turning something else—both proceeded to do. (2)

Under the intellectual leadership of Weber, the MDC abandoned a central focus on the working class, instead wanting to mobilize the masses in a democratic fashion and in support of a post-scarcity perspective. Janet Biehl says it was Bookchin who helped influence both Weber in particular and the group in general on ecological issues, as well as to look at the Greek polis for democratic inspiration. Bookchin said that, "Weber played a liberating role in my life as a young man because he unstitched what remained of my Marxist straitjacket and provided alluring perspectives." (3) Bookchin published a number of articles in *Contemporary Issues*, including "The Problems of Chemicals in Food," which became the basis of his first book, *Our Synthetic Environment*.

By the early 1960s, he was deeply involved in anarchism, ahead of the curve for the New Left's revival of the movement, and in particular with an ecological reading of it. He became involved in CORE (Congress for Racial Equality), as well as downtown New York City anarchist groups including the Libertarian League, the Lower East Side Anarchists (later the East Side Anarchists), and the *Anarchos* group. Bookchin's "Ecology and Revolutionary Thought," one of the first left-wing radical ecological writings, was published in 1964; it summarizes his points from *Our Synthetic Environment* and develops others that will become the basis of *The Ecology of Freedom*. In the essay he emphasized that the physical sciences and revolutionary politics have always gone hand in hand, but he now argued that the corollary of ecological science was anarchism. Bookchin's famous "Listen, Marxist!" essay was circulated at the last SDS conference in 1969 in a failed attempt to counter the

influence of both the neo-Leninist sects like the Progressive Labor Party and others who would turn into the New Communist Movement.

In the 1970s he taught at Ramapo College in New Jersey, as well as Goddard College in Vermont, where he helped found the Institute for Social Ecology. He worked with the anti-nuclear Clamshell Alliance in the late 1970s and spoke at the 1980 Libertarian Party Conference. In 1987, he was the keynote speaker at the first U.S. Greens gathering and he was involved in the Left Green Network, an attempt to counter the move in the Greens towards centralization and electoral participation.

He published numerous books during this time, including some on the more mainstream publishing houses: *Our Synthetic Environment* (1962), *The Crisis of the Cities* (1965), *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (1971), *The Limits of the City* (1973), *The Spanish Anarchists* (1977), *Toward an Ecological Society* (1980), *The Ecology of Freedom* (1982), *The Modern Crisis* (1986), *The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship* (1987), and *Remaking Society* (1990). (4) He published another eight books before he died, and even more appeared posthumously.

As the 1990s went on, Bookchin became increasingly frustrated with countercultural currents (which he had championed in the 1960s), and increasingly contemptuous of currents in radical ecology that involved spirituality and deep ecology. Overall he became less interested in ecology, spontaneity, the colonization of the lifeworld by hierarchical relations, the radical potential of lifestyle (as well as anti-racist, feminist, and related "identity" politics), the Frankfurt School, an appreciation for the social lives of non-industrial groups, and non-Western spiritual/philosophical systems. Instead, his focus shifted to "reason," the Enlightenment, and direct democracy.

Janet Biehl says “as early as 1995 he was telling the people closest to him that he no longer considered himself part of that movement”; this was the same year he published the polemical *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*. (5) In 1999 he made this announcement public; in one (possibly apocryphal) story, he refused to speak to the *New York Times* after the Seattle demonstrations, ironically leaving them to instead interview John Zerzan. By 2002, Bookchin announced that he was no longer an anarchist and attempted to found a new political school, Communalism (still based on social ecology); he died soon after in July 2006.

To adequately address Bookchin’s oeuvre (which includes around twenty books and many more uncollected essays) is far beyond the ability of this study; instead three of his major works will be examined.

### ***Our Synthetic Environment (1962)***

Bookchin’s first book in English was published in 1962 on a mainstream press (Knopf) under the pseudonym Lewis Herber. (An earlier essay, “The Problems of Chemicals in Food,” was published in 1953 in German translation as part of a book, authored with Götz Ohly, called *Lebensgefährliche "Lebensmittel."*) Although Bookchin started moving towards anarchism in the late 1950s (6), this work is firmly in the marxist tradition. He said, “I wrote my earliest, almost book-length work on the ecological dislocations produced by capitalism, ‘The Problems of Chemicals in Food’, in 1952, while I was a neo-Marxist and had in no way been influenced by anarchist thinkers.” (7) All of the basic conceptual arguments of the book could be found in any standard eco-marxist text today. Like many writers, many of the themes and interests that remained throughout his career are present in embryonic form.

Published in the McCarthy-era, it is a crypto-radical book. Marx is never mentioned—although Justus von Liebig is, upon whom Marx drew for some environmental framing. The

single mention of “anarchy” is: “In the absence of a meaningful system of grade labeling, the homemaker is surrounded by nutritional anarchy.” (8) The book’s framework wrapped around what was largely a compendium of already published scientific work, some of which was being actively publicized. Today, practically every claim he made in this book is recognized as common knowledge. However, the book was not a success, although in 1974 it was still timely enough for Harper & Row to reissue it.

Bookchin argued that, especially in the postwar period of expanded industrial production and the introduction of new technologies, environmental and health problems increased significantly. In classical dialectical fashion, he argued that looking for genetic precursors for many diseases ignored the impact of the environment on humans, which was where the focus should be. The instances of many diseases—cancers, especially—increased as synthetic compounds were dispersed throughout all aspects of the world, including fertilizers in soil, pesticides in plants, steroids in livestock, preservatives in food, and pollution in the air. Capitalist workplaces and congested cities caused stress and alienation. Standardization and centralization were pervading the world.

Progress had become entangled in the dialectic of domination of the natural world. (9) The answer was not to become anti-technological or anti-scientific, but to make “rational” use of human knowledge and harness it to form “a balanced relationship between man and nature.” He said, “the two spheres, natural and synthetic, must be brought into a complementary relationship based on a clear understanding of man’s needs as an animal organism and the effects of his behavior on the natural world.” (10)

To be healthy, the first steps people need to take are to lose weight, stop smoking, and exercise. And while some changes can be made individually, ultimately they will have to happen on a larger level. Human-scaled urban areas tied to small agricultural units are

needed. Labor hours need be reduced and mindless labor minimized. Diversity and decentralization in workplace organization, in the relationship of the city and the country, and in agricultural techniques, must replace standardization.

### **Anarchism or Annihilation? *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (1971)**

Bookchin's *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* is a 1971 collection of essays, most of which originally appeared between 1965 and 1968. Just as *Our Synthetic Environment* put him ahead of the environmental movement, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* showed how he was consistently one step ahead of the unfolding countercultural 1960s. He was one of many former Orthodox Marxists who were rethinking their intellectual project by rediscovering Hegel, moving away from the centrality of labor and economics, and trying to come to terms with the post-war consumer society; his company here included the Frankfurt School, *Socialism ou Barbarie*, and his former party comrades from the SWP, the Johnson-Forrest Tendency. Bookchin, however, took this two steps further, putting these ideas both into a direct engagement with classical anarchism and turning his focus directly onto ecology. (Some of these others did address ecological questions, but none to the extent that Bookchin did). His new intellectual brew was neither simply Hegelian Marxism (although it was that in a sense), classical anarchism (although he did continue and expand the anarchist project), nor ecological thought (although he was an ecologist)—but rather a combination of all of them.

*Post Scarcity-Anarchism* is in many ways comparable to *One-Dimensional Man*, and remains firmly Hegelian Marxist in its theoretical approach. (Bookchin himself says that one can call “the new modes of struggle, or organization, of propaganda and of lifestyle...whatever you will, even ‘Marxism’ if you wish. We have chosen to call this new approach post-scarcity anarchism.” The relationship with Marx is complicated. Bookchin repeatedly disavows Marx, saying that his approach was forged in a scarcity economy and his goals were oriented towards creating the preconditions for freedom. Bookchin said that marxism is “not

visionary or revolutionary enough,” and “the problem is not to ‘abandon’ Marxism or to ‘annul’ it, but to transcend it dialectically.” (11)

His main complaints against Marx included his emphasis on centralization and the role of the factory in deradicalizing the proletariat, rather than disciplining and uniting them, as had been claimed it would. (12) (Bookchin was content to read Marx largely in the light of the Second and Third Internationals and he did not attempt a comprehensive re-reading of his works, unlike so many have done since the 1960s). Bookchin said that “Marx’s greatest contribution to revolutionary thought is his dialectic of social development.” (13) Aside from these complaints, Bookchin seemed to be in agreement with the notion (that a number of thinkers hold) that Marx was right in his own time—but, as social conditions have changed, his views are no longer correct. The cake can be had and eaten, too.

By the mid-1960s Bookchin argued, alongside many others (the most well-known of whom was Marcuse) that, especially in the United States, automation had created the “material preconditions for human freedom.” The possibility of a utopian society, in which labor time could be decreased and work itself restructured, was now upon us. At the same time, “bourgeois exploitation and manipulation are undermining the very capacity of the earth to sustain advanced forms of life.” (14) Whereas in the past the question was socialism or barbarism, the options were now “anarchism or annihilation.” (15)

However, these new conditions did not annul the old ones. Classes and class struggle did not disappear, but they ceased “to have revolutionary implications.” The new anarchist revolution “attracts all those who feel the burdens of exploitation, poverty, racism, imperialism and, yes, those whose lives are frustrated by consumerism, suburbia, the mass media, the family, school, the supermarket and the prevailing system of repressed sexuality.” The proletariat is no longer the revolutionary subject; it is now “literally the great

majority of society,” and the revolutionaries must have the active (or passive) support of all classes of people. To Bookchin, the conflict seemed to be one more of generations than classes. (16)

He saw anarchism as “a libidinal movement of humanity against coercion in any form, reaching back in time to the very emergence of propertied society, class rule and the state”; but anarchism could not achieve its goals in the past because of scarcity and the low level of technological development. (17) People create a variety of spontaneous forms, such as the workers’ councils, and these forms could be seen in various radical uprisings such as in Petrograd in 1905, Spain in 1936, and Paris in 1968. Today, confronted by the “tension between what-is and what-could-be,” these libidinal impulses toward justice and freedom should to be unleashed. (18) “The problems of social reconstruction have been reduced to practical tasks that can be solved spontaneously by self-liberatory acts of society.” The city, bureaucracy, centralized economy, patriarchal family, and marketplace will be negated; their replacements will be ecologically balanced communities, face-to-face assemblies, regional eco-technology, a liberated sexuality, and communism. (19) There is something rather automatic about the schema; it should be noted that Bookchin called *the movements themselves*—and not his conception of them—“post-scarcity anarchism.” Later on, he lost this tendency towards automatism and moved back toward the position that ideas need to be imparted through education.

### ***The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy (1982)***

In 1991, Bookchin said “*The Ecology of Freedom* still remains the most comprehensive statement of my ideas and of social ecology generally,” and was the “keystone” work of his “theoretical arch.” (20) By 2005, he said it had been read by 60,000 people and was translated into six languages. (21) In this opus, he conjured up a world-historical account comparable to the works of Hegel and Marx. Instead of the world-spirit or class struggle,

Bookchin posited the emergence of hierarchy and domination as the central story of human history, and chronicled how it came to be, its opposition, and the future society that could come into being. Like Hegel, Marx, and Adorno and Horkheimer (*The Ecology of Freedom* sometimes reads like an explicitly anarchist version of the latter's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*), Bookchin took a speculative dialectical anthropology and looked backward into pre-literature societies to paint a fairly unilinear picture of human development. This description of future potentials was less rosy than Marx's, but far more hopeful than Adorno and Horkheimer's.

Bookchin says that some of the things he advocated earlier in *Post-Scarcity Anarchism* (including decentralization, alternative technologies, a reduction in pollution, and organic farming) had been adopted, but only piecemeal, and as such had become recuperated into the capitalist system. What was needed at that moment was a unifying perspective that tied these things together and gave them a "radical thrust." (22)

He outlined his program of social ecology as an attempt to look to the principles of ecology to forge a new political perspective which upheld "unity of diversity" (23) and rethought the approach of science. It was based on the idea that human domination of other humans preceded the domination of nature; that humans are the self-conscious part of nature; and that there is a legacy of freedom that runs through history, can be recovered, and will hopefully prevail over the legacy of domination under which we live.

Bookchin made several claims in this work. First, like the other post-Hegelians, he saw history as moving from an initial, positive state of human society progressively through stages of darkening. He posited that "organic communities"—non-literate, non-industrial communities—were an original state of being which embodied both social egalitarianism and a relationship with nature that was closest to "kinship." These communities epitomized

"unity in diversity" and had no hierarchies (not even between adults and children), and were "free of coercion and command." (24) They were based on usufruct, with no conception of exchange or reciprocity, and had a minimum standard of living (the "irreducible minimum") that all members were guaranteed.

Bookchin largely constructed his argument against an orthodox marxism which posited that hierarchical divisions arose from an accumulation of material surpluses. Instead, he posited that *conceptual* categories arise, which then are transformed into different categories which keep the same form—the "epistemologies of rule." He said early village societies were supplanted by towns (and then cities and later empires); collective control became elitist control; kinship relationships became territorial and then class relations; and popular assemblies and councils of elders became state bureaucracies. (25)

The first hierarchy came from the sexual division of labor, followed by the rule of elders. The rise of the shamanic groups was of particular importance since it "solidifies the privileges of the elders" and these groups were "incipient political institutions." (26) Familial bonds were replaced by obligations to leaders, and the domination of the earth commenced. The inauguration of "domination" also meant that its counterpart, "freedom," emerged. Justice was the flipside of "equivalence," a concept without meaning until usufruct was broken. The city arose and these new concepts of inequality, unleashed by the dissolution of the blood tie, were given a material reality.

But these hierarchical forms gave rise to their utopian opposites, the "legacy of freedom." Bookchin also recounted the history of European oppositional movements that had already been documented by a number of other historians, including Woodcock and Vaneigem. These included various Gnostic sects of the middle ages, the chiliastic primitive Christian

communists (like the Brethren of the Free Spirit), and the Levellers and Diggers, all leading up to the nineteenth-century socialist movement.

Bookchin conceived of technology as having two faces: a *techné* that is part of a wholistic world view, versus a technics that is focused on machinery and raw materials. Technics must be reembedded in a social matrix in order to be liberatory; therefore simply developing “alternative technology” would not suffice.

Bookchin painted this history of dialectical differentiation, and then posited social ecology as the resolution to these oppositions. However, in his version of global dialectical movement, the legacy of freedom was not guaranteed to champion; this only remained as a *possibility*. But because hierarchy was historical and not natural, and therefore could be overcome, it showed that not only can hierarchy be abolished, but that its abolition would also lead to the abolition of the hierarchy over the natural world. Reason—wholistic, dialectical reason—could lead us to a world in which technology will be used for the well-being of all and our relationship to the natural world would be based on a sensibility of being-with, as opposed to being-over.

### **1991 Introduction**

Bookchin later backed out of some of the avenues he had opened up. In “Twenty Years Later...Seeking a Balanced Viewpoint” (the introduction to the 1991 reissue of *Ecology of Freedom*), he said that the first four chapters of the book were written in 1972, although he did not pick them up again until later to finish the work. By 1991, however, he was regretting some things that he felt he had inadvertently encouraged. His work had included uncritical, glowing praises of “organic communities”; valorized matriarchal societies which were overseen by a “Mother Goddess”; called for a “quasi-animistic respiritualization of phenomena” (27); emphasized how science needed to be dialectically fused with poetry,

artfulness, fancy, and imagination (28); upheld the Dionysian character of rebellion; and attacked patriarchal, technocratic "civilization." He said:

Even in the late seventies, I had unnerving suspicions that one could write on ecology and its spiritual implications, as I did, and easily be mistaken for a spiritualist, and similarly even write on sophisticated organismic forms of thought like dialectics and be misread as a mystic.

But little did I realize that, even as I was writing *The Ecology of Freedom*, new ecologies were in fact emerging, principally in the American Sunbelt, that would seek to do *exactly* what I had tried to avoid. These ecologies began to recycle many beliefs that superficially resemble the kind of ideas I had advanced into a New Age romanticism and produce a mystical ecology that was all but a collection of assorted atavistic religious cults. (29)

He denounced trends like deep ecology, Earth Goddess worship, ecological animism, primitivism, biocentrism, and new forms of ecofeminism as "mystical, romantic, and often downright silly ecologies...that now threaten the very integrity of a rational ecology movement." (30) He saw these trends as attacking reason, technology, and even humanity itself, and disassociated himself from them. Arguing that only humans can bestow these concepts, he attacked the idea that either nature as a whole or non-human species have intrinsic rights, worth, or value. (31) He also argued that many writers' views of indigenous societies were rose-tinted and ignored that various non-industrial groups hunted species to extinction, engaged in clear-cutting (and otherwise altered their physical surroundings for their own material gain), and tortured animals. And Bookchin says that many of these writers "quail before words like *technology*, *science*, and *logic*—as if they were totally autonomous forces that have an oppressive character in every social context, irrespective of their underpinnings." (32) He even went so far as to claim that these movements, which posed ecological problems in "genetic, psychological, personal, and purely subjective" terms actually "deflect" people from engaging in political actions that could make change. (33) This position comes very close to condemning other perspectives on ecology—including those that have explicitly progressive political outlooks—as reactionary just because theoretically they do not coincide with Bookchin's.

## **Life after Anarchism: Bookchin versus Everyone Else**

However, disenchanted by what he saw as the excesses of U.S. anarchists, in 1995 Bookchin published the polemical *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, which caused a great uproar in the anarchist movement. Despite his anti-workerism, in it he revived syndicalist revisionism (thereby implicitly casting his lot in with platformists and syndicalists), and positioned himself against practically everyone else in the anarchist milieu, including (but not limited to) counterculturalists, deep ecologists, individualists, primitivists, mystical anarchists, spontaneists, L. Susan Brown, Hakim Bey, David Watson, and John Zerzan.

Bookchin said anarchism always possessed “two basically contradictory tendencies: a personalistic commitment to individual autonomy and a collectivist commitment to social freedom.” He then conflated some of the late-nineteenth-century bohemian individualists involved in avant-garde arts and attentats with various trends of the present day—both really existing parts of the anarchist milieu along with imagined ones—all of which he lumped together under the term “lifestyle anarchism.” These included postmodernist anti-rationalism, a focus on “imagination, desire, and ecstasy,” psychological therapies that focused on personal enlightenment, “spray-can graffiti, post-modernist nihilism, antirationalism, neoprimitivism, anti-technologism, neo-Situationist ‘cultural terrorism,’ mysticism, and a ‘practice’ of staging Foucauldian ‘personal insurrections’”; and, most oddly, he tied the whole thing—and *Fifth Estate* magazine in particular—to yuppie restaurants. He linked these various trends to Heidegger, Nietzsche, and Foucault, before lumping them all under the sign of Stirner, and then declared them to be no more than a “squirming petty-bourgeois” individualist commitment to pleasure which was “concerned with a ‘style’ rather than a society.” Bookchin continued, “with its aversion for institutions, mass-based organizations, its largely subcultural orientation, its moral decadence, its

celebration of transience, and its rejection of programs, this kind of narcissistic anarchism is socially innocuous, often merely a safety valve for discontent toward the prevailing social order." He concluded that if anarchism's failure to gain mass popularity today "can be attributed to any single source, the insularity of lifestyle anarchism and its individualistic underpinnings must be singled out for aborting the entry of a potential left-libertarian movement into an ever-contracting public sphere." (34)

The rift was never healed and Bookchin abandoned anarchism in 2002 for what he called Communalism. In "The Communalist Project," he claimed that anarchism was not a social theory, that it was based on individual autonomy, and that many contemporary anarchists—including himself—had simply borrowed their ideas from marxism. (35)

### **Bookchin as Hybrid Thinker**

In his earlier works, Bookchin offered the most sophisticated version of a hybrid contemporary anarchism. Taking the elements that he was most interested in from classical anarchism—an opposition to hierarchy in general (including capitalism) and an advocacy of federalism—he wedded them to perspectives from Hegel and Marx, as well as democratic structures recovered from liberalism. In doing so, he incorporated ideas that challenged classical anarchist assumptions (post-scarcity, direct democracy) but did not openly clash with them. He also incorporated new ideas which melded well with anarchism (ecology and aspects of the new social movements), as well as including philosophical elements which had not appeared before, at least in those forms (Bakunin had been influenced by Hegel, but few other anarchists followed this philosophical tendency).

As Bookchin became disillusioned with anarchism, he made this intellectual structure explicit. "Accordingly, and without prejudice to the earnestness of many anarchistic practices, a case can be made that many of the ideas of social and economic reconstruction

that in the past have been advanced in the name of 'anarchy' were often drawn from Marxism (including my own concept of 'post-scarcity,' which understandably infuriated many anarchists who read my essays on the subject)." (36) He even dismissed the centrality of anarchist thought to his project, implying it could have stood complete on its own: "Far from pillaging from Kropotkin and other anarchist writers, I have tended in the past...to overstate my obligation to them." Regarding Kropotkin specifically, he said "It was not until the late sixties, when reprints of his works began to appear in American bookshops, that I became familiar with his *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*...and it was not until the mid-sixties that I read portions of *Mutual Aid*—that is, the centre portion that deals with medieval cities. To be quite frank, these books did not appreciably affect my views; rather, they confirmed them and reinforced my commitment to anarchism.... Indeed, it was mainly my study of urban development over the course of history that nourished *The Limits of the City*, a work strongly influenced by Marx's *Capital*. My book mentions Kropotkin only incidentally as figuring in the history of city planning in the later-appended pages." (37) In a letter he said, "Social ecology is a very broad synthesis that, irrespective of its merits or demerits, has affinities to many traditions: Marxism, anarchism, radical ecology, Hegelianism, socialism, etc. etc., and to a number of [Josef] Weber's notions, which, in turn, also stem from a large body of left-wing traditions." (38)

Regarding this blending, Janet Biehl said "Perhaps in retrospect it seems opportunistic to marry one's preexisting ideas to an existing ideology. But in the early 1960s anarchism seemed like a historic relic, more or less up for grabs." Elsewhere she noted that:

As Murray would later point out, anarchism seems to have always been most functional when merged with another ideology or set of ideas. For example, synthesized with syndicalism, or trade unionism, it became anarcho-syndicalism, one of its more significant tendencies and the banner under which the greatest anarchist experiment of all was conducted, the Spanish Revolution. Synthesized with communism, the idea of the abolition of private property and distribution according to need, it became anarcho-communism, a libertarian form of communism. In some sense anarchism functions best as part of a duality. (39)

## **Bookchin's Legacy**

Bookchin was the one anglophone anarchist theorist in the post-1960 period who both developed a distinct and large body of work, and who was influential well outside of the anarchist milieu. In terms of intellectual history, it is impossible to avoid him as a (and perhaps even *the*) major anarchist theoretician in the period from the 1960s to 1990s.

His prominence was due to several reasons. He consistently addressed topics as they were rising in importance, and created systematic approaches to them which were completed by the apex of these issues—ecology especially, but also the counterculture and the importance of democracy to decentralized social movements. He produced a large body of accessible work, which was grounded historically in left traditions but also felt very contemporary and *American*; much of the left still feels very European to many in the United States. And last his thinking was deeply systematic; he created a wholistic critique like the Hegelianism which was at its foundation. This kind of approach has a variety of advantages: it allowed one to create a doctrine with ready-to-hand answers to a variety of questions with a high-level of internal consistency. This gave one a much louder voice in discussions (“What does Bookchin think?”), and furthermore promoted the acquisition of students and other intellectual followers who were looking for comprehensive doctrines and approaches to study. (40)

Therefore, it was somewhat ironic that within the anarchist milieu his death was largely met with silence and his works are rarely read today, especially by those who came into the movement after his passing. Certainly his denunciations of the majority of other anarchists (and finally anarchism itself) played into this, but so did both the general move within anarchism away from ecology, as well as the perception—fair or not—that Bookchin did not deal adequately with issues of identity politics (race in particular). Despite the centrality of “democracy” in semi-anarchist political circles such as Occupy Wall Street, Bookchin’s name

is rarely invoked in connection to them. Some of this obviously has to do with the failure of those around him to promote his name in connection to these events, and in particular in connection with the anarchist scene, and therefore act as effective carrier groups. (Bookchin had always remained two steps ahead of both other anarchists and emerging social movements, and his refusal to take credit for the Seattle demonstrations was his final failure to capitalize on his work.) Some of it is a mystery.

It would be too much to say that he died in obscurity or has been forgotten, but his shadow does not loom large today. Whether this will change in the upcoming years waits to be seen.

## **7c. John Zerzan: Syncretic Criticisms of Modernity as “Anarchy” (intellectual hybrid of multiple non-anarchist traditions, but anarchist self-identification)**

“And as to whether you are an anarchist—well, if you are, I have to say it is a very strange branch of the tree.... No one I can think of in history, not Kropotkin, Bakunin, Voline, Malatesta, Berkman, Goldman—really, not any serious anarchist I am familiar with—is out there sitting on your branch with you.... Show me where in the anarchist tradition any of these folks, or any other of the impressive people that have gone by that name, have said anything that is even remotely in accord with your views.... If you can't, I think as far as copping goes...maybe you ought to cop to the originality of your perspective and call it just plain old primitivism (an apt name) or maybe Zerzanism, but certainly not anarchism.”

—Michael Albert (1)

John Zerzan is one of only a very small handful of contemporary U.S. anarchists to create a large body of distinct theoretically developed work, and (partly because of this) he has acquired an enduring stature. His work is both intuitively appealing in its claims and enigmatic in its approach, frustrating many a would-be critic.

Zerzan's version of “anarcho-primitivism” offers a sweeping critique of the modern world. He has written, “We inhabit a landscape of emptiness, grief, stress, boredom, anxiety in which our ‘human nature’ is as steadily degraded as is what is left of the natural world.” (2) In a series of foundational essays, he identified time, language, number, art, and agriculture as the primary forms of alienation. According to him, today we live in a world of complete alienation; everything we experience has been turned into abstract, quantifiable, and exchangeable forms, all part of a global march of domination that has been going on for thousands of years. Furthermore, he claimed that before the initial emergence of these forms, people lived in an unmediated oneness and harmony with their world. Zerzan then calls on us to throw off the alienated forms and return socially to hunter-gatherer life and ontologically to our true being—which is intuitive, primal, and spontaneous.

Zerzan very specifically and loudly proclaims his thought to be anarchist, though he is known for vigorously denouncing (pretty much all) other anarchist thinkers for their complicity with the techno-industrial system. But one of the most curious aspects of Zerzan's thought is that it emerges neither out of anarchism nor (as many assume) deep ecology, but initially out of ultra-left marxist theories of workers' spontaneous resistance, before later incorporating an eclectic number of other sources—the most important being Western Marxism and the interwar German cultural right.

Zerzan's importance to this study is two-fold: first, not just do his ideas fail to fit into any of the ideal type theories of anarchism, but they are specifically excluded from some of them. If the most important theorist of one of the main tendencies of anarchism cannot fit into these general claims, serious doubt is cast on the veracity of these ideal types.

Second, although his ideas constitute the most radical wing of anarchism, simultaneously they are not based on any of the classical anarchist theorists, but rely on insights from a number of other traditions. While *politically* he may be situated in the anarchist tradition, *intellectually* he is still beholden to concepts generated in other paradigms—such the totality, "civilization," progressive quantification of the social world, a regressive teleology, and twinned notions of complete mediation and immediacy.

## **Background**

Before adopting his current views, Zerzan was known as a left-wing critic of unions, and between 1974 and 1984 published six articles in the prestigious journal *Telos*, during the period when it was pivotal in translating Western Marxist texts into English. (3) So how did he shift from the criticism of unions to the criticism of civilization?

As a young man, Zerzan had been a union organizer. While employed by the California Department of Social Services from 1966–1971, he helped form the San Francisco Social Services Employees Union (SSEU), a radical and bottom-up union in which he served as both Vice President and President. (4) The union pursued what was called the “Long March Through the Institutions,” according to which radicals entered mainstream institutions and worked their way up to positions of influence, ultimately with the goal of taking them over. (5) He was close to the Progressive Labor Party and later was briefly a member of the IWW in the early 1970s. But Zerzan was also deeply affected by the spontaneous nature of the 1960s uprisings, and was heavily influenced by Situationist propaganda.

He received his undergraduate degree from Stanford, and then completed a History MA at San Francisco State University in 1972. He attended the PhD program at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles but left before starting his dissertation. (6) Back in San Francisco, he fell into alcoholism and despondency, at one point taking all his furniture out to the street and burning it. He later moved to Eugene, Oregon, where he has lived since.

Zerzan also worked with the Detroit-based anti-authoritarian periodical *Fifth Estate* beginning in 1976. He published many articles and letters in the paper, developing his primitivist views in conjunction with David Watson, Bob Brubaker, and Fredy Perlman. But his views were far more extreme, and his articles were often published alongside disclaimers, with lengthy rebuttals sometimes published after. (7) These differences led Zerzan to break with *Fifth Estate* in 1988. He re-aligned with *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, and eventually became a contributing editor until the journal changed hands in 2005. Zerzan also became part of the editorial collective of *Green Anarchy*, and his primitivism was its main ideological thrust until it folded. Today he still publishes articles, has a radio show, and gives talks around the world. His essays have been collected in the anthologies *Elements of Refusal* (1988), *Future Primitive* (1994, second edition in 2012),

*Running on Emptiness* (2002), and *Twilight of the Machines* (2008). *Origins*, from 2010, is a best-of collection.

## **Overview**

Zerzan's work can be divided into three periods: the first period, roughly 1972 to 1977, consisted of ultra-left histories, in which he specialized in analyzing how unions restrict worker power, and the effects of the introduction of industrialization. The essays, in theme and approach, were solidly in the mainstream of the (non-orthodox) marxist academic publishing of the time. His second period, between 1977 and 1982, was a time of rethinking, occurring alongside a general shift in *Fifth Estate* away from a traditional (if countercultural) left perspective, and moving towards a critique of technology and civilization. In his third period, primarily from 1983 to 1988 (but continuing since then), Zerzan elaborated his own specific theoretical perspective. The core of his thought is contained in the five "origins" essays, identifying time (1983), language (1984), number (1985), art (1986), and agriculture (1988) as the primary forms of alienation and control. His works since the *Origins* essays have largely been applications of these theses, although more recently some elaborations have appeared (adding religion and cities to the lists of original alienations).

This case study will argue that in the first period, Zerzan was under the influence of the tradition of anti-union ultra-left marxism and syndicalism, and "history from below" associated writers like E.P. Thompson. In his second period he absorbed a large array of influences that came out in his third period, which included ruminations on alienation, mediation, and reification by the Situationists and Western Marxists (especially the Frankfurt School); anthropological fieldwork and theory; psychoanalysis; and late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century German cultural theory usually associated with the political right (which comes full circle, as it influenced many Western Marxists as well). It

was in this third period that Zerzan abandoned the focus on the working class and the organization of labor; instead, concepts like "technology," "civilization," "mediation," and "abstraction" became central.

### **The Ultra-Left and the Critique of Domestication**

Zerzan's pre-primitivist works helped illustrate his evolution from an ultra-left position to primitivism, while skirting any engagement with the classical anarchist tradition. He published over twenty articles between 1974 and 1984, seven of which appeared in journals. His first article, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers," argued that Chavez's United Farm Workers (UFW) was a conservative influence on the workers, its real goal being to build its own bureaucratic organization and work amicably with capital. Zerzan wrote, "the modern union is highly valued by management for its control of workers; a disciplined or docile labor force is the expected result." (8)

His third article, "Organized Labor vs. the 'Revolt Against Work'" was quite a success. Originally published in *Telos* in 1974, it was republished several times, including as half of the pamphlet *Unions Against Revolution* (printed by the Perlmans' Black & Red press; the other half was by Grandizo Munis). The article details workers' resistance to work from 1970 to 1973. It pointed to the roles of automation and speed-ups (i.e., technology and time) as disciplining agents, and stressed the "business-labor-government collusion" to reign in workers' attempts to control the production process. It also ominously referred to a forthcoming implementation of a regime of total control through compulsory unionization, and claimed that even workers' self-management is part of a strategy of recuperation. The article contrasted the union agenda with the workers' willingness to engage in spontaneous action outside (and in opposition to) their unions, and linked these actions to the urban riots of the 1960s.

These themes continued in five further anti-union articles, appearing in *Telos* and *Fifth Estate* during 1976 and 1977. They portrayed unions as agents of social control in collusion with the state and capital, as defenders of Taylorism and multinationalism, and as agents of fascism—he went so far as to compare closed shops to the Nazi Labor Front. In 1976 in “Who Killed Ned Ludd?,” Zerzan championed the Luddite rebellion as “seemingly unmediated by ideology” as contrasted to the unions, which he said defended new technologies and transformed resistance into a pillar of the capitalist, alienated, technological system. (9)

The 1976 essay “The Decline and Fall of Everything” (co-written with Paula Zerzan) was the inauguration of a deeply gloomy reflection on our culture, which mirrored the sense of despair found in both the German critics who saw Western culture in decline, and the Western Marxists who described a totally mediated and alienated modern society. The Zerzans said that the landscape of global capitalism “caused a crisis of the spirit” and daily routine in the United States was “near collapse.” The essay tied the wildcat strikes, resistance to unions, and political ambivalence to the purely cultural aspects of disgust with and disengagement from the modern world. (10)

“New York, New York”—a short and breathless essay praising the widespread looting and arson during the New York blackout of July 1977—was a turning point in Zerzan’s published works. Its analysis consisted of two lines: “The left—all of it—has spoken only of the high unemployment, the police brutality; has spoken of the people of New York only as objects, and pathetic ones at that! The gleaming achievements of the unmediated/un-ideologized have all pigs scared shitless.” (11) Labor was no longer a consideration, and his main narrative posited a transhistorical drive towards domestication and domination of what is essentially human, which was opposed by a spontaneous eruption of unmediated resistance.

Up to this point, four themes could be differentiated in Zerzan's work. The first was the critique of unions and how they control workers' resistance and channel it back into the system; this was a critique of representation, and by extension, mediation. The second was a critique of the work process itself. The essays on industrialism dealt with how the factory system and the process of rationalization it embodied were intended from the beginning to control the work process and stymie resistance. Third, modern life was portrayed as a hopeless wasteland. The fourth was a spontaneous sense of resistance that periodically explodes. Soon, Zerzan would tie all four together into a coherent whole. He portrayed a transhistorical and global conspiracy to entrap and enslave humanity starting with the very first abstractions, like language. The deus ex machina here was the process of abstraction itself—later taken up by capitalists, bureaucrats, and union leaders.

"The Refusal of Technology" in 1980 outlined many of Zerzan's themes to come—technology, rationalization, and immediacy. Echoing Marx at the height of his 1848 utopianism, and more recently the Situationists and Camatte, Zerzan said that, "Upon the utter destruction of wage-labor and the commodity...[and] the abolition of every trace of authority...concepts like 'economy,' 'exchange,' 'production' will have no meaning." They will be replaced by "the delights and surprises of an infinity of gift-creations, freely, spontaneously expressed by everyone." He says that "Perhaps mobile celebrations will replace our sense of cities, maybe even language will be obsolete." (12)

### **Beginning of Time, End of Time**

The "Beginning of Time, End of Time," published in 1983, was the first of the origins essays. Here Zerzan claimed that time is the primal alienation. "Reification of this magnitude—the beginning of time—constitutes the Fall: the initiation of alienation, of history." Time then manifested itself through spatialization, the first being the division of labor, then the war chariot, fixed property, and geometry. As agricultural culture advanced, "the idea of time

becomes more defined and conceptual," until with Judaism and Christianity "time very clearly sharpened itself into a linear progression." The monastery showed what daily life looked like when ruled by the clock. Official time "unmistakenly imposed a new distance on human relations and restraint on emotional responses." Time was the move from community to civilization; it was "the fundamental language of technology and the spirit of domination." (13)

Zerzan claimed that in the fourteenth century "the march of time met a resistance unequalled in scope, quite possibly, since the Neolithic revolution of agriculture." With public clocks and the division of hours into sixty minutes, the groundwork for a new level of "domestication" was introduced. He then tied this change to a number of millennial revolts, describing them as having components of "time refusal" and suggesting that the end of the millennial revolts in the sixteenth century coincided with the "perfection and spread of the mechanical clock." (14)

The other origins essays expanded the same argument he made about time to encompass number, language, and art, before he finally condemned agriculture as embodiment of alienation and quantification—it was the entire process finally made *material*.

In the essay on time he also set up the schema which he would employ in the decades to come. Its critique of social ills was derived from the Weberian-Marxist view of how rationalization had come to dominate modern life in numerous guises, both as a proliferation of the commodity form, as well as through modern administration (in turn based on science and technology). Underneath this social conditioning, however, was an unmediated self which had been buried but never corrupted. Citing diverse sources such as Norman O. Brown, Walter Benjamin, and Mircea Eliade in quick succession, Zerzan said that

the almost universal idea of an original state of perfection showed a memory of what happened before there was time. (15)

It was this ontological vision that crossed many differing traditions—psychoanalysis, Western Marxism, and fascism, in this instance. On one hand, it continued the vision of worker spontaneity. On the other, it picked up the notion of subject-object reconciliation that would create an unmediated being, especially from early Lukács. It continued situationist, Nietzschean, Surrealist, and 1960s psychedelic notions of an ecstatic, creative self. It dovetailed with some of the conclusions of Western anthropologists, while paralleling many visions of fascist and protofascist thinkers who saw a racial or cultural being perverted by cosmopolitan, rationalist thought. Psychoanalysis (especially readings of Marcuse and Brown) further suggested that in the past this kind of self existed, and furthermore could be recovered. There were also essentialist (especially eco-feminist), ecological, and spiritual perspectives reflecting this view that were circulating in the same anti-modernist and radical milieus at the same time. Zerzan's vision, regardless of its extremity, was in step with many of the currents of his own time.

### **Syncretic Theory**

Zerzan's influences are so vast that it is impossible to offer more than a cursory summary. For our purposes, the most important are the Communist Party Historians' Group, the ultra-left (especially Henri Simon), Western Marxists (such as Lukács, the Frankfurt School and the Situationists), and elements of the German cultural right.

Briefly, however, Zerzan was influenced by at least three other traditions: structural anthropology, psychoanalysis, and poststructuralist linguistics.

Primitivist claims largely rely on both fieldwork and conceptions developed by various structuralist anthropologists (especially works that were in vogue in the 1960s). Marshall Sahlins's *Stone Age Economics*, and Richard Lee's studies of the !Kung, helped influence Zerzan's advocacy of hunter-gatherer life. Levi-Strauss is cited approvingly as saying "the savage mind totalizes," and similar views can be found in other anthropologists like Lucien Lévy-Bruhl. (16)

Psychoanalysis was an important theoretical element in Zerzan's work, in particular the conception of "civilization" as developed by Freud in *Civilization and Its Discontents*. (This conception was also adopted by the Frankfurt School, in particular Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*, but also by Adorno and Horkheimer; the psychoanalyst Norman O. Brown was also influential on Zerzan.) The notion of civilization as an overarching superego, and the possibility of a nonrepressed existence, was a theme that ran throughout Zerzan's work. (17)

And finally, Daniel Dylan Young pointed out that, ironically, poststructuralist linguistics influenced Zerzan. Young said "Zerzan's theories about language and symbolic culture are clearly indebted to the entire body of twentieth century structuralist, poststructuralist and postmodernist thought," and he even claimed that "many of Zerzan's ideas are distinctly similar and probably indebted to Derrida." (18) While Young exaggerated the influence of the poststructuralists and completely ignored the influence of marxism on Zerzan in regard to the same issues, nonetheless it was true that Zerzan relied on a selective reading of poststructuralist linguistics at a crucial point in his theoretical development—even if he dismissed this tradition shortly thereafter.

### **Communist Party Historian's Group**

The most obvious influences on Zerzan's thought during the first period (1972 to 1977) were marxist historians and the ultra-left. His historical work illustrated the influence of the Communist Party Historian's Group; he referred to Christopher Hill, Eric Hobsbawm, and E.P. Thompson throughout his early works. These writers stressed the need to write history from below—from the perspective of the workers, the illiterate, and the excluded—as opposed to history as a procession of kings and the lives of the literate classes. In particular, Thompson's essay "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism," which addressed the rise of European standardized time-keeping in relation to industrial capitalism, was influential, in addition to work by the groups' members on the origins of unions and the Luddite movement. Zerzan's historical essays, published through the 1980s, can be seen as reflecting this tradition. Although he clearly dissented from the more traditionally marxist interpretations, the histories themselves were written from an ultra-left perspective. They were deeply critical of unions and focused on spontaneous resistance—first by workers, then to the industrial process itself, and finally looked at forms of resistance that abandoned any focus on class or economics.

### **The European Ultra-Left**

Henri Simon, a member of Socialisme ou Barbarie, the ICO (Information Correspondence Ouvrieres), and a founder of Echanges et Mouvement, was perhaps the primary ultra-left influence. (19) Simon championed workers' councils and autonomous and spontaneous resistance to capital, but in a much broader form than previous leftists had envisioned. Like many other marxists of his time, he re-envisioned class struggle as being larger than the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In "The New Movement," he says:

The attempts at rejecting trade unions, the underground organization of conflicts, the attempts to make horizontal links between those in struggle, the new attitudes of students, women, homosexuals and so on, the attitude of workers towards work, all

these reflect the desire of those concerned to manage their struggle for themselves and by themselves. (20)

### **Georg Lukács**

One of the main influences on Zerzan was the Western Marxist tradition, especially the Hegelian Marxism of Lukács, the Frankfurt School (especially Marcuse and Adorno), and the Situationists. (Some of the less Hegelianized members of these, especially Walter Benjamin and Raoul Vaneigem, were also deeply influential.) What Zerzan takes from these writers—common to all of them—is a critique of the totality, the conceptualization of reification, and the society of total control. From this tradition he also borrowed the possibility of subject-object reconciliation, and a notion of spontaneity and revolutionary subjectivity.

Lukács initiated the recasting of marxism by making Marx's analysis of the commodity form the central story of industrial society, which, leaning heavily on Hegel, Lukács conceived as a totality. Lukács also borrowed from Weber's notion of the rationalization of the social world, and its subsequent "disenchantment." Modern society was dominated by an alienated, frozen sensibility; a total system of abstraction replaced the organic experience of life. Our conception of time "sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things.'" (21) However, the proletariat remained the "collective meta-subject," and its labor created the social world; therefore, proletarian revolution could abolish the commodity form, eliminate alienation, and restore the flowing nature of time. (22) Lukács's work helped revitalize marxism and establish it as a respectable intellectual tradition; but—importantly, for our purposes—some marxist critics claimed that he smuggled into marxism some of the neo-Romantic ideas then flourishing on the right, especially in Germany.

## **The Situationists**

The Situationists—Debord in particular—extended Lukács’s conceptualization of reification into the notion of the spectacle, a total system of control that alters both our perception of the world and relationship to it. Debord said that, “All that was once directly lived has become mere representation.” (23) All social and cultural institutions participated in the construction and maintenance of an overarching system of control, which operated outside of the agency of any identifiable human actors. Everything had become an alienated form was separate from direct experience.

The Situationists, especially those such as Vaneigem who were less Hegelian Marxist, tended towards valorizing a kind of innate spontaneity that would be the locus of resistance to the spectacle. This tied them in with Freudian notions of repression on one hand, and Surrealist and other avant-garde politics (including Nietzschean philosophy) on the other. For example, in *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, Vaneigem offered a short parable: “When a water pipe broke in Pavlov’s laboratory, none of the dogs who survived the flood showed the slightest trace of their conditioning. Can the high tide of social upheaval have less effect on people than a broken water pipe on dogs?” Zerzan repeated this story in several places. (24)

Despite statements like these, the Situationists specifically disavowed the ontologization of pleasure and spontaneity. (25) Nonetheless, as situationism became increasingly influential in the anglophone world in the 1980s and 1990s, it was broadly interpreted as holding that there were real, innate, biological desires that were being repressed by the spectacle, or capital—or civilization.

## **The Frankfurt School**

Zerzan's copious references to the Situationists were rivaled by his references to various Frankfurt School figures; Adorno, Horkheimer, Benjamin, and Marcuse will be briefly examined.

### **Theodor Adorno & Max Horkheimer**

Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* was certainly not a primitivist text—Adorno forcefully rejected the notion of subject/object unity and scoffed at Romantic valorizations of primitive societies. Yet Zerzan's incomplete (or, perhaps more accurately, syncretic) reading of this book lends intellectual ammunition to his arguments.

Like the other Western Marxists, Adorno and Horkheimer posited a society of total control. Capitalism, unions, numbers, language, and science had all formed an interlocking system. Quoting Marx but following more in the spirit of Weber and Nietzsche, equivalence had become the order of the day, wiping out difference and offering standardization instead, where the ability to manipulate is primary. A grey world of uniformity reigned. Signs, language, math, and even thought itself became the agents of instrumental knowledge; there was no grasping of the whole or of the dialectical process. They even pointed out the origins of this process in the establishment of agriculture. A negative teleology was posited; whereas in Hegel and Marx the dialectic was moving towards progress, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* what appeared to be progress was only regress in disguise.

### **Herbert Marcuse**

Marcuse's *One-Dimensional Man*, published in 1964, was perhaps the most influential radical theoretical text of the late 1960s, and Zerzan was largely indebted to Marcuse's work, including *Eros and Civilization*. This earlier book was very optimistic compared to *One-Dimensional Man* and *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. It began by saying that civilization is

built on repressive sublimation, and asked if “mechanization and standardization of life,” “mental impoverishment,” and the “growing destructiveness of present-day progress” was worth it. Marcuse said “concentration camps, mass exterminations, world wars, and atom bombs are no ‘relapse into barbarism,’ but the unrepressed implementation of the achievements of modern science, technology and domination.” However, “a non-repressive civilization, based on a fundamentally different experience of being, a fundamentally different relation between man and nature, and fundamentally different existential relations” is possible. (26)

In *One-Dimensional Man*, he developed themes he approached years earlier in his 1941 essay, “Some Social Implications of Modern Technology,” in which he argued, “Technology, as a mode of production, as the totality of instruments, devices and contrivances which characterize the machine age is thus at the same time a mode of organizing and perpetuating (or changing) social relationships, a manifestation of prevalent thought and behavior patterns, an instrument for control and domination.” (27) In the “one-dimensional society,” domination had become pervasive, and technology was its vehicle; opposition elements like unions were pseudo-opposition, recuperated into the system. Even our own inner space, where critical ideas live, “has been invaded and whittled down by technological reality.” (28) Art, language, science, and thought are now all the agents of domination. Science, wedded to technology, leads to the situation where “technology has become the great vehicle of *reification*”; Zerzan later repeats this formulation almost word-for-word. (29)

However, like the other Frankfurt School theorists, Marcuse did not reject technology or science as such—he followed the post-scarcity thesis and wanted to retain automation to increase leisure time. In fact, he remained politically hopeful and looked to an alliance of socially marginal actors—“outcasts and outsiders, the exploited and persecuted of other

racism and other colors, the unemployed and the unemployable"—to become new revolutionary subjects and engage in the "Great Refusal." (30)

### **Walter Benjamin**

Benjamin's work is less marxist and more literary, but Zerzan's reliance on him is of interest. For example, Zerzan cited three different elements of Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History": first, the shooting of the clocks during the July 1830 uprising in Paris; second the quote "There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism"; and third, the famous image of the angel of history who "sees a single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet." (31)

Zerzan was also fond of Benjamin's approach to remembrance and prehistory—anamnesis. Michael Löwy said Benjamin thought that "The archaic societies of *Urgeschichte* were also those of harmony between man and nature—a harmony broken by 'progress' which would have to be recovered in the liberated society of the future." Löwy said, "For Benjamin, this prehistoric 'paradise,' this 'previous life' are also characterized by harmony, reciprocity, and complicity, between man and nature—totally missing from modern life." (32)

### **Interwar German Right**

Besides these variations of "unorthodox" marxism, one of the main influences on Zerzan was the interwar German right. Critics often point to Romanticism, and especially Rousseau, as the driving force behind Zerzan's thought. There is some truth to this, but its influence was particularly through the interpretation of German thinkers who elucidated a largely right-wing reaction to modernity. This cultural pessimism, which started in the 1870s but thrived from the 1890s to the 1930s, influenced and interacted with numerous schools, movements and thinkers, including lebensphilosophie, vitalism, and the Conservative

Revolutionaries. It ultimately influenced and then was superseded by Nazism, but not before impacting thinkers like Weber, Simmel, and Tönnies—as well as Western Marxism.

These cultural critics can be thought of as operating under narratives of “the whole versus fragmentation” as well as “the artificial versus the organic.” Other principal themes were opposition to liberalism and parliamentary democracy; cultural despair, and a perception of a society marked by degeneration and decay; an opposition to rationality and abstraction in general; a criticism of industrial society; attacks on cosmopolitanism and the big cities; and calls for a revival of wholeness, often in an apocalyptic tenor.

Jeffrey Herf noted the importance of technological questions to this milieu:

Although the confrontation between technology and culture did not begin in Weimer, it certainly came to a head in those years. It even had a name of its own, *die Streit um die Technik*, the debate about technology. Hundreds of books, lectures, and essays emerged from both the technical universities and nontechnical intellectuals from all points along the political spectrum dealing with the relation between Germany’s soul and modern technology. (33)

Anne Harrington stressed how the notion of the “machine” versus the “whole” became important to many natural scientists who opposed the “Machine model” of both life and the mind, and saw Wholeness “locked in combat with the Machine.” Harrington wrote:

these scientists began to mingle their voices with those of other kinds of cultural critics, would-be reformers, and crisis-mongers. Those other voices from outside the sciences also typically used the oppositional imagery of the machine and wholeness in order to articulate what they believed had gone wrong in politics, the community, and individual existence—and to identify roads to renewal. That imagery in turn had energetic links to other, overlapping political and societal oppositions of the time: *Gemeinschaft* (community) versus *Gesellschaft* (society), an opposition made famous by the nineteenth century sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies; (German) *Kultur* versus (French) *Zivilization*; Life and Soul versus Mind and Reason, a squaring off associated with such “life philosophers” as Ludwig Klages (34)

Zerzan cited a number of thinkers from this milieu; particularly he praised Oswald Spengler (whose *Decline of the West* was admired, albeit critically, by Adorno as well). Zerzan also

described Friedrich Georg Jünger's post-war book *The Failure of Technology* as one of three early influential critiques of technology. (35)

This tradition was particularly important to Zerzan because, although he borrowed many of the *criticisms* of modern society and abstraction from the Western Marxists who absorbed this pessimism, his *answers* had more in common with those of the German right. Zerzan however, was not sympathetic to their hyper-nationalism, völkisch thought, emphasis on spirit and will, praise for tradition and war, antisemitism, or worship of discipline and authority; but his "road to revival" also included a revival of a sense of the whole, of immediacy, and of the organic as being as the answer to the problems of soulless, abstract modernity.

It is also helpful to recall the broader context in which Zerzan was forming his ideas: the increasing techno-scientific control of society as computers became widespread in the 1980s; the rise of eco-feminism and deep ecology, which rejected abstract, quantitative thinking in favor of an essential, intuitive union with nature; poststructuralist analyses of multifaceted systems of quantification and domination over a subjectivity which had no prior form; the translation and reception of both the Frankfurt School and the Situationists in the United States; the critique of science coming from many quarters (including post-marxism, post-structuralism, deep ecology, and feminism); and the destruction of the last "old growth" forests in the United States—resistance to which was strongest around Eugene, Oregon, where Zerzan lived.

## **Conclusion**

Zerzan synthesized an array of influences; what is most interesting is how he came to an ultra-anarchist political position without ever engaging with the anarchist intellectual tradition. Instead, he moved from his early marxist influences to combine differing

theoretical elements, including aspects of the interwar German right; Hegelian Marxists like the Frankfurt School, the Situationists, and Lukács; and a mélange of psychoanalysis, anthropology, and even poststructuralism.

It is not useful to attempt to pin his new conception down to any single tradition. Zerzan probably came to his views as a kind of revelation or remembering (anamnesis)—one that was concurrent, and at least partly compatible with, numerous intellectual and political trends of its time. Despite his outward appearance of adhering to traditional academic norms (such as the use of formal citations of canonical work), he did not systematically deploy a methodologically coherent argument. Zerzan's thought is ultimately poetic and visionary.

Yet there was a thematic continuity between his earlier and his later views. Steve Millet summed up this trajectory: "John Zerzan's work began with a critique of political representation (in the form of labor unions and councils) and has expanded it to become a critique of all forms of representation and mediation." (36)

Zerzan created one of the few coherent and theoretically developed contemporary anarchist theories—and he did so by entirely avoiding anarchism as an intellectual tradition. Standing alongside other theorists who continued classical anarchist paradigms (Sam Dolgoff); fused classical anarchism with other traditions (Murray Bookchin); or who propagated non-anarchist intellectual traditions under the label of anarchism (Joel Olson), it becomes impossible to conclude that there is a freestanding intellectual tradition of post-classical anarchism. Neither is there any common base (in terms of a shared theoretical ancestry or methodology) on which to build one. The foundations that these theories rest on are entirely different, even if their structures tend to lean more-or-less together.

## 7d. Postanarchism: Todd May and Richard Day (hybrid)

“Thus post-structuralist theory is indeed anarchist. It is in fact more consistently anarchist than traditional anarchist theory has proved to be.”

—Todd May (1)

“contemporary radicals would do better marshaling classical anarchism to interrogate poststructuralism, rather than the other way around. As it stands, the continual rehashing of May’s spurious characterizations in a bid to theorize ‘beyond’ anarchism has merely set up a false God adjective, poststructuralism, at the price of silencing the ostensive subject.”

—Allan Antliff (2)

Although for many people Seattle was a quintessentially anarchist moment, many (sometimes simultaneously) heard Seattle in a poststructuralist, and in particular a Deleuzian/Foucaultian, key. (3) Directly inspired by this is a school of academic thought called “postanarchism,” which is a combination of the largely anti-authoritarian politics that were represented by the groups participating in the coalitions that comprised the anti-globalization movement and the PGA with poststructuralist theory (and, to a lesser extent, the package of other theorists associated with “French theory” and postmodernism—such as Jacques Lacan, Julia Kristeva, and Jean Baudrillard). The seminal postanarchist text is Todd May’s 1994 *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*, which was quite prescient in its theoretical justification of a political lineup that was only starting to take shape. Ultimately theorists and groups who had a number of different takes were incorporated, including Hakim Bey and Ashanti Alston.

There are a number of “postanarchist” theorists and theories; Saul Newman’s work has been referred to above, and this section will deal with a fundamentally different version, focusing on the works of May and Richard Day (author of *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements*), who both share similar theoretical understandings and hence offer similar political structures. (4)

Poststructuralism's origin as primarily a rejection of Althusserian structuralist-marxism is well known; what is less referred to, but even more problematic, is its equal foundation on a rejection of phenomenology—and hence on the primacy of human experience. Post-structuralism's distance from "humanism" is at the cost of setting itself up as a something that resembles a "science," where the theory of the observer is of primary importance. Poststructuralist theories tend to refer to other theories and not to a reading of the real world. (This is not to say that the theories have no relationship to a reflection on the world; even Frederic Jameson's description of postmodernism as the superstructure of post-Fordist capitalism implicitly acknowledges this relationship.)

May and Day both offered a schema based primarily on Foucault's notion of a "micropolitics" combined with a Deleuzian notion of "irreducible multiplicities of resistance," which was set against a stereotyped marxism (typical of anti-Althusserian poststructuralism in general), as well as an equally stereotyped reading of classical anarchism. (May claimed that classical anarchists said that "humans are good," even though they explicitly repudiated this idea; even the introduction to *Post-Anarchism: A Reader* admitted this criticisms of many of the postanarchist theoretical works.) (5)

This came out in the wash as the idea that a variety of different, more-or-less anti-authoritarian political groups (who are more-or-less defined by some more-or-less unspoken assumption that they are not directly affiliated with a political party, nor are they recruiting for Marxist-Leninist sectlets—even if they hold Leninist ideological perspectives) would be networked together. No one group got to "lead" or to define what the other groups should do, and specifically there was no "primary" form of oppression that all others were reduced to (this form usually being labor and the working class, but the argument can equally be applied to gender, sexual or racial reductions)—or at least that if a one held this kind of a

reductionist perspective, it was not one that could be the basis of the politics as a whole. This argument was essentially the same as the proposed tactical alliances that a number of postmodernists/poststructuralists were offering in the 1980s and 1990s (as well as non-workerist anarchists), overwritten onto the existing anti-globalization movement.

There are a number of important points about this theory:

The first is that it offered little new to anyone, as it was modeled on the existing political alliance; if anything its novelty was that it justified the inclusion of an even greater number of less-anarchist political groups than those that were already involved. Its popularity seem to lay in that it offered a theoretical justification, using the language of the academy, for something that arose outside of these theories. (May's work can at least be appreciated for being far ahead of its time, although it was not widely read in anarchist circles until after Seattle.)

The second is that this theory, as deployed by these two thinkers, was not "anarchist" in any sense other than its own self-identification. (6) It was not based on self-identified anarchist actors, and it did not come to political conclusions that were generally in alignment with those actors who were called "anarchist"; there was a fundamental difference between anarchists and the anti-globalization movement as a whole—a difference which postanarchism implicitly tried to paper over.

The third is that, just as with "new anarchism," despite its pretenses to openness, it was an set orthodoxy imposed by theoreticians on activists themselves. The groups that composed this "alliance" or "constellation" in almost all cases did not hold the same perspective as the postanarchist theorists (in many cases, the groups actively sought to convince the other activists that their perspective should be the dominant one or that their group was the

vanguard of the movement, and/or that all the other activists should convert to their perspective). However, the postanarchists *sought* to impose their perspective on others, although most often in the intellectual realm; in fact, they had little influence in the anarchist political milieu, although it was not for lack of trying.

Last, if these theories are taken literally, they have no mechanism for deciding who is included in the coalition and who is not; after all, if the basis is purely “tactical” and the groups themselves are, by the postanarchists’ own admission, “irreducible” (i.e., incompatible), who makes this decision, and on what basis, if the very notion of a “basis” is to be rejected? In practice, the coalition was designed to include ethnic separatists and anti-zionists (including those who had antisemitic elements), as well as those who, although not in a political party, were direct adjuncts to the electoral system. This framework, which supposedly is against the notion of a master theoretician dictating politics (often aimed at Althusser—although quite erroneously as he did not dictate the political practice of the PCF, the French Communist Party, of which he was a member), in practice does exactly that—this vision of a supposedly anarchist politics did not arise from anarchist activists, but from professors who sought to propagate their views in activist circles.

Unsurprisingly, fascist groups attempted to enter this coalition from the very beginning, and attempts to expel certain antisemites and most conspiracy theorists were rebuffed—with the theories of postanarchism and new anarchism used to justify their inclusion. The fact that the fascists were eventually expelled (but the antisemitic-oriented anti-zionists remained) revealed what was actually operative with this perspective. While postanarchists claimed that they were basing their works on poststructuralism, in fact their justifications were carefully tailored to operate under the “sign” of the Marxist-Leninist frameworks deployed by the 1970s anti-imperialist New Left. That is, racial/national/ethnic separatists could be included as long as they were not white (or Jewish), and anti-zionists could be included if

they used antisemitic narratives, but as long as they said “Zionists” and not “Jews.” The other parts—labor, ecology, feminism, queer politics—has remained unchanged from the progressive coalitions since the 1970s (i.e., those which actually led to Seattle). Richard Day’s *Gramsci Is Dead* epitomizes this tendency to include non-white racial separatists (he upholds ethnic separatism as being opposed the “genocidal integration into European modernity”) and he says those who do not support to right of African-Americans to form a racially based state are guilty of “white privilege.” (7)

## **7e. David Graeber: Anarchists Without Anarchism, Anarchism Without Anarchists (ideal type)**

David Graeber is one of the more high profile anarchists today; his is one of only a few whose name might appear in mass media publications. His work is important because it has been accepted so widely in intellectual circles (his formulations are far less influential among activists). However, his claims about anarchism are, at best, mostly a clever recasting of various left-leaning radical democratic movements as “anarchist.” At worst, they are an implicit advocacy of anti-intellectualism that has damaged serious inquiry regarding fundamental questions about anarchist theory.

Graeber’s basic argument, which he made in 2002 and has largely repeated since, is two-fold: 1) that there is a “new anarchism” characterized by direct democracy and direct action, and 2) that any other specific anarchist approach is “sectarian.” His work can be seen as the photo negative *Black Flame*. Both attempt to carve out a definition of anarchism that has nothing to do with those who self-define as anarchists, but is instead based on a set of practices that fit the author’s political preferences. But whereas *Black Flame*’s work has had little influence on how anarchist intellectuals conceive of themselves, a surface interpretation of Graeber’s work *has*, influencing intellectual bodies like the Institute of Anarchist Studies and their publication *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, the North American Anarchist Studies Network (NAASN), and anthologies like *New Perspectives on Anarchism* and *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An Introductory Anthology of Anarchy in the Academy*. All of these have accepted the notion that activists and intellectuals from any tradition can be accepted under the rubric of legitimate “anarchist intellectual work” as long as their short-term political work is not directly focused on electoral work, and as long as they utilize some kind of collective decision-making process (directly democratic or not).

## **Background**

Graeber was a Yale anthropologist who joined the anti-globalization movement immediately after the 1999 Seattle demonstrations. He did his graduate work at the University of Chicago under Marshall Sahlins, gained attention as a media spokesman for DAN and then Ya Basta!, and wrote several popular essays (especially "The New Anarchists"). His anthropological reputation largely rests on his 2001 book *Toward An Anthropological Theory of Value: The False Coin of Our Own Dreams*. He later painted himself as having lost his Yale position because of his anarchist politics; he used this claim to garner media attention, which culminated in an appearance on *Charlie Rose*.

His parents were in the orbit of the Communist Party, and his father fought in the Spanish Civil War. (1) Graeber had been interested in anarchism philosophically since at least the 1980s, but said he never made more than cursory attempts to become involved (he blamed "squabbling egomaniacs" as his reason for not participating more) until Seattle. (2) In 2000, he participated in the demonstrations against the IMF/WB in Washington, DC, and then joined the New York City chapter of the Direct Action Network (DAN). (3) He did media work and black blocked at the demonstrations against the Republican National Convention in Philadelphia, (4) and later was involved in the Ya Basta! Group in New York City. He also attended the 2001 demonstrations in Quebec City, which he chronicled in his book *Direct Action*. He was involved in the early stages of Occupy Wall Street and projected himself as a spokesperson for that movement as well.

Graeber was the right person, in the right place and at the right time, who said absolutely the wrong thing. As an Ivy League professor and a (newly minted) activist, he positioned himself as a credible and articulate spokesman for the most anti-intellectual wing of the movement. He successfully codified and reproduced the most intellectually retrograde elements of anarchism.

## **Anarchists ≠ Anarchists**

Graeber's claims about anarchism are scattered throughout various works; in fact, he rarely addresses any political claims about his own perspectives directly. The most comprehensive account is a sub-section buried in the middle of *Direct Action*. (5) Other important sections can be found in "The New Anarchists," "The Twilight of Vanguardism," "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century" (written with Andrej Grubačić), and *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*.

Graeber's 2002 *New Left Review* article, "The New Anarchists," became frequently cited—particularly this line about the anti-globalization movement: "Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what's new and hopeful about it." (6) In the article he claims that there is a new type of anarchist, without ideological moorings beyond their belief in two things: direct action and direct democracy.

Despite claiming that this formulation was now hegemonic among anarchists, a strict reading attracted limited adherents among intellectuals, most notably Andrej Grubačić and Uri Gordon. (Gordon's *Anarchy Alive!* would attempt to take Graeber's perspective and turn it into more traditional social science.) Graeber himself offered no evidence that his position ever became hegemonic, although the bait-and-switch way in which he defined who is an anarchist perhaps makes this impossible. For example, he said "counting how many people involved in the movement actually call themselves 'anarchists,' and in what contexts, is a bit beside the point... There are some who take anarchist principles of anti-sectarianism and open-endedness so seriously that they are sometimes reluctant to call themselves 'anarchists' for that very reason." (7) Therefore, he sets up a claim that is, by its very nature, almost impossible to disprove.

Taking this approach, Graeber wrote the majority of self-identified anarchists out of his definition. In their place he inserted a variety of anarchistic groups from varying backgrounds, most of whom would probably reject the “anarchist” label if asked directly about their politics. He said in “The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America”:

By “anarchism” here I am speaking less about anarchism as a political identity, about explicitly “anarchist” organizations, individuals who refer to themselves as “anarchists” of one variety or another—though these have, certainly, increased dramatically in number in recent decades—so much as anarchism as a form of practice, an ethical system that rejects the seizure of state power, and, to the extent possible, any appeal to or entanglement in institutions of state power, and that relies instead on classical anarchist principles of self-organization, voluntary association, direct action, and mutual aid.” (8)

In this same essay, he provides a history of U.S. post-war anarchism by almost entirely referring to non-anarchist groups like SNCC and SDS. Only a single page of the whole essay is given to self-identified anarchists.

### **Direct Democracy**

His basic schema is that the people he called “anarchists” are simply progressive activists who use direct action and direct democracy, no matter what they call themselves. All others who disagreed with him were deemed “sectarians” and/or “vanguardists,” the direct opposite of the Anarcho-Graeberians. Ideologically, Graeber resembled less anything that has historically been known as anarchist; rather, his views are those of a radical democrat committed to direct action. (As direct democracy is the central element to Anarcho-Graeberianism, it is somewhat ironic that it was not this claim that was adopted widely by those self-identified anarchists he influenced.) (9)

One of the main pillars of Graeber’s “new anarchists” was that they are not “ideological” in a traditional sense. He said that “It is not that the new movements lack ideology...these new forms of organization, which presume and are ways of articulating a diversity of perspectives, *are* its ideology.” These “anarchist-inspired revolutionary ‘networks’ and

'convergences' employ decision-making processes which assume that no ideological uniformity can or should be possible." (10)

Graeber rooted this claim in his experience in NYC DAN. However, at no point did he ever present any evidence that this was how DAN conceived of itself. Graeber never performed statistical surveys of the group, nor did he represent individuals who held views contrary to his. While it is probably true that some members of this group held similar views, it is unlikely that even a majority of this specific group did; and even if this is true, he presented no evidence of it.

### **Theory vs. Theory**

The theoretical basis of Graeber's anarchism is the naturalistic thesis (which is the one point on which he is most indebted to classical anarchism): that anarchism is natural human behavior, which therefore has nothing to do with being a self-conscious theoretical perspective. He says that "anarchism is, already, and has always been, one of the main bases for human interaction. We self-organize and engage in mutual aid all the time. We always have." (11) He also says that "The nineteenth-century 'founding figures' did not think of themselves as having invented anything particularly new. The basic principles of anarchism—self-organization, voluntary association, mutual aid—referred to forms of human behavior they assumed to have been around about as long as humanity.... We are talking less about a body of theory, then, than about an attitude, or perhaps one might even say a faith." (12) Elsewhere he claims that anarchism is an "ethical system," an "ethical discourse," and an "ethical imperative." (13)

In trying to tie these ideas together, he said that "anarchists" can refer to three different kinds of people, ideas, or institutions: traditional, self-identified anarchists; rural peasants or other anarchistic forerunners; or a set of institutions, habits, and practices (usually of

non-industrialized people). (14) Therefore, he said that “one can see ‘anarchism’ either as a vision, as an attitude, or as a set of practices. The distinction between the last two is admittedly somewhat fuzzy.... What I would like to argue is that ‘anarchism’ is best thought of, not as any one of these things—not as a vision, but neither quite as an attitude or set of practices. It is, rather, best thought of as that very movement back and forth between these three.... Hence anarchism [is in no sense] a doctrine. It’s a movement, a relationship, a process of purification, inspiration, and experiment. This is its very substance. All that really changed in the nineteenth century is that some people began to give this process a name.” (15)

Historically, this kind of anarchist naturalism has led to anti-intellectualism: If anarchism is not a historically specific doctrine but is “natural human behavior,” then what is theory but an attempt by intellectuals to control others?

Likewise, Graeber’s constant broadsides against “sectarianism” seem to reveal little more than his own proclivities: his brand of anarchism is apparently the one non-sectarian interpretation. The platformist federation NEFAC is Graeber’s only named representative of these “sectarian Anarchist groups.” (16) But he also claimed “most existing anarchist literature” engages in the “old sectarian dichotomizing logic” where he distinguished between “these non-sectarians” which he called “small-a” anarchists, and “those who identify with any one particular strain: Green Anarchists, Individualists, Anarcho-Syndicalists, post-Leftists, Platformists, and so on.” (17) This admission is important to pay attention to: the clear implication is that *any* anarchist who identifies with *any one* particular formulation of anarchism—other than Graeber’s strain, of course—is a sectarian. (18)

### **Role of Anarchist Theory**

So, if anarchism is natural behavior, an ethics, and a practice based on direct democracy,

what role does anarchist theory have? Graeber's comments are self-contradictory. He implies that political theorists with specific recommendations for action are de facto "vanguardist." His formulations imply that theory itself, or at least any theory of anarchism, is authoritarian. Nonetheless, he denies being anti-intellectual and claims that he is not against theory.

He has an often-cited statement (of which several different versions exist), regarding "High Theory" and "Low Theory." In *Fragments*, it is rendered:

This doesn't mean anarchists have to be *against* theory. After all, anarchism is, itself, an idea, even if a very old one. It is also a project, which sets out to begin creating the institutions of a new society "within the shell of the old," to expose, subvert, and undermine structures of domination but always, while doing so, proceeding in a democratic fashion, a manner which itself demonstrates those structures are unnecessary. Clearly any such project has need of the tools of intellectual analysis and understanding. It might not need High Theory, in the sense familiar today. Certainly it will not need one single, Anarchist High Theory. That would be completely inimical to its spirit. Much better, I think, something more in the spirit of anarchist decision-making processes, employed in anything from tiny affinity groups to gigantic spokescouncils of thousands of people." ... Even more than High Theory, what anarchism needs is what might be called Low Theory: a way of grappling with those real, immediate questions that emerge from a transformative project. (19)

The version in "The Twilight of Vanguardism" accused essentially all other radical intellectuals of "vanguardism":

One could imagine a body of theory that presumes, and indeed values, a diversity of sometimes incommensurable perspectives in much the same way that anarchist decision-making process does, but which nonetheless organizes them around a presumption of shared commitments. Clearly, it would also have to self-consciously reject any trace of vanguardism. This, then, leads to the question: if the role of revolution intellectuals is *not* to form an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow, what precisely is it? This is an area where I think anthropology is particularly well-positioned to help. (20)

He went on to suggest that the proper role for intellectuals is to do ethnography amongst activists and "figure out what the larger implications of what they are (already) doing might be." (21)

Despite his apparent embrace of “a diversity of sometimes incommensurable perspectives” under one anarchist banner, in fact he elsewhere attacks anyone who holds any of these “incommensurable perspectives.” (It also raises the question of how this would be a “body of theory,” as opposed to just an incoherent jumble.) And his invocation of “High Theory” raises more questions than it answers: What exactly does it mean? We can assume he means something like Derrida or Lacan. But does he mean Marx, Habermas, Durkheim, or Mauss (the latter of whom he relies on heavily)? Last, what he offers as “Low Theory” is not what anyone would usually consider “theory” at all, which is in the broadest sense is considered to be a kind of abstraction about social life. How a group makes a decision is a practical—and not a theoretical—question.

### **Marxism as Anti-Marxism**

Graeber’s two-dimensional worldview partly relies on a deeply simplistic view of marxist groups. He says that “Marxist parties...have always tended to demand ideological conformity combined with top-down, usually highly authoritarian, decision-making structures,” while anarchists organize “in conscious opposition to the style of organization and, especially, of debate typical of the classical sectarian Marxist group.” (22)

Graeber’s constant stereotyping of the Marxist-Leninist sect is unfortunate for several reasons: it obscures how ideas and practice relate; it becomes one half of a dualistic strawman (the other being, Anarcho-Graeberism); and it becomes an odd sort of projection where he seems to denounce “marxists,” but really is promoting a political arrangement where marxist ideas are promulgated by anarchist actors. (23)

Regarding intellectuals he says:

And of course theory will have to catch up with practice. To be fully effective, modern anarchism will have to include at least three levels: activists, people’s organizations, and researchers. The problem at the moment is that anarchist

intellectuals who want to get past old-fashioned, vanguardist habits—the Marxist sectarian hangover that still haunts so much of the radical intellectual world—are not quite sure what their role is supposed to be. Anarchism needs to become reflexive. But how? On one level the answer seems obvious. One should not lecture, not dictate, not even necessarily think of oneself as a teacher, but must listen, explore and discover. To tease out and make explicit the tacit logic already underlying new forms of radical practice. To put oneself at the service of activists by providing information, or exposing the interests of the dominant elite carefully hidden behind supposedly objective, authoritative discourses, rather than trying to impose a new version of the same thing. But at the same time most recognize that intellectual struggle needs to reaffirm its place. (24)

He also said “any anarchist social theory would have to reject self-consciously any trace of vanguardism. The role of intellectuals is most definitively not to form an elite that can arrive at the correct strategic analyses and then lead the masses to follow.” He also says, “one obvious role for a radical intellectual is...to look at those who are creating viable alternatives, try to figure out what might be the larger implications of what they are (already) doing, and then offer those ideas back, not as prescriptions, but as contributions, possibilities—as gifts.” (25)

Beneath this pretense of humility—what killjoy could complain about academics bearing gifts?—this is an logical fallacy. Vanguardism can only happen in any meaningful way in the context of *real-world political organization*. An academic can attempt to dictate the correct line endlessly—but no one is under any obligation to listen to them. Anyone—academics, janitors, and everyone in between—can get on a listserv, write an essay, give a lecture or ramble on at the bar about what their vision of anarchism is, and what it is specifically that anarchists do. This is, actually, the very essence of political democracy, which Graeber argues should be the same as anarchism. The idea that someone offering their own opinion is vanguardist is a deeply anti-democratic vision. At the same time it covers up the actual action of intellectuals like Graeber formulating a specific theoretical perspective on anarchism and actively propagating it activist circles, and publicly attacking intellectuals who disagree with him, in an effort to promote his own theories—while claiming that the

opposite is true. (More recently, his direct intervention in the organizing of Occupy Wall Street casts doubt on all of these past statements.)

Secondly, this perspective is nonsensical since it assumes that activists are somehow *tabula rasa* intellectually: they are somewhere between a “noble savage” and a pure-Foucaultian reaction. In fact, there is usually a long (and ongoing) process of politicization, in which people acquire specific theoretical perspectives and ideas. Our concepts don’t just come out of the air—they are often very directly formulated by intellectuals and taught to activists. For example, “privilege,” “self-determination,” “hierarchy”—and “capitalism,” for that matter—are intellectual formulations that are forged and then disseminated. To say that anarchist intellectuals should “just observe” is to say that they should just passively observe the effects of *other*, non-anarchist intellectuals. Many, if not most, street activists in the circles Graeber describes have gone through the higher education system or are otherwise quite intelligent readers; to assume that somehow they come to politics without beliefs already formed and shaped by intellectual discourse is absurd.

### **“Ethnography” and Selective Representation**

Graeber’s anarchists are mostly the product of his own imagination. Many anthropologists who have created glowing descriptions of non-industrial peoples have been criticized for seeing what they want to see (an accusation made against Sahlins, who Graeber studied under), and Graeber has done the same thing to the anti-globalization movement.

*Direct Action*, his supposed ethnography about the anti-globalization movement, would have been better off left as a story told at the bar. The invocation of “ethnography” seems to act as an excuse for limiting the representations of anarchists to those he selected. Any sense of history about the anarchist movement is suppressed. His refusal to use oral interviews with group members, or surveys of the groups he is speaking for, also allows him to select

which views are represented—without having any obligation to represent the diversity of views all groups have.

In “The New Anarchists,” Graeber says “sectarian anarchists” are the “diametrical opposite” of groups like DAN. But, for example, NYC DAN had at least two NEFAC members in the group, as well as numerous Wobblies (a group Graeber himself later apparently joined). These examples—examples which are the “diametrical opposite” of the story Graeber tells about this group—are conspicuously absent from his “ethnographic” representations.

Graeber complains that “It’s hard to think of another time when there has been such a gulf between intellectuals and activists; between theorists of revolution and its practitioners.” (26) He then turns around and portrays himself, over and over again, as speaking for “most anarchists” (this phrase occurs nine times in *Direct Action*)—despite that fact that he openly admits to having practically no contact with the anarchist milieu before Seattle (and afterwards he was not interested in self-identified anarchists, but rather just in activists who practiced a combination of direct democracy and direct action). After all, how *could* someone using ethnography, with little or no experience in the field (as he admitted, he had only passing contact with the anarchist milieu before 2000), possibly speak for “most anarchists?”

This study argues that U.S. anarchists are a small and incredibly intellectually fractured group. Even if one de facto excluded anarcho-capitalists, national-anarchists, individualists, etc. and looked only at left (or post-left) social anarchists, it would still be impossible to come up with a set of widely agreed upon basic principles; furthermore, any attempt to do so would result primarily in the project of the theorist’s own interests onto them. That is exactly what Graeber has done. Therefore, it is recommended that wherever Graeber invokes what “most anarchists” think, it should be understood as “David Graeber thinks.” (27)

## Conclusion

Politically there are many appealing points of Anarcho-Graeberianism, including its rejection of national liberation politics and embrace of an overarching political perspective than can encompass a number of different kinds of politics (queer, ecological, etc). But the specifics of his formulations involving the role of theory and intellectuals are deeply problematic.

Anarchistic groups like DAN partly arose on the basis of a popular front strategy by ideological anarchists, and Graeber took this position and inverted it, dumping the content that others saw at the core of these groups. (This is elaborated in the next section.)

Despite the claims that “most anarchists” agreed with him, Graeber’s perspectives were adopted by very few anarchists, although they became popular among graduate students in the academy (although rarely among existing academics who were anarchists), which did result in great theoretical damage. They provided a basis for a variety of “easy outs” regarding theoretical issues. One could intellectually be an autonomist marxist, post-structuralist, radical democrat, post-colonialist, etc. without ever having to ask vexing theoretical questions. One could also stay within their intellectual discipline and publish in its journals, present at their societies, etc. Last, Graeber’s perspective also helped fuel contempt for scholarly looks at traditional anarchist thought.

Insofar as anarchism is seen as pure practice, this approach is deeply anti-intellectual and anti-self-reflective. It is what I call “faith-based anarchism.” Reasons must be given for beliefs; otherwise they are only ideas that are accepted at face-value, on faith. Reasons have to be given as to *why* ends and means are congruent, *why* direct democracy and direct action are the correct political conduct, and *why* hierarchy and domination should be opposed (not to mention what these very concepts consist of). To deny that explanations should be given for these beliefs is to negate the possibility of self-reflection. Choosing them

is a sort of aesthetic or moral exercise; either they appeal to you, or they don't. You cannot have a dialogue about your beliefs or convince anyone else logically, since there is no logical reason for them without "theory." No matter what we may think of their specific formulations today, Bakunin and Kropotkin had actual answers to these questions. When one asks these deeper questions today, there is nowhere to turn or ask under these frameworks. Graeber wants to ensure that this situation does not change; as noted above, he goes so far as to call anarchism a "faith."

Anarcho-Graeberism attacks any attempt to even define the legitimate boundaries of anarchism. Arbitrarily classifying political actors as "anarchists" causes intellectual collapse, and there are a number of implications of this. First, doing so denigrates the reason for there to be any intellectual work done on anarchism at all, since its definition and scope is already defined; "theoretical work" becomes merely an ornament to decorate what has already been substantively decided. Second, Graeber's work attacks all anarchists who offer a specific interpretation of anarchism, thus discouraging any serious discussion of what anarchist beliefs are or should be. Third, it reduces anarchism to a "means" divorced entirely from the "ends" of a future anarchist society. This implies abandoning the construction of an anarchist society as a goal at all, reducing it to merely being a way to organize a demonstration. Fourth, irrespective of Graeber's own specific political proclivities, the end result is that almost any intellectual perspective can be included under this banner, including nationalism, racial separatism, conspiracy theories, and antisemitism.

## **8. Real Origins of Supposed “New Anarchists”: How U.S. Anarchism in the 1990s Led to the Seattle Demonstrations**

Other than some specific theoretical statements, very little has been written about either the political or ideological specifics of U.S. anarchism from the mid-1960s through the current day. David Graeber’s work exploits this lack of self-reflective understanding; in doing so, it is able to codify his views and reproduce them. My own experiences in Portland, Oregon in the late 1990s, which included my participation in the demonstrations in Seattle, ran very contrary to Graeber’s and because of this, it is important to recount them in order to illustrate why his—and other ideal type and postanarchist—accounts of anti-globalization movement anarchism are so deeply misportrayed.

As the historical section showed, the anarchist movement in the United States had been slowly growing since the 1960s. By the late 1980s and early 1990s, it had become a much larger political force than in previous decades. At the same time, in the larger “progressive” (left-liberal but not Leninist) political milieu, the mood was to “link the social movements together.” This was a reaction to the fragmentation which resulted from the various permutations of identity politics of the 1970s and 1980s, and was epitomized by the academic approach of Race-Class-Sex-Gender. Animal rights advocates, feminists, unionists and environmentalists were making alliances across single-issue organizing. The *Sexual Politics of Meat* by Carol Adams, which combined feminism and vegetarianism, was one popular example of this trend. Groups like the Student Environmental Action Coalition (SEAC) were also important. One SEAC pamphlet describes the “Systems of Domination” (represented by a pyramid), which include “Racism,” “Sexism,” “Militarism,” and “Ageism,” all of which are underscored by “Environmental Destruction.” Hierarchy, domination, and “power-over” are to be replaced by “power-from-within.” (1) The Green Party, which came

to the height of its influence with Ralph Nader's presidential campaign in 2000, was defined by its "Ten Key Values," which also had a multi-issue stance—including social justice, ecology, feminism, non-violence, and decentralization.

Radicals were doing the same thing. Jobs With Justice was nationally a fairly moderate pro-labor group which was designed at the outset to operate as an action caucus independent of the formal AFL-CIO structures. But in Portland, Oregon, for example, it was controlled by anarchists who used it to link labor issues with environmentalism, housing issues, and anti-sweatshop campaigns, as well as a vehicle for direct action. The city's Copwatch group was originally founded by anarchists as a committee within an anti-war group. In 1989 the Redwood Summer campaign in Northern California was a joint IWW and Earth First! campaign to save ancient redwoods and to organize loggers. Later in the 1990s, Earth First! joined unionists in the United Steelworkers of America in a campaign against their mutual foe Charles Hurwitz. He owned both MAXXAM, which locked out striking workers at Kaiser Aluminum, and Pacific Lumber, which was at the same time clearcutting old-growth forests.

(2) Radical animal rights and environmental activists also made links; the ALF helped spawn the ELF, for example. Anarchist punk bands like Crass had specifically multi-issue stances, simultaneously advocating issues like pacifism, feminism, animal rights, and atheism. All of this blended perfectly with Murray Bookchin's recasting of anarchism as "against hierarchy," which could embrace issues like feminism, ecology, and queer liberation without going through the theoretical contortions marxists had to in order to justify these politics. It was this mood to "link movements" and to do "multi-issue" work that was far more influential than post-structuralist notions of "arrays of non-reducible resistance," although in retrospect the latter have become almost ubiquitous readings of what and the former was erased. This is not to deny that there was some post-structuralist influence, but a close examination of political literature from this movement directly before Seattle (including calls

for the demonstration itself) clearly show that the multi-issue narratives were the ones used. (3)

### **Theorists Commit Murder-Suicide, Activists Advance**

Graeber has gone out of his way to denounce the “squabbling anarchists” of the 1990s, as well as vanguardist intellectuals, without acknowledging that in fact the Seattle demonstrations came directly out of this political and intellectual milieu.

Intellectually it was also a time of great ferment among anarchists. There were numerous national publications that were striking off in different directions, trying to elaborate on insights from radical ecology, situationism, feminism, etc. While they all had small print runs, unlike much of the left their audience consisted almost entirely of activists and counterculturalists (and not primarily academics or members of unions or political parties). They combined both news and theory, as opposed to the Marxist-Leninist tendency to separate newspapers and theoretical journals. Periodicals like *Fifth Estate*, *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, *Profane Existence*, *Love and Rage*, *Kick It Over*, *Earth First! Journal*, *Live Wild or Die*, and others engaged in extensive debates about the meaning of anarchism and its relation to current activism.

At the same time, there was a large, multi-voiced debate (which in particular involved many of the environmentally minded anarchists), concerning issues about technology, organization, and theory. It culminated in a 1995 polemic by Murray Bookchin called *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*. The writers labeled “lifestylists” were actually a wide variety of radicals with few, if any, unifying elements; a case could be made that most, although probably not all, were influenced by situationism and anti-organizationalist positions. This precipitated an open war between various writers, ending in a kind of murder-suicide. David Watson renounced primitivism, and *Fifth Estate* made

moves towards folding. (4) Murray Bookchin renounced anarchism altogether soon after. The LRRAF folded in 1998 amid mutual incriminations, the rump eventually joining with holdovers from the New Communist Movement. (5) John Zerzan, who was living in the Pacific Northwest in Eugene, Oregon, was in some ways the last man standing. He had already received national media attention because of the Unabomber case. Unlike many of the others, he was connected to a very militant political milieu where he lived—one which would specifically become infamous after Seattle (the “Eugene anarchists” who were part of the Seattle black bloc)—and because of this Zerzan would continue to gain national media attention after words.

Standing outside of this and only reading the degenerating broadsides in the anarchist press, as Graeber assumedly was, one might be tempted to think that anarchism was nothing but “squabbling egomaniacs.” (Of course, even a squabbling egomaniac can be an effective activist in real life, and not a few inveterate sectarians have been just that.) But on the ground, and especially on the west coast, organizing was in full-swing. But (as Graeber notes), this revival of anarchism was almost entirely ignored by the left media. (6)

### **The Perfect Enemy: The WTO Death Star vs. the Rebel Alliance**

At the same time, the Democratic Party under Clinton was abandoning the welfare state and completing its embrace of neoliberalism. Clinton had already presided over the first of the decade’s major neoliberal trade pacts, NAFTA (the North American Free Trade Agreement), which came into being on January 1, 1994. Many left-wing Democrats became disillusioned by the passage of DOMA (the Defense of Marriage Act), the gutting of AFDC (Aid for Families with Dependent Children, the main welfare program), and, finally, Clinton’s embrace of the WTO. After twelve years of Republican rule, the AFL-CIO (which had a generational leadership change in 1995 when John Sweeney became the president, and promised a new wave of grassroots organizing) felt abandoned by the Democrats,

particularly regarding the WTO. Ralph Nader, founder of the powerful PIRGs (Public Interest Research Groups), felt that there was no longer room for him at the table inside the Beltway, and he moved towards the orbit of the Green Party. Liberals were moving to the left; progressives had been linking issues for several years; and, especially on the west-coast, anarchists were trying to reach out and make ties with a variety of groups and interests. In came the WTO, an undemocratic and unelected body whose supranational provisions threatened to wipe out the legal rights gained by almost every single progressive group: labor, environmentalists, feminists, anti-GMO advocates, animal rights activists, anti-imperialists, etc. For all the activists (particularly those involved in animal rights and environmentalism) who for years had been admonished not to engage in illegal direct actions but to “work through the system,” it was the final insult. All of their reluctant reformist work was about to be tossed out the window.

The WTO was the perfect enemy and, in the United States, the stars came into alignment for the opposition. The protectionist right around Pat Buchanan did not mobilize on the streets, therefore removing major potentials for internecine fighting. No major Marxist-Leninist groups were involved in organizing around this issue, either, thereby removing potential radical competition for the anarchists. The final touch was the choice of Seattle as a host city for the WTO. Hundreds of thousands of left activists lived in “left coast” cities such as Seattle, Portland, Eugene, and the Bay Area, and this probably included most of the anarchists and eco-radicals in the United States—and a number of Canadian ones, as well, in Vancouver and Victoria. It was a home game for a unity coalition of the anarchist and the progressive left. After the Seattle police bungled the security for the conference, the coalition was able to shut down the early meetings on the first day. Later, when the police moved to a heavy-handed approach of tear-gassing and beating protestors, this only cemented popular support for the demonstrations, which were publicly wrapped in the rhetoric of democracy. Footage of Storm Trooper-looking riot policing shooting tear gas

canisters directly at the backs of demonstrators, who were seated on the ground in classic poses of non-violent civil disobedience, called to mind images of Bull Connor's dogs attacking sit-ins in the segregationist South. Capitol Hill, a wealthy liberal neighborhood, was flooded with tear gas, angering its previously ambivalent residents. One city official, attempting to attend emergency meetings, was beaten by the police in the crackdown, and another was hit by a tear gas canister. Washington state Governor Gary Lock eventually called in National Guard to restore order, equally among the city police and the protestors—although, fearing a repeat of the Kent State massacre, he made sure the Guard did not carry firearms.

What is often overlooked is that the WTO did not just unite the resistance (as well as draw off-the-street support from significant elements of the center and the right)—it united anarchists as well. The WTO was opposed by all anarchist factions, without exception; even those who had reservations, such as myself, endorsed or participated. (7) Syndicalists, ultra-leftists, primitivists, pro-Situs, deep ecologists, social ecologists, counterculturalists, mystical and religious anarchists, anti-imperialists, and anti-racists—which had been split by the arguments of the mid-1990s—were all were united in opposition to this issue and in favor of (or at least were able to work within) this style of organizing. The anarchist milieu is very small, and its significant fissures exacerbate its political ineffectiveness. The WTO allowed anarchists to unite with each other, and thereby magnify their impact on the more moderate factions.

### **The Invisible Anarchist Popular Front**

So what were anarchists thinking going into this demonstration? Certainly many different things, although from what I remember (and looking back at the documents), "democracy" was not the first word on everyone's lips. I came from Portland so I can only speak to

everyone's experience, although three of the thirteen blockade groups at the WTO were composed of Portlanders.

The Portland anarchist scene, which was heavily countercultural and tied to anti-consumerist, environmental and animal rights politics (but for whom opposition to capitalism was central), was composed of people who heavily self-identified as "anarchist"—as individuals. But there were very few groups that anarchists participated in that utilized this name. Even the local anarchist infoshop was euphemistically called the "223 Freedom and Mutual Aid Center."

From my perspective, as younger militants we had been trying for years to reach out to others. My friends and I had what was a kind of generic anarchism: anti-capitalism, anti-Leninism, anarchism as opposition to hierarchy with an explicitly multi-issue focus, and a commitment to means-ends congruency and prefigurative politics. We did not participate in election campaigns, but would occasionally enter into alliance with those who did, in particular the Greens. (Occasionally some of the more moderate Portland anarchists did participate in ballot initiatives; one was to raise the minimum wage, and one to reboot the police department's civilian review board.) Other groups, such as Love and Rage, were also actively trying to make larger alliances and mobilize communities, albeit in a form that resembled Third World Marxism more than anarchism.

We found that ideologically based organizing only worked with punks (and to a lesser extent other counterculturalists); others were immediately turned off. But we did find receptive audiences for both our ideas as well as our style of organizing. People were interested in collective living, vegetarianism and veganism, voluntarily moving away from market-based exchanges of goods, opposition to neoliberalism, collective decision-making, squatting, alternative transportation advocacy, etc. When we *explained* our ideas, people would like

them; but when we *labeled* them, people were turned off. I called this phenomenon “the A word.”

Projects like Food Not Bombs (FNB) were important in this regard. FNB was not founded as an explicitly anarchist project, but by the early 1990s was essentially adopted as such. People would collect food that was to be thrown away by stores (usually bruised produce or packaged food that reached its expiration date), prepare it, and then serve it for free in public settings. Groups were totally decentralized and anyone could pick up this label and start a group (this is sometimes called “franchise activism”). Meals were supposed to be vegetarian and cooked in protest of war (hence the name), but as with any completely decentralized group, this was not always the case. In Albuquerque, there was no anarchist community; I lived there for two years and could never find more than a dozen people who would adopt that label. But many different kinds of people felt comfortable coming to FNB and cooking with us. We would engage in frank political discussions with them in person. While “converting” people was rare, this did build relationships of trust and understanding with a larger community. We also saw groups like FNB and Earth First! the same way, as “crypto-anarchist.” (This was not, however, to say that members of these groups saw it the same way, and many clearly did not.)

Important here was the notion of being “consistent with anarchist values” (as opposed to being, what we called, “circle-A Anarchist”). A group that was “consistent with anarchist values” utilized practices that, at least in its everyday actions—without scrutinizing its ideology, goals (stated or otherwise), or implications of its actions—were such that anarchists could work with them. This generally meant that community-based groups that did not focus on electoral or lobbying work, and which used any kind of leaderless decision-making process (there was no special focus on consensus), were “consistent with anarchist values.” (Sometimes, however, this meant that anarchists would do the early, labor-

intensive, grassroots work for organizations that later became very hierarchical and/or electoral-focused.) This idea is similarly related to, although not exactly the same as, this study's notion of "anarchistic" politics.

Graeber misses this important distinction altogether. As anarchists, there were often very few ideologically anarchist groups to work with. However, there were a large variety of groups that held related political views and which had acceptable internal organizational structures and political focuses. For example, I worked with a Klan/Nazi-monitoring group in Georgia, a Peace and Justice center in Ohio, and a community-based anti-police brutality group in New Mexico; none of them were "anarchist"—or at least they were not composed primarily of anarchists—but all were compatible with anarchist principles. (Sometimes these groups would engage in electoral politics, in which we usually declined to participate, organizing instead the direct actions, pickets and demonstrations, educational programs, etc.) There were many animal rights or environmental groups like this. There were also a large variety of national (or international) "anarchistic" groups like Reclaim the Streets, Critical Mass, Earth First!, and Food Not Bombs. Some were intentionally started by anarchists as a kind of Popular Front expression. For example, Reclaim the Streets was started as a specifically anarchist project but whose public interventions were open to all kinds of participants, although it later morphed into a less ideologically specific idea that different activists utilized. Some were started by non-anarchists and the idea taken over by anarchists (FNB); while others included many anarchists, but also many others who held differing ideological views that were not anarchist but had similarities (Earth First! was composed of this mixture).

Although we did not use this language, in retrospect we were quite intentionally trying to set up what were, in practice, anarchist Popular Front groups. We were developing political structures that represented our ideological views, but also internally were structured in a

manner consistent with our beliefs. This allowed all kinds of people to become involved without an ideological litmus test. Generally these groups had a “core” of self-identified anarchists who made sure they stayed true to these values (although it was never posited this way, this was the same as Bakunin’s “invisible dictatorship,” and the Spanish FAI). We could disseminate anarchist principles of means-ends consistency; extra-parliamentary direct action; anarchist cultural aesthetics; intellectual formulations of non-workerist, anti-hierarchical politics, etc.

What Graeber misses is that we did not consider everyone in these groups to be an anarchist; in fact, we did just the opposite. Some were and some were not. Some of the other activists who held ideological views were council communists, deep ecologists, eco-feminists, etc. The EZLN made it very clear that they were not anarchists, as did the German autonome. (Other people simply participated. They might be Democrats, but they enjoyed that they were not being “told what to do,” and they could engage in actions based on decisions that they had a direct say in; we won many allies this way, especially among people who had experienced manipulation by top-down NGO organizations, but who felt that they had a real say in groups that used any of the variety of communal decision-making structures.) To us, what was important was not what people were called, but what they *did*. Anarchism was *content* and not a *label*. (8) While we thought of ourselves as ideological anarchists, we obviously were not interested in forming ideologically based anarchist organizations, especially after the collapse of Love and Rage (although by 1999, almost none were in existence in the United States).

### **The Confusion of Anarcho-Graeberism**

From my perspective, Graeber completely missed what pre-Seattle anarchists were doing—in fact, he inverted what happened. We *purposely* dispensed with the label “anarchist,” forming or entering groups consistent with anarchist principles but not bearing the name. As

long as people engaged in actions based on anarchist principles, we did not care what they called themselves. (The aforementioned Fredy Perlman quip “the only -ist I am is a cellist” summed things up.)

Instead, Graeber insists on the label, and in fact applies it to many people who we did not (and did not want to) label as “anarchist” at all. He excludes most of the ideologically self-conscious anarchists, and instead includes in his schema people who we considered to be mere sympathizers, or even adherents of close but non-anarchist perspectives. In the classical era, the “synthesis” perspective was an attempt to unify anarchists of different persuasions (individualists, anarcho-communists, and anarcho-syndicalists) under one tent. But it *never* tried to erase their specific ideologies, it tried to *unite* them. Graeberian anarchism can be read as an inversion of synthesis: it expels the different anarchist strains from its supposed big tent. (9) From our perspective, what he did what was the same as redefining members of Popular Front groups as the “real” marxists—while simultaneously excluding most Party members and marxist intellectuals from his definition.

In Seattle, anarchists participated in many different parts of the demonstration. The several hundred strong black bloc (who were infamously labeled as the “Eugene anarchists,” of which Zerzan was the most public representative) was assumedly almost all-anarchist, and was the most militant and ideological. (10) The blockade groups were organized under the rubric of the Direct Action Network, but this was just a name that was coming from outside; it was not an organization. Activists in fact organized their own affinity groups and showed up in Seattle to be coordinated under the rubric of DAN. (11) There was no ideological vetting of any kind at this level. The Portland groups were predominately anarchist, and presumably at least half or more of the others were. Once again, though, in our mind it did not matter: who was labeled “anarchist” was indeed not just beside the point, but what we were trying to avoid. Last, anarchists were also involved in the many other elements of the

demonstrations, including the large labor marches and attempts at getting a general strike called. (12)

The people I had worked with most closely were in the blockade groups. Our perspective was this: it was great that the anarchists were in the black bloc, and great that DAN was a mixture of anarchists and non-anarchists but operated on anarchist principles, and helpful that anarchists in the IWW were a link to the larger labor unions. In the public eye, the non-violent civil disobedience of DAN suddenly made them look like moderate “good guys” compared to the black bloc “bad guys.” In turn, we made sure not to say anything bad about the black bloc, who we were of course in sympathy with; we simply turned a blind eye and smiled and ran interference. The “big-A” and “small-A” anarchists were not in conflict, as Graeber often implies, but rather were working in tandem, whether consciously or not. Going back to my analogy: there was the Party and then there was the Popular Front. Ideologically committed activists could choose to work with whichever group they felt more comfortable with. This also kept an ideological core in these semi-anarchist groups, and helped coordinate their actions with the more circle-A militant groups while keeping a friendly public face to interface with the more mainstream unions and NGOs. The Popular Front and the Party were not in “diametrical opposition,” but rather were intimately linked.

This is not to say that everyone shared this perspective. Many of the more militant types pushed to organize in the old manner, with a rather narrow political vision. This implicitly condemned the multi-tiered structure that had arisen. Conversely, there were undoubtedly some people in the DAN-style groups who disliked the black bloc and even anarchists in general.

### **Origins of Anarcho-Graeberism**

But those people who agreed with him were undoubtedly a small minority of the adherents

of these groups, and many of them were probably, literally, “new anarchists” who left after a year or two (or less). Some of them probably realized shortly thereafter that they were “radical democrats” or generic grassroots progressives—and not anarchists after all.

Graeber made a sweeping generalization about anarchism; Teoman Gee notes that, at best, his conception was limited to the United States. It is primarily based on what Graeber saw—or, more accurately, wanted to see—primarily in one group that was part of these anti-globalization demonstrations, the New York City DAN. One of the problems with this is that DAN was intended to be an action group based around a common political minimum; it was specifically not an ideological group, and this allowed it to contain a variety of ideological perspectives (which was particularly useful in a city where there was a highly factionalized political milieu). It seemed to be a political group and it was, but on another hand it was merely a coalition.

In one place, Graeber admits that many New York City anarchists did not see DAN the way he did: “The anarchists didn’t think of the coalition as a ‘group’ at all. They saw it not as a decision-making body but more of a forum, a way for groups already organizing against the FTAA to exchange information and avoid reduplication of effort. It was something along the lines of a spokescouncil. Certainly they saw no reason for it to adopt an ideological ‘line’ of any sort.” (13) But this clearly is in conflict with his statements elsewhere that anti-globalization groups like DAN are “not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization *are* its ideology.” (14)

Graeber misrepresented a temporary political alliance and coalition for a new ideology (which he wanted to see), while openly admitting that he had little or no evidence that activists held this ideology. In fact, they didn’t.

## **I Believe in the Reality of My Press Releases, I Take My Press Releases for Reality**

“Democracy” has almost never been a key concept for most self-identified anarchists, nor was it a central one in the run-up to the Seattle demonstration—or even in the immediate aftermath. This can be shown by an analysis of six broadsheets that were distributed to promote various ant-globalization mass mobilizations in the United States between 1999 and 2001, as well as a magazine-length pamphlet published by DAN immediately after Seattle. There is only *one* of these in which “direct democracy” was mentioned as a central concern—and in this one David Graeber himself is listed as one of the contributors. In neither the publicity packet distributed by the “Direct Action Network Against Corporate Globalization” in October 1999, nor the initial public invitation circulated to ask people to join DAN-NYC, was the term “direct democracy” even mentioned. (15)

The more militant types almost always eschewed (and sometimes openly rejected) discourses about “democracy”—direct or otherwise. While DAN-style groups sometimes did deploy this language, I always saw this as little more than a ruse: a version of the Communist Party’s 1930s slogan “Communism is Twentieth-Century Americanism.” It was good PR, but outside the Bookchinites I don’t think that many majority of anarchists believed it, although some may have. (Naturally, we insisted that all decisions were made with some kind of collective process, but this was just a baseline assumption.) Like many of Graeber’s formulations, he reads as if he believed our own press releases. Concepts like “democracy” and “anarchism is human nature” are best thought of as slogans for public conception; privately, most anarchists generally understand that this is not how the world functions and not what they believe or are aiming for.

What non-anarchists in DAN thought I cannot say. There were many people who flooded into the more outward-looking anti-globalization groups like DAN who picked up the term “anarchist” without adopting the meaning we had given it. While I argue that we were using

a CP-style organization, unlike the CP, front-group participation was not then followed by activists being given ideological training and then recruited into some ideologically coherent core organization. This let people come to their own conclusions about what they were doing and what these labels meant.

Graeber says that the “new anarchist” perspective cannot generally be found in the anarchist press in general, and he is right, although mostly for the wrong reasons. Since the press was partly theoretical and his schema is avowedly anti-theoretical, there is no reason for them to publish this material. There were no ideologically anarchist “direct democracy” groups either; the only attempt to form one that I am familiar with, the Alliance for Freedom and Direct Democracy, was still-born. (16) The theory that these activists used was, frankly, drawn from the same left/progressive writers that everyone read (Vandana Shiva, Noam Chomsky, etc). And last, I would argue that the simple truth was that most anarchists did not adopt this perspective.

There is a circular logic to Graeber’s argument that “there are some who take anarchist principles of anti-sectarianism and open-endedness so seriously that they are sometimes reluctant to call themselves ‘anarchists’ for that very reason.” Elsewhere he admits as well that these views are not represented in the anarchist press, before labeling that very press a “persistent problem.” (17) This produces a situation in which Graeber cannot produce almost a single piece of evidence in support of his views, while simultaneously justifying this.

In truth, there was no silent majority of “new anarchists” disconnected to the 1990s movement of self-identified anarchists who were concerned with specific “ideological” questions, which culminated in the Seattle demonstrations. Anarchism was never a kind of non-ideological practice; these “small-a” groups he praises, and falsely counterposes to

“sectarians,” are in fact Popular Front-style products of the same self-conscious anarchist organizing he denounces. Furthermore, it not sectarian to talk about anarchist theory. In fact, it is imperative to do so, lest the situation be left just as Graeber describes it: anarchists carrying out marxist ideas.

There is some truth to Graeber’s contention about there being a center that “most anarchists” are around, and which is not represented by any of the specific ideological positions such as primitivism, anarcho-syndicalism, or insurrectionism. But if it did or does exist, it is certainly not defined by direct democracy and direct action. Its center would be something more like what was described in the last section: commitments to means-ends congruency; an “opposition to hierarchy,” which was anti-capitalist but not class-centric, and explicitly included other issues such as feminism, queer liberation and ecology; insistence on some form of collective-decision-making; an almost purely extra-parliamentary politics; and a rejection of membership-based “vanguard” groups. One could go on at length (as Cindy Milstein did in *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*) about these characteristics, but the more specific one would get from this, the fewer people it would encompass. However vague this sounds or mushy this is as a social theory, it *is* an “ideology” and even, in a vague way, a “theory” (although not the kind of specific social theory this study is asking about)—and it is far closer to what “most anarchists” thought, both before and after Seattle, than what Graeber claimed was the silent hegemony. His “sectarians” were not opposed to this, they were merely more specific about what they believe. They may or may not spend time engaging in ideological debate with other anarchists or working with them; Graeber himself seemed to spend an inordinate amount of time attacking other anarchists, while rarely working with activists who held beliefs differing from his own. (18) One must search with a fine-toothed comb through Graeber’s works to find even passing positive mentions of any other living anarchist, who is not already on board with his schema.

The joke may have been on us in the end. That people like Graeber were drawn into active participation in the anarchist milieu from the sidelines showed the success of this program of crypto-anarchism. But it also showed its weaknesses. It allowed self-promoting intellectuals like Graeber to appoint themselves as spokespeople for all anarchists, and furthermore to use their skills in speaking, thinking, and writing to work on redefining who anarchists were as a whole, and what we were doing; they were able to use their cultural capital in a fashion that could hardly be considered democratic or consensus-seeking. Partly because there was not a more coherent anarchist theoretical stance that could be taught to new adherents, it was difficult to transmit what we had been thinking to others. In turn, Graeber at best misread the temporarily political coalition we had forged as the ideology itself, and at worst used this vacuum to insert his own personal notions about politics, above—and even against—what “most anarchists” actually thought.

In this light Graeber’s relationship to anarchism can be seen as an equivalent to George Sorel’s to syndicalism; he is a theorist who was deeply disconnected from the internal conception of the political movement he was writing about, but who projected his own needs and desires onto it from the outside. Since others are looking for an intellectual to represent the movement, they turn to these writers to “represent the movement.”

### **The Gig is Up: National-Anarchists as Limit Case**

A few years after Seattle, a fascist group which had dubbed themselves “National-Anarchists” made an appearance on the edges of the anarchist milieu. On one hand, they appeared to be a straightforward crypto-fascist sect attempting to infiltrate the left. Their main ideologue was a veteran of Third Position fascist politics. Third Positionism (which is sometimes referred to as “the Trotskyism of the fascist movement”) tends to attract far-right intellectuals and to be critical of the (formerly) really existing fascist states. They are

both anti-capitalist and endorse reciprocal racial separatism (as opposed to white supremacy); in recent years they have embraced environmental and animal rights politics. To underscore this, the National-Anarchists even publicized the tactic of “entryism”—the political cheap trick of covertly entering other political groups in order to ransack their membership. However, instead of advocating separate ethno-states (in the United States, there had been a demand for a separate white state in the Pacific Northwest forwarded by far right activists like Tom Metzger of the White Aryan Resistance), these National-Anarchists followed the lead of French New Right theorist Alain de Benoist and advocated extreme decentralism, including a regime of separate racial “villages.” On this basis, they rechristened themselves as “anarchists.” They attempted to enter animal rights, anti-zionist, and anti-globalization circles, and to cross-recruit from anarchists. (19)

Beyond their intrinsic interest as an idiosyncratic outgrowth of the far right, the National-Anarchists are of interest as a limit-case for how anarchism is defined. The National-Anarchists were clearly aware that they were exploiting several loopholes in anarchist ideology. According to the way that many anarchists have offered definitions of contemporary anarchism, the National-Anarchists should clearly be included. They were formed into collectives engaged in extra-parliamentary actions; opposed globalization and the supremacy of any single racial group over others; and endorsed environmentalism and animal rights.

They also exploited the endorsement of anarchists of “national self-determination.” This had been forwarded and endorsed by many anarchists; the most prominent of whom are Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin, a former Black Panther, and Ashanti Alston, a former Black Liberation Army member and a former board member of the Institute for Anarchist Studies; both are also former political prisoners. Both say that anarchists should support the rights of African-Americans (and other people of color) to form separate racially based activist

groups, as well as permanent forms of self-governance, and to make alliances with various nationalist groups who hold this position. In anarchist terms this is justified because communities have “autonomy” and should be able to make their own decisions on how to self-organize. These ideas are widely embraced by participants in circles like APOC (Anarchist/Autonomous People of Color). (It should be noted that this is a fundamentally different *reasoning* for endorsing national self-determination than the one held by Marxist-Leninist groups: that is, because their national self-determination negates “imperialism.”) The National-Anarchists simply took this idea to its logical conclusion: if people of color can form exclusivist enclaves because of their autonomous right to self-organization, then white people can as well. Murray Bookchin’s autonomous municipalities become white “sundown towns” in their eyes.

The National-Anarchists also exploited the tendency of the anarchist movement’s refusal to discipline anti-semitism, and sometimes even to endorse it, especially as the Second Intifada went on and Hamas came to power in Gaza. Pro-Islamist factions developed; some anarchistic actors even called Hamas and Hezbollah “the good Islamists” (as their main enemy was Israel); the “bad Islamists” were Al Qaeda and the Taliban, who had more of a reputation for slaughtering civilians and oppressing non-Muslim populations in their own areas of influence. Anarcho-Graeberism had been invoked to include these segments, thereby opening the door to include antisemitic white separatists as well.

The National-Anarchists are the otherwise unspoken limit case who stand in the background of this study. Any definition of anarchism needs to be good enough to keep these elements out—not on a practical level, but on an theoretical level. The National-Anarchists offer a deep theoretical challenge to intellectual anarchism: it must explicitly define itself in such a way as to exclude these reactionary beliefs. Definitions offered by postanarchists like May

and Day, and arguably the vague ideal types offered by Graeber, are inclusive of these far right decentralists, and for this reason, if nothing else, need to be rejected.

## **9. Of Tool Boxes and Hodge-Podge: A Critique of Postanarchism and Ideal Type Anarchism**

### **The Problem of Hodge-Podge: We Are All Already Post-Modern**

Anarchism has lost its theoretical grounding. It has become an irreducible grab bag of elements, not just from the already fragmented tradition of classical anarchism, both also from a variety of other intellectual traditions. The social anarchist traditions of Bakunin and Kropotkin had some naturalistic philosophical positions that were later questioned by figures like Malatesta and Goldman, but there was a coherence to these initial claims which could be criticized and revised. The rejuvenation of anarchist politics in the 1960s brought with it a lack of theoretical continuity with the past traditions. While the framework of the politics was kept basically the same, the specific theoretical formulations of differing anarchists varied wildly. Anarchists adopted ideas from movements as wide-ranging as deep ecology, biocentrism, and bioregionalism; various feminist and identity politics discourses; phenomenology; Kantianism; populist socialism; animal liberation politics; anti-colonialism; post-structuralism; chaos and emergence theory; situationism; and various forms of marxism, including the Frankfurt School, Third World Marxism, white privilege theory, autonomism, council communism, and the autonome.

There are two important implications here. One, these non-classical anarchist theories were all outgrowths of existing independent intellectual traditions, with their own pedigrees and dialogues, ontologies, and epistemologies. Two, since then no real new anarchist social theory (or theorist) has arisen. Contemporary anarchism has a kind of real-world political consistency (especially as long as it remains limited to protest activity and activism based in small groups), but intellectually it is a hodge-podge of different traditions. Because of this, it is impossible to attempt to look at the really existing political milieu and “read” a theory out of it, as Graeber and others claim they can do. What results tends to be little more than a

description of the theorists' own predilections, but with nothing new added. The milieu includes too many different and irreducible elements.

When people explicitly started to promote a "postanarchist" trend in the mid-'00s, it engendered quite a backlash from more "orthodox" anarchists. The irony is that anarchism has *been* a kind of postmodern bricolage for many decades, combining various theories taken from different sources. In a certain light, postanarchism can be seen as codifying and legitimizing an existing situation, and in another as extending the reach of "anarchism" into a larger pool of non-anarchist-identified actors whose views may or may not reflect those of self-identified anarchists—or postanarchists.

### **Taking Ideas Out of Tool Boxes**

The materialist bias that the left has inherited from marxism has drawn its attention away from how ideas function in political movements. (This is more than a little ironic, as many the Marxist-Leninist sects seem to spend the majority of their time arguing with other marxists *precisely* about ideas.)

The kinds of ideas that political movements use are almost always formed within specific philosophical crucibles: that is, social categories themselves are forged by the application of particular philosophical perspectives. For example, Theodore Allen wished to comprehend how race worked in the United States. Being a marxist and having marxist assumptions, he used marxist epistemology (historical materialism) to investigate the issue of race, and came up with the category of "white privilege." It could then be applied to analyze existing social conditions, to describe and interpret the social world.

It is true, of course, that theories themselves are codifications of various trends in a society: case in point, many of the foundational concepts of marxism were taken from existing ideas

that were in currency in the nineteenth century; part of Marx's brilliance was that he put many ideas that socialists had already accepted into an overarching framework. These concepts includes dialectics, the labor theory of value, history as the history of economic changes, and the division between use-value and exchange-value. Additionally, the *kinds* of things that the theories will analyze shift historically, too. Marxism became more interested in the commodity form as the consumer society arose, more invested in theories of imperialism as countries were invaded, and more interested in analyzing race with the rise of the Civil Rights movement. But even with these caveats, I believe that my main point still holds.

You can not take an idea forged in one theoretical crucible and simply insert it into another framework and retain consistency; this only "works" to a certain level, until cognitive dissonance kicks in and the ideas show themselves as being ultimately in conflict. The idea will retain, in its very foundational shape and assumptions, the elements with which it was initially designed.

The advocacy of this trend of appropriation is usually tied to the notion of the "tool box" that Foucault invokes, and which Deleuze summarizes as:

A theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate. We don't revise a theory, but construct new ones; we have no choice but to make others. (1)

This idea has been invoked many times in anarchist circles. Starting at least in the early 1990s (and obviously reflecting larger academic trends) and continuing to the present day, it was advocated that U.S. anarchists should "learn" from anti-racist, feminist, post-colonialist, and other theories. The implications of this should not be missed: it was not proposed that anarchists *engage* with questions about colonialism or the subjugation of

women or of people of non-European descent, but rather that they *borrow* pieces of analysis from the other, existing theories. As described regarding the postanarchist work referred to above, the adaptation of these theories by other actors (here, anarchists) need not be reciprocated theoretically; in the act of adaptation itself, they are acting under the master framework that the poststructuralists have set up. At the risk of mixing my metaphors, I would say that insofar as anarchists follow this perspective, they are laboring under the poststructuralist sign.

The tool box analogy is useful to look at contemporary anarchism, but not in the way it was intended. As Bob Black noted, classical anarchism—especially that of Bakunin—set up a political paradigm. This paradigm was originally based on a certain set of arguments, but these theoretical stances were then jettisoned, even though the master structure remained. For contemporary anarchism, the political outlines of anarchism are the tool *box*, and all of these discreet theories—which include classical anarchism, poststructuralism, deep ecology, animal rights, etc.—are the *tools*. And the tools retain the marks of their foundries (i.e., parent intellectual bodies).

The problem with this is the various theoretical tools, taken by themselves, do not necessarily belong in the anarchist toolbox. If one accepts the white privilege theory, for example, there is no reason why one need to have an anarchist politic; in fact, if one did not accept historical materialism or the centrality of class struggle, there would be no reason to accept the white privilege theory in the first place. The same is true for notions of the totality and the colonization of everyday life by the commodity form; they, too, are inseparable from marxist theoretical perspectives. If one did not share their presuppositions, one would not need accept these ideas; and if one started from the other end and accepted these ideas, there would be no reason to draw anarchist conclusions from them.

### **Elective Affinities: Anarchist Naturalism and Post-Structuralism**

Despite his comments refuting a unitary anarchist theory, Graeber goes out of his way to attack post-structuralism. As with many of his writings, these attacks have more than their share of irony in them, because postanarchists themselves have a deep affinity for his work.

Like many of Foucault's subjects, Graeber's anarchists are very zen; despite the fact that they are engaged in some very concrete political actions, they seem to have no beliefs whatsoever (and therefore, ultimately, no reasons for engaging in these actions). Although Graeber attacks post-structuralism in general, and Foucault in particular, his work has attracted attention in postanarchist circles, undoubtedly because it implies very Foucaultian beliefs: radical subjects are not formed through, say, a Gramscian process of politicization, but rather are similar to Foucault's unthinking, reactive subjects (i.e., whose identity and resistance is the pure product of being "acted on" by the pure play of "power"). They have no history or sense of self-reflexivity. If they do acquire these attributes, they invariably become "sectarians" (or, in postanarchist terms, "defenders of Enlightenment metanarratives which claim privileged access to the 'truth' and therefore refuse to embrace their notions of non-reducible, polyvocal resistance").

Simultaneously, Graeber's beliefs also are consistent theoretically with naturalistic beliefs that were rife in early twentieth century anarchism (i.e., diversity is good because it is the product of natural human social relations unfettered by homogenizing authority). These naturalistic beliefs, mixed in with the traditional anarchist celebration of diversity and self-organization, also somewhat paradoxically come into alignment with one of the pillars of postanarchism (despite its own self-conscious founding on the rejection of a stereotyped view of nineteenth-century Enlightenment and naturalistic beliefs). It is even in vogue for postanarchists to cite left-völkisch anarchist Gustav Landauer, cherry-picking and

elaborating on some of his quotes—while simultaneously ignoring the main thrust of his argument about “organic communities,” which is clearly hostile to the very foundations of their project.

### **Faith-Based Anarchism?**

All of this leads to the deeper problem that is encountered when anarchism jettisons its possession of a (or any) coherent onto-epistemology: the specter of a faith-based movement. This problem is especially pronounced with the “ideal type” anarchism of Graeber and others. This kind of stance leads to anti-intellectualism in terms of political views, since all fundamental questions are proclaimed to be resolved at the outset, and it specifically removes the ground on which debate is possible, therefore making it difficult (or impossible) to have internal debate regarding the nature of the political movement itself.

Which is to say: self-reflection on *why* anyone should hold anarchist political ideas is no longer possible. On one hand, anarchists themselves cannot engage in reflection on why they should hold their own ideas. They simply must accept or reject them (on what assumedly must be aesthetic, experiential, or ethical grounds); they can never revise or think them through, since there are no grounds on which to do that. If anarchism is simply a groundless *a priori* set of practices, or a naturalistic claim about human behavior, then it is *faith* (or at least *whim*), but not *thought*, that anarchists base their actions on.

Correspondingly, other intellectuals cannot be attracted to their tradition on intellectual grounds. Some of marxism’s best and brightest—such as Georg Lukács, Walter Benjamin and Louis Althusser—were existing scholars in other traditions who later were drawn into marxism’s orbit, bringing their own backgrounds with them and thereby infusing new blood into the marxist tradition. (2) Certainly, intellectuals from other traditions can *become* anarchists, or declare their work to *be* anarchist, but it is a dubious proposition that existing

intellectuals will be converted to anarchism because of engagements with contemporary anarchist intellectual thought.

One clarification is in order. Many traditions borrow ideas from other traditions without entering into a fundamental intellectual revision (à la Sartre's later works on marxism or Jameson's engagement with post-structuralism). A division needs to be made between borrowing ideas that are not in conflict with the fundamental onto-epistemological approach of a tradition, and those that are. For example, Lefebvre brought in the notion of the lifeworld from phenomenology, and made it something for marxism to work with and through; I would argue that it was not in fundamental opposition to marxism, and could be incorporated without relative problems. However, to import certain ideas into anarchism—including white privilege theory, doctrines of national self-determination, and essentialist notions of gender domination—are conceptually problematic and require something more fundamental. It is quite possible that they cannot be imported without creating fundamental contradictions.

Last, anarchists cannot engage in meaningful internal debate without a basis for their ideas. As Sandra Jeppesen said in an email debate regarding this specific discussion, "policing boundaries around anarchism is kind of authoritarian, isn't it?" Although rarely stated so bluntly, in actual content this is a popular view amongst anarchist "intellectuals." Of course to not define anarchism is to allow any party which adopts the label to be included: and so we are back to allowing neoliberals, antisemites, and white racial separatists into the fold. If anarchism is democratic, as Graeber proposes, then shouldn't the very definition of anarchism itself be a primary notion for debate? (Graeber's definition is, indeed, quite anti-democratic, as it originates with him and cannot be questioned; it ends up being based on an appeal to authority—himself.)

Also problematic is that anarchists cannot engage in internal debate over issues, since they lack a ground in which to do so. Again, we return to the white privilege example. The idea is taken out of its indigenous setting (marxism) and imported into the anarchist tool box. But once there, it is (supposedly) shorn of its onto-epistemological heritage. It becomes impossible to have a dialogue with someone who holds an idea, but has no *reason* for holding it.

If people do not *recognize* the basis of their critique, it is impossible to have a discussion about it with them; ideas end up being either accepted or rejected, but never really debated or worked through. This is neither anarchist nor democratic; in fact is a serious intellectual devolution. Marxists, to their credit, have always placed an emphasis on educating their followers in their own intellectual beliefs. Anarchists, in many cases, adopt these marxist ideas and argue for their adaptation and implementation, but are unable to comprehend why they hold them, or engage in a serious discourse around them.

## 10. Prolegomena to a Future Anarchist Social Theory

“Don’t sell your birthright for a mess of pottage.”

— popular saying (1)

Contemporary anarchists do not possess a useful social theory; there is a basic political framework, but specific analyses tend more to be an “accent” of other theories rather than an indigenous theoretical perspective. The classical traditions are worth ransacking, but generally are not useful as is.

As has already been outlined, some anarchists may be satisfied with specific anarchist theories put forth by particular workerists, primitivists, or social ecologists. Others will be content with using existing social theories (especially autonomism or post-structuralism), merely “bending” their conclusions into anarchist frameworks, while simultaneously ignoring the deep philosophical issues that are raised. Yet still others will embrace these vague anarchist ideal types of their particular preference, but again will be unable to do social analysis using them. (2)

There several paths one to take to rectify this situation. One is to follow what Western Marxist thinkers did when they created various forms of heterodox marxism. Orthodox Marxism follows a series of commentaries on commentaries, much like Christianity tends to. Western Marxism, instead, denoted the works of Marx and Engels as canonical, and then used this a springboard to work off of. Korsch and Lukács both essentially offer the same approach to this around the same time; Korsch’s *Marxism and Philosophy* is the more streamlined approach, where he offers marxism as essentially a methodology. Lukács offers a similar approach in *History and Class Consciousness*, although he actually applies this

critique, unlike Korsch. This has proved to be a rich intellectual trove for marxism, allowing theorists flexibility in approach and dealing with new problems, while simultaneously giving them a base to operate from.

The Frankfurt School was the main flowering of this approach; they took the dialectical approach that Lukács and Korsch had identified as the methodological core of marxism (“historical materialism”), and combined it with a number of other elements. On one hand they went back to Hegel, who was a precursor to Marx, and on the other, they went forward and included a number of new ideas—most importantly, psychoanalysis, but also elements from Nietzsche and Weber. They then took this new combination and applied it to the contemporary world they lived in (one vastly different from Marx’s, especially the post-war era). This gave them increased theoretical flexibility and range.

However, the main problematic with applying this approach to anarchism is that marxism actually possessed a distinct methodology that could be extracted from Marx’s works. While Kropotkin does at one point offer anarchism as a methodology, his crude scientific reductionism is not something many would want to follow today. (3) Extracting a useful methodology that one would want to follow from either Proudhon or Bakunin’s works is also a highly dubious proposition.

Nonetheless, anarchists could do something similar to heterodox marxism in the sense of establishing a common intellectual base, which they then enter into a critique of, and produce new (perhaps post-) forms of. Anarchists could go back and treat Proudhon, Bakunin, and/or Kropotkin in this manner: together, they all share a vision of self-regulating society, a view that has congruency between its theory and political goals.

While Proudhon sees this as “moral law,” Bakunin as a “natural law,” and Kropotkin as some kind of biological functioning, they all have a similar basis. (Secondarily, the notion of the congruency of means and ends could be added in, which became important for most—although not all—anarchists.) As should be obvious, this is not a call to “return to the classics” and apply them in an essentially static form. Instead, it is a call for re-engagement and re-consideration of them. What is important about these particular thinkers specifically (as opposed to later anarchists or to the appendages of other lineages) is that they set up the anarchist *paradigm* which is still in use today. Therefore they are the essential starting point. This could produce an “Heterodox Anarchism,” based on classical anarchism, but flexible in its approach. Emma Goldman and Errico Malatesta might even be seen as two of the first examples of anarchists who entered into a critique of this position. (4)

Another, perhaps more fruitful, approach has a very unusual origin. In Europe, a group of young fascist intellectuals based around Alain de Benoist found themselves in a situation that was similar in some ways to what anarchists face today. The post-war political and intellectual landscape had completely shifted, but many fascist thinkers and organizers still behaved as if it were 1933. More problematically, fascism (more so than anarchism, in fact) had no solid theoretical ground; it had literally been invented on the fly by a series of political actors. Similarities between even Mussolini and Hitler were highly debatable, without adding in the question of smaller groups like Action Française in France, Oswald Mosley’s Blackshirts in Britain, or the Romanian Iron Guard. (The question of the “fascist minimum”—the definition of fascism—is at least as problematic for scholars of fascism as the definition of anarchism is for scholars of anarchism.)

In response to this situation, de Benoist (along with his fascist think tank, G.R.E.C.E.) did something very clever: he made an intellectual end-run. De Benoist abandoned his previous investigations in sociobiology, and started looking elsewhere for a justification of preserving

European national values (in his case, French). He saw the preservation and assertion of the purity of the nation as the primary issue of our time, and he saw the liberal, cosmopolitan world (usually embodied by the United States, international finance capital, and the consumer culture) as destroying this purity. This is the cornerstone of fascism that he wished to recover, and he wanted to do it while avoiding any taint of the Nazis—who held the same general ideas but took them in a specific direction.

To do this, he rummaged through the fascist closet. He settled mostly on the Conservative Revolutionaries of the 1920s, but also early precursors like Nietzsche, as well as selected fascist intellectuals like Julius Evola and Carl Schmitt. (De Benoist also took certain ideas from the left, including national self-determination; ecological decentralization; the Gramscian “war of position”; and a critique of the alienation of the consumer society.) Abandoning the biological thinking that had been primary for so many other fascists, he concluded (in step with his times) that national identities—while still the only ground for preserving a stable identity and sense of self—were culturally produced, and were in flux over time. He therefore called on groups to voluntarily self-segregate into micropolitical entities that were each culturally homogenous, but respectful of each other (sometimes called the “Europe of One Thousand Flags”). He also called on them to oppose globalization, transnational finance capital, Atlanticism, the European Union, etc., all of which broke up these local identities. He repudiated colonialism (after all, it brought non-white peoples into Europe) and endorsed ecology. His “New Right,” as it became called, was intellectually coherent and able to formulate innovative approaches to problems. (5)

Unlikely as this is, anarchists could take inspiration from de Benoist’s approach. (It would also be appropriate payback for his appropriation of left-wing ideas.) Like all theories, anarchism has many different elements: anti-statism, autonomy, decentralization and federalism, anti-nationalism, anti-capitalism, atheism, etc. A well-versed theorist could

identify what they saw as most important concepts in classical anarchist ideas. They could then go back to both the initial anarchist texts and their direct precursors (which is what de Benoist did), and then—while keeping in mind the main concepts they wanted to nurture—rethink the anarchist project, without necessarily retracing the steps of the classical movement. Specific anarchist thinkers could be added in as needed, just as de Benoist adds in specific fascists who he needs to prop up his project. While this would undoubtedly be too specific to produce a rigorous but general anarchist theory, it would provide a route to build a new and intriguing anarchist theory that shared the initial basic concerns of the founders of anarchism. This would then be neither a new hybrid form (a la anarcho-syndicalism or social ecology), nor a “Heterodox Anarchism,” but something else. (“Postanarchism” is the obvious label for this approach, but the term has already been taken!)

### **Has This Been A Rigged Question From the Start?**

Last, there is the real question about whether the expectations of this study have been unrealistic from the get-go. Marxism has always held a special position in the last century as a political movement that simultaneously functioned as an academic analysis; this was of course because Marx was a product of the rigorous German university system, and then took the training and (outside of the academy) made it into a politically useful schema. He created systemic analysis (what Jean-François Lyotard condemned as a “metanarrative”) with a high-level of internal coherence and wide-ranging applicability to human behavior.

Because of its temporal and political proximity in particular, there is (and perhaps always has been) an expectation that anarchism is—or could be—something similar.

The comparison is perhaps understandable as anarchism and marxism are twin movements in a way—but the problem is that marxism is, in fact, a special exception and not the rule. The vast majority of political movements do not possess a twined social theory that has the

necessary coherence to be useful as an academic critique. Neither populism, fascism, nor nationalist movements can make this claim. (Liberalism has produced rigorous theorists, although they have a different position vis-à-vis politics than marxist intellectuals do.) And while there are other metanarratives—such as Hegelianism and psychoanalysis—they are not *political doctrines*.

All political movements do have social theories that are implicit in them, but that does not mean that they can ever attain the level of coherence required to be useful as an academic tradition. On one hand, perhaps we have been looking for something that not only can we not have, but something that we do not need. On the other, the lack of this may condemn anarchism to be little more than a mere carrier vehicle for ideas such as marxism.

Modern social theories are not derived from political movements; they are the work of one (or two) intellectuals, who are in, or are products of, the modern academy. Sometimes theorists *involved in* or *drawn to* political movements create theories *of* these movements (Marx, Sorel, Lukács, Althusser), which are then sometimes adopted by activists. But complex social theories with a high level of internal consistency are not *derived* from movements; they must be formulated by individual intellectuals—or at best small groups. You can not “read” a theory out of a movement, although you can create one based on your experience in the movement.

Last, this study as a whole is perhaps more of a challenge than an answer. The challenge is clear: contemporary anarchism does not present a social theory that is either internally coherent or independent of existing social theories. This situation needs to be recognized by those claiming to “develop anarchist theory”; are they developing anything, or merely repackaging other theories as “anarchist”? However, whether the approaches suggested

here can rectify this problem—or even if this is a worthwhile theoretical endeavor—is only speculation.

## **In Conclusion**

1. Political movements do not need to be academic analyses to be internally coherent; they just need to answer the practical questions that face them in a coherent manner.

2. Contemporary anarchism has failed to do even this. It has become a conduit for a myriad of other intellectual traditions, which, when taken to their logical conclusions, are ultimately in conflict with classical anarchism's political ideas. As long as anarchists accept these notions, they will end up accepting non-anarchist perspectives, or they must gerrymander their conclusions to match a pre-existing political perspective and engage in a "faith-based anarchism."

3. In order to attain a higher level of critique and internal coherence, anarchism will need to reset its theoretical groundings so that it possesses an ontologically and epistemologically coherent theory and practice. The best opportunity for this is to engage in a revision of classical anarchist social ideas. Only then will there be an anarchist social theory that has the ability to perform analysis of the social world that will be of wide-ranging interest.

# ENDNOTES

## 1. Introduction

1. Bookchin, "The Communalist Project."

2. From Eric Hobsbawm's 1969 essay "Reflections on Anarchism," in *Revolutionaries*, 83, 89. The full quotes are worth reading; on pages 82–83 he wrote:

As an ideology, [classical] anarchism did not decline so dramatically because it had never had anything like as much success, at least among intellectuals who are the social stratum most interested in ideas. There have probably always been eminent figures in the world of culture who called themselves anarchists (except, curiously enough, in Spain), but most of them seem to have been artists in the wider—or like Pissarro and Signac, the narrower—sense of the word. In any case, anarchism never had an attraction comparable to, say marxism, for intellectuals even before the October revolution. With the exception of Kropotkin, it is not easy to think of an anarchist theorist who could be read with real interest by non-anarchists. There seemed, indeed, no real intellectual room for anarchist theory. The belief in the libertarian communism of self-governing cooperatives as the final aim of revolutionaries, it shared with marxism. The old utopian socialists had thought more deeply and concretely about the nature of such communities than most anarchists. Even the strongest point in the anarchists' intellectual armoury, their awareness of the dangers of dictatorship and bureaucracy implicit in marxism, was not peculiar to them. This type of critique was made with equal effect and greater intellectual sophistication both by 'unofficial' marxists and by opponents of all kinds of socialism.

A few pages later on 88–89, he said:

It will be clear that in my view anarchism has no significant contribution to socialist theory to make, though it is a useful critical element. If socialists want theories about the present and the future, they will still have to look elsewhere, to Marx and his followers, and probably also to the earlier utopian socialists, such as Fourier. To be more precise: if anarchists want to make a significant contribution they will have to do much more serious thinking than most of them have recently done.

3. James Joll, "Anarchism—A Living Tradition," in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 260.

## 2. The "Anarchist Minimum"

1. From a letter from prison by Alexander Berkman, sent to Emma Goldman on March 12, 1905; in Candace Falk, ed., *Emma Goldman*, vol. 2, 153.

2. *Fifth Estate*, "Renew this Earthly Paradise," 10.

## 3. Political and Intellectual Overview of Anarchism (and Immediate Precursors): 1798–2013

**Section reference note:** The sources for the history of the classical movement are the standard anarchist histories, which are summarized in the literature review section.

There are many sources that formed the basis of the post-1940 section. The most important of these are the fifty-four periodicals, six websites, and media of thirteen organizations, all of which are listed at the end of the bibliography. Biographical and secondary works available on this period available were also utilized; unfortunately few were available. Mike Hargis's *Notes on Anarchism in North America, 1940-1996* is the only one which approaches being a comprehensive history; although quite good, it focuses on workerist currents and obviously ends before Seattle. Some of the other important pieces, or which cast insight on a particular topic addressed, include:

Angel, Jen, "Seven Years of *Clamor*"; Antliff, ed., *Only a Beginning*; Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*; Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*; Berger, ed., *The Hidden 1970s*; Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism and the Future of the Left*; Cornell, "Anarchism and the Movement for a New Society" and "For a World Without Oppressors"; Dolgoff, *Fragments*; Martin, *The Theater is in the Streets* (see chapter 3, "The Diggers: Politicizing the Counterculture," 86-124); McQuinn, "The Life and times of *Anarchy*" and "Life & Times of *Anarchy Magazine*"; Melzter, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*; Millett, "Divergence and Disagreement in Contemporary Anarchist Communism"; Neumann, *Up Against the Wall Motherf\*\*ker*; Perlman, *Having Little, Being Much*; Profane Existence, *Making Punk A Threat Again!*; Purkis and Bowens, eds., *Twenty-First Century Anarchism*; Rimbaud, *Shibboleth*; Rosemont and Radcliffe, eds., *Dancin' in the Streets!*; "Quiet Americans"; San Filippo, ed., *A New World in Our Hearts*; Savage, *England's Dreaming*; Schwartz, "Pre-Occupied"; Shepard and Hayduke, eds., *From ACT UP to the WTO*; Staudenmaier, *Truth and Revolution*; Watson; "Notes Toward a History of the *Fifth Estate*"; Werbe, "History of the *Fifth Estate*"; Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*; Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition*; Yuen, Burton-Rose, and Katsiaficas, eds., *Confronting Capitalism*.

1. George Woodcock, "Anarchism: A Historical Introduction," in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, 47.

2. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 14.

3. In the second part of chapter five of *What is Property?*, Proudhon includes this imaginary conversation, in which he introduced for the first time the label "anarchist" as an affirmative self-identification:

"Well! you are a democrat?" — "No." — "What! you would have a monarchy." — "No." "A constitutionalist?" — "God forbid!" — "You are then an aristocrat?" — "Not at all." — "You want a mixed government?" — "Still less." — "What are you, then?" — "I am an anarchist."

"Oh! I understand you; you speak satirically. This is a hit at the government." — "By no means. I have just given you my serious and well-considered profession of faith. Although a firm friend of order, I am (in the full force of the term) an anarchist. Listen to me."

4. "Libertarian" was a term synonymous with anarchism until it was adopted by laissez faire neo-liberals in the US in the 1960s. Murray Rothbard wrote "One gratifying aspect of our rise to some prominence is that, for the first time in my memory, we, 'our side,' had captured a crucial word from the enemy.... 'Libertarians'...had long been simply a polite word for left-wing anarchists, that is for anti-private property anarchists, either of the communist or syndicalist variety. But now we had taken it over." See Rothbard, *The Betrayal of the American Right*, 83.

5. Cited in Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 237; the source is given as the 1851 edition of Proudhon's 1849 *Confessions of a Revolutionary*. Another famous Proudhon quip along the same lines (from *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, 294) is:

To be GOVERNED is to be kept in sight, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right, nor the wisdom, nor the virtue to do so... To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonored. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.

6. McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin*, 191.

7. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 453.

8. Friedrich Engels, "The Catchword: 'Abolition of the State' and the German 'Friends of Anarchy,'" in Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism & Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 27–31. Engels dismisses a wide variety of figures whom he lumps together as followers of "anarchy...a widely used catchword in Germany"; 28. The anthology's footnotes identify the others that Engels refers to as: Emile de Girardin, Karl Grün, Arnold Ruge, Eduard Meyen, Julius Faucher, Ludwig Buhl, Ludwig Simon, and Karl Vogt; 340, n1–4. These writers held a range of views, from socialism to free trade; their unifying element was calling for a reduction in state power, in one direction or another and to one degree or another.

9. On Bellegarrigue, see Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 434. The Proudhon is cited in Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 254, who gives his source as Proudhon's 1853 *Philosophy of Progress*. For Elisée Reclus, see Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 39–40.

10. Insufficient scholarly work has been done on the period before the international and on what later became the "anarchist movement" (e.g., the Bakuninist faction of the International). Almost all scholarship on 1850s "anarchism" applies notions developed later to events that occurred earlier; they assume that Proudhon and others "are" anarchists, without studying how something that became known as anarchism developed historically. (Max Nettlau's *Short History of Anarchism* is the best single English-language account of these early years.) Bakunin himself hated Stirner—apparently referring to him only once, and then in dismissal—while praising Proudhon to the skies. Bakunin described his own political ideas as "Proudhonism...pushed right to its final consequences"; cited in McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin*, 72. (The quote is taken from Bakunin's "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State," and Dolgoff's translation renders it less forcefully—and less personally—as "Proudhonism, greatly developed and taken to its ultimate conclusion by the proletariat of the Latin countries"; in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 263.)

But as Marx and Engels were describing something already called "anarchy" in the 1850s (that is, well before Bakunin returns to radical politics), and Marx later characterizes some

of his anti-authoritarian opponents' ideas in the International as "Proudhonised Stirnerism" (see his June 20, 1866 letter to Engels, in Marx, Engels, Lenin, *Anarchism and Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 41). This raises the question of how much *later* historiography was formed and shaped by Marx and Engel's earlier views—as well as the views of other observers who saw "anti-statism" as a common element to thinkers who saw themselves as quite divergent from each other.

For example Marie Fleming, in *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, says that the term "anarchist" was "used in a pejorative sense in the first half of the 1870s to specify those socialists who refused to engage in party-political action within the framework of the bourgeois order. But the label did not come to be deliberately adopted until 1876, and not on any scale until after the collapse of the federalist (anti-authoritarian) International in 1877." (119) Fleming stresses the naturalism of Kropotkin and Reclus as a fundamental break with Bakunin, saying "anarchists did not emerge out of loyalty to Bakunin or to his ideas... Only after his death in 1876 was the theory of anarchism formulated, and by people who had rejected important parts of his theories." (123)

From my perspective, the question of how and when anarchism actually formed is still open, and requires further careful historical exploration.

11. McLaughlin, *Mikhail Bakunin*, 62, 99–100n77.

12. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 147. Feuerbach should probably be added to this list.

13. This famous quote, dating from Bakunin's pan-Slavist period (long before he became an anarchist), appears in his 1842 essay "The Reaction in Germany," in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 57.

14. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 152.

15. Malatesta, for example, said that "Almost all the anarchist literature of the nineteenth century was impregnated with Marxism" and "Today I find that Bakunin in political economy and in the interpretation of history, was too marxist; I find that his philosophy was conducted without possible issue in the contradiction between the mechanical concept of the universe and the faith in will over the fate of mankind." Regarding those in Bakunin's faction of the International, he said "though none of us had read Marx, we were still too Marxist."

The first quote is cited in Daniel Guérin, "Marxism and Anarchism," in Goodway, ed., *For Anarchism*, 117; the latter two are cited in Vernon Richards, "Notes for a Biography," in Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 209. Richards gives the source of the first quote as *Pensiero e Volontà*, July 1, 1926, and the second as Malatesta's preface to Max Nettlau, *Bakunin e l'Internazionale in Italia dal 1864 al 1872* (Geneva, 1928).

16. While arguing with the syndicalist revisionists at the 1907 conference, Malatesta said, "It must be admitted that I have never been one of those anarchist intellectuals who benevolently walled themselves up in the ivory tower of pure speculation once the old International disappeared," and furthermore that "I used to deplore that comrades isolated themselves from the workers' movement. Today, I deplore the fact that many of us are going to the opposite extreme and allowing ourselves to be absorbed by that movement." In Antonioli, ed., *The International Anarchist Congress: Amsterdam (1907)*, 121–22, 126.

17. Lewis Mumford's blurb appears on the back of *Fields, Factories, and Workshops Tomorrow*, the Colin Ward edited version of Kropotkin's book.

18. Todes, "Darwin's Malthusian Metaphor and Russian Evolutionary Thought, 1859–1917." Stephen Jay Gould's much better known article "Kropotkin Was No Crackpot" is based on Todes's work.
19. In *Mutual Aid*, Kropotkin simultaneously, and somewhat paradoxically, worked in crypto-Lamarckian notions of progress, for example claiming that since mutual aid was such an advantageous trait, those who cooperated most effectively were likely have the evolutionary advantage. Some of his later essays on evolution make a clear turn toward Lamarckianism, with Kropotkin arguing that plants and animals can acquire inheritable genetic characteristics during their lifetimes. For the latter, see the essays collected in the *Thoughts on Evolution* section of the Kropotkin anthology *Evolution and Environment*.
20. Peter Kropotkin, "Peter Kropotkin entry on 'anarchism' from the Encyclopaedia Britannica (eleventh ed.)."
21. The most concise and easily accessible overview of anarchism in Latin America and Asia is Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 504–35. In recent years numerous studies have appeared in English about anarchism outside of Europe and North America.
22. "Peter Kropotkin—Recollections and Criticisms of An Old Friend," in Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 262, 263. Originally April 15, 1931.
23. *Ibid*, 266–67.
24. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 357.
25. Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 25. Originally published in *Umanità Nova*, April 27, 1922.
26. Johann Most—a former Reichstag member—had also left the SPD for anarchism. Shortly after his departure, Landauer left as part of the Die Jungen group, a faction of which (including a young Rudolf Rocker) eventually found its way into the anarchist movement. For more on Die Jungen, see Lunn, *Prophet of Community*, 49–55, and Graur, *An Anarchist "Rabbi,"* 23–30.
27. Crump, *Hatta Shūzō and Pure Anarchism in Interwar Japan*.
28. Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 198–200.
29. Delo Truda, "Organizational Platform of the Libertarian Communists." While platformists routinely deny their connections to Leninism, the International Bolshevik Tendency says, "Platformism is, in fact, a halfway house between Leninism and anarchism"; see their *Platformism & Bolshevism*, 12. Peter Arshinov, one of the platform's authors, later denounced anarchism and returned to Soviet Russia, where ironically he was murdered in 1937 in the purges.
30. Faure, "The Anarchist Synthesis"; Several Russian Anarchists, "Reply to the Platform (Synthesist)."
31. George Woodcock, "Anarchism: A Historical Introduction," in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, 47.

32. This contention comes from those working from white privilege and whiteness studies perspectives. See, in particular, Brodtkin, *How Jews Became White Folks and What that Says About Race in America*.
33. "Introduction to Part Five," in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 320. For more on this period see Dolgoff, *Fragments*; "The 1920s and After," in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 413–76; and Cornell, "For a World Without Oppressors."
34. C. Wright Mills, *Letters and Autobiographical Writings*, 217–18.
35. Allen Ginsberg's "America" is in his *Selected Poems*, 62–64. Diane di Prima's dedication on page 3 of her *Revolutionary Letters* is "The REVOLUTIONARY LETTERS / are dedicated to Bob Dylan; / and to my grandfather, Domenico Mallozzi, / friend of the great anarchist dreamers of his time, / who read me Dante at the age of four / & named my mother after Emma Goldman."
36. Cornell, "For a World Without Oppressors."
37. Karl Jay Shapiro, "On the Revival of Anarchism," in Horowitz, ed., *The Anarchists*, 573.
38. Lewis Perry and Leonard I. Krimerman, in the "Foreword" to the anthology of anarchist texts they edited, *Patterns of Anarchy*, xv.
39. David Stafford, "Anarchists in Britain Today," in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 112–13, 107.
40. "The Black Flag of Anarchism," in Goodman, *Drawing the Line: The Political Essays of Paul Goodman*, 203–214. It originally appeared in the *New York Times Magazine* on July 14, 1968.
41. E.W., "The 'Civil Rights' Struggle," and the *Views and Comments* editorial, "Leaders and Led in the Negro Revolt."
42. Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition*, 371, 374.
43. Franklin Rosemont, "To Be Revolutionary in Everything: The Rebel Worker Story, 1964–68," in Rosemont and Radcliffe, eds., *Dancin' in the Streets!*, 71–72. Rosemont describes Lingg as "the youngest and most recalcitrant of the Haymarket Martyrs"; 72.
44. Neumann, *Up Against the Wall Motherf\*\*ker*, 88–90; for UATWMF's role in the Columbia University takeover, see 77–85. Jason McQuinn mentions his involvement in the first installment of the history of the magazine he edited, "The Life and times of *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*," 55.
45. Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism and the Future of the Left*, 98–105. The statement by the Radical Decentralist Project at the SDS conference, "Toward a post-scarcity society: the American perspective and the SDS," can be found in Ehrlich, et. al., eds., *Reinventing Anarchy: What Are Anarchists Thinking About These Days?*, 120–26. For a perspective on the SDS split from an anarchist who was in the organization, see Cain, "Students for a Stalinist Society."
46. Although he stops short of the claim that Maoism was shaped by anarchism or that Mao himself was an anarchist, Arif Dirlik shows that many Chinese Maoist leaders were involved

in anarchist groups when they were young, and illustrates the similarities between the two movements. See his *Anarchism in the Chinese Revolution*, especially 26–30, 195–96, and 294–97. Alvin W. Gouldner also compares Bakuninism with Castroism and Maoism on the basis of voluntarism and the stress on armed peasant revolution; see *Against Fragmentation*, 187. Max Elbaum saw U.S. Maoism as having three parts: one oriented towards Stalinism, one toward Third World nationalism, and one towards “Cultural Revolution Maoism,” which had an emphasis on a politically engaged population and a voluntarism; the latter, Elbaum says, “bordered on anarchism.” See his *Revolution in the Air*, 140.

47. Miller, *Anarchism*, 146.

48. Franklin Rosemont, “To Be Revolutionary in Everything,” in Rosemont and Radcliffe, eds., *Dancin’ in the Streets*, 210.

49. Dolgoff’s version of events, without the Morea part, is in *Fragments*, 87–88; Andy Cornell recounted Morea’s participation in this at his presentation “Daily Acts of Life: Pacifism, Poetry, and the New Anarchism, 1940–1954” at the NAASN (North American Anarchist Studies Network) conference in Hartford, Connecticut, November 21, 2009.

50. Cornell, “Anarchism and the Movement for a New Society.”

51. Libertarian economist Murray Rothbard said, “As far as I’m concerned, and I think the rest of the movement, too, we are anarcho-capitalists. In other words, we believe that capitalism is the fullest expression of anarchism, and anarchism is the fullest expression of capitalism. Not only are they compatible, but you can’t really have one without the other. True anarchism will be capitalism, and true capitalism will be anarchism.” See Rothbard, “Exclusive Interview with Murray Rothbard,” 1.

52. Mark Anderson and Mark Jenkins document the D.C. political punk scene in *Dance of Days*.

53. For Black Wedge, see Jean Smith, “The Black Wedge Tours: ‘Take Something You Care About and Make It Your Life,’” in Sakolsky and Ho, eds., *Sounding Off*, 197–203.

54. Moore, “Anarchism and Poststructuralism,” 157.

55. Tokar, “The Greens as a Social Movement.”

56. Max Elbaum easily documents the New Communist Movement’s influence on the other groups, but strains to find Marxist-Leninist influence on Native American radicalism, conceding that the “outlook of Indian elders and ‘traditionals’—rooted in a different view of the relationship between human beings, the land, nature and technological development, and with a strong spiritual dimension—exerted a greater and more lasting pull on the new generation of Indian militants than did any form of Marxism”; *Revolution in the Air*, 80. Without claiming any kind of harmonious relationship between anarchists and Native radicals, it’s safe to say that many anarchists found those traits that Elbaum described—so toxic to Leninism—to be in tune with anarchism. For example, the 1990 Oka occupation in Quebec, Canada received strong anarchist support (see Antliff, ed., *Only a Beginning*, 119–26), and radical environmentalists have frequently worked with Native groups.

57. In 2002 Cherney and, posthumously, Bari (who had died of cancer in 1997) won a lawsuit against the FBI for violating their rights by arresting them in the bombing case. This

was generally taken to be vindication of their claims that the FBI planted the bomb. However, some people hold that the bomb was placed by Bari's ex-boyfriend; for this alternate view, see Stephen Talbot, "The Mysterious Death of Judi Bari."

58. Bring the Ruckus, "Bring the Ruckus."

59. Other bands of note included Filth, Struggle, Man Is the Bastard, Citizen's Arrest, Doom, Refused, His Hero is Gone, Resist, Dropdead, Antischism, Iconoclast, Downcast, Fuel, Catharsis, A//Political, Anti-Product, Autonomy, the Pist, Disrupt, Detestation, and Destroy. The Ex continued to be very popular throughout the decade.

A "hardline" scene, focusing on straight-edge and animal and earth liberation, included bands such as Earth Crisis and Vegan Reich. However, not just were the bands in this genre not necessarily anarchist or even left-wing, some had dubious or even right-wing politics, notably around issues of abortion.

The political punk scene continued through the 2000s and 2010s, although reduced in size, with bands such as Against Me!, International Noise Conspiracy, Leftover Crack, Ghost Mice, and Defiance, Ohio.

60. From a U.S. perspective, the most visible of these demonstrations included:

- worldwide actions, "Global Street Party," May 16, 1998. (G-8 meeting in Birmingham, UK and WTO second ministerial conference in Geneva.) Called by the PGA, as were many of the future demonstrations.
- worldwide actions, "Global Carnival against Capital" (J18), June 18, 1999. (G-8 in Cologne)
- Seattle (N30), 1999 (WTO, third ministerial)
- Davos, January 27, 2000 (WEF, World Economic Forum)
- Washington, DC (A16), April 16, 2000 (IMF/World Bank)
- Philadelphia, July 29, 2000 (RNC, Republican National Convention)
- Los Angeles, August 11, 2000 (DNC, Democratic National Convention)
- Prague, September 26, 2000 (IMF/World Bank)
- Washington, DC, January 20, 2001 (George W. Bush inauguration)
- Quebec City, April 20, 2001 (FTAA, Free Trade Area of the Americas)
- Gothenburg, Sweden, June 15, 2001 (EU summit). Three people were shot and injured by police.
- Genoa, July 20, 2001 (G-8) Anarchist Carlo Giuliani was shot dead by police.
- Washington, DC, September 29, 2001 (IMF/World Bank) Many groups cancelled participation because of the public mood after the September 11 massacre, although a small militant march was held. ANSWER kept their permit and held a large anti-Afghanistan intervention march, marking a return to mass demonstrations organized by current or former Marxist-Leninists in traditional front group fashion (including UFPJ, NION, and ANSWER), all of which collectively dominated the anti-Iraq War movement.
- On November 9–13, 2001, the WTO's fourth ministerial was held in Qatar to make oppositional street protests impossible.
- New York City, February 1, 2002 (WEF)
- Cancun, September 14, 2003 (WTO, fifth ministerial)
- Miami, November 20, 2003 (FTAA)

Note that not all of the demonstrations were against global trade meetings. Miami was the last large anti-globalization demonstration in the United States; it was considered a

tremendous failure because of the intensity of the police repression in suppressing the demonstration.

61. See for example, "FOX NEWS reviews 'The Coming Insurrection.'" Numerous other broadcasts from Glenn Beck mentioned the book as well.

62. Schwartz, "Pre-Occupied."

#### **4. Anarchist Theoretical Issues, 1968–1998**

1. This specific phrase is from Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 101; however, "neo-anarchism" was a commonly used term for the "new anarchists" of the 1960s.

2. Black, *Anarchy after Leftism*, 147.

3. Willener, *The Action-Image of Society*, xiii.

4. Porter, *Eyes to the South*, 58, 123.

5. Meltzer, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, 174, 145, 186; for his further comments on anarcho-punk and the Autonomy Club, see 298.

6. Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 104, but see 101–4 for both his denunciations of the counterculturalists and his account of the conflict between BM/UATWMF and the aging Italian anarchists, who they turned to for help.

7. "Anarchism Revisited," in Woodcock, *Anarchism and Anarchists*, 54, 41.

8. Terry M. Perlin, "Preface," in Perlin, ed., *Contemporary Anarchism*, 16.

9. Rosemont, "To Be Revolutionary in Everything," in Rosemont and Radcliffe, eds., *Dancin' in the Streets!*, 17, 18, 19, 39.

10. *Fifth Estate*, "No Anarchy? No Money!," 6.

11. Watson, "Notes toward a history of the *Fifth Estate*," 35.

12. David E. Apter, "The Old Anarchism and the New," in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 6. In the same anthology, Nicolas Walter said that anarchists were reading "Russell Barton and Erving Goffman in psychology, R.D. Laing and David Cooper in psychiatry, Herbert Marcuse in political science, Lewis Herber in environmental studies, Theodore Roszak in educational and cultural studies, Ronald V. Sampson in the social aspects of literary criticism." See Nicholas Walter, "Anarchism in Print: Yesterday and Today," in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 161.

Franklin Rosemont describes influences as diverse as anarchism, IWW history and theory, dissident marxism (including council communism and the Johnson-Forest Tendency), anthropology, psychoanalysis (including Wilhelm Reich), Native American and black nationalist thought, and surrealism (Rosemont, "To Be Revolutionary in Everything," in Rosemont and Radcliffe, eds., *Dancin' in the Streets!*, 41–47). His collaborator Charles Radcliffe said the U.S. and U.K. "libertarian left" was interested in the counterculture, Buddhism, anthropology, ecology, feminism, Spinoza, Freud, and early Marx. (Charles Radcliffe, "Two Fiery Flying Rolls: The *Heatwave* Story, 1966–1970," in *ibid*, 373).

13. David E. Apter, "The Old Anarchism and the New," in Apter and Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, 7, 9, 10. See also "The New Left and the Counter-culture" chapter in Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 539–58.

14. Savage, *England's Dreaming*, 27–36.

15. Murray Bookchin, "New Social Movements: The Anarchic Dimension," in Goodway, ed., *For Anarchism*, 259–74.

16. One exception was the IWW, especially among its longshoreman union. It is estimated that 10 percent of Wobbler cards issued between 1905 and 1924 (100,000 out of a million) were to African-Americans; see Renshaw, *The Wobblies*, 140. Of course, how many of these union members identified with anarchism and in what way is up for grabs.

17. Haywood had been an advocate of the "black belt thesis," which held that African-Americans were a nation according to the definition that Stalin had set out in "Marxism and the National Question"—and therefore had the right to national self-determination. This meant that a separate state could be formed in the "black belt," a crescent-shaped swath of Southern counties which had at least a 50 percent African-American population. After the Communist Party dropped this from their platform in the late 1950s Haywood left and went into a series of smaller Marxist-Leninist groupings. The first group that Haywood entered, the Provisional Organizing Committee for a Communist Party, included Theodore Allen and Noel Ignatiev, who went on to develop the white privilege theory.

U.S. anarchists writing for *Vanguard* had denounced the black belt thesis after the Communist Party's affirmation of this stance in 1936; see Creighton, "Negro Question in the U.S." and Craig, "Self-Determination for the Black Belt."

18. In the 1993 edition of *Anarchism and the Black Revolution*, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin wrote, "In fact, the white left has always taken the chauvinist position that since the white working class is the revolutionary vanguard anyway, why worry about an issue that will 'divide the class'? Historically Anarchists have not even brought up the matter of 'race politics,' as one Anarchist referred to it the first time this pamphlet was published. This is a total evasion of the issue." The commentary from LRRAF can be found in their *Federation Bulletin*, the internal discussion periodical of the organization.

19. "The only -ist name I respond to is 'cellist,'" is cited in Lorraine Perlman, *Having Little, Being Much*, 96. It should be noted that this statement could be read in a variety of different ways; many have interpreted this slogan in a post-ideological or anti-theoretical light. Perlman was certainly not anti-theoretical, and in fact had rather well-developed views. I read his statement as a confirmation that he was a sort of marxist who was equally influenced by neo-Romanticism and who rejected many of the assumptions of classical anarchism—but not theory as such. (It could be argued, however, that the implications of his theories were anti-theoretical.)

## **5. Different Approaches to Anarchist Theory**

1. Cited in Joll, *The Anarchists*, 146. Joll's footnote says the citation is taken from Jean Maitron, *Histoire du mouvement anarchiste en France (1880–1914)* (Paris: 1951), 227, and that Maitron in turn gives his source for the quote as *Le Journal*, February 19, 1894.

## 6. English-Language Secondary Literature on Classical Anarchism

1. Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 16. She said "a general awareness of an 'anarchist' position did not exist until after the emergence of its representatives in the late 1870s." She is referring to the post-International members of the Jura Federation in the period after Bakunin's death in 1876.
2. Ibid, 16–18. These secondary texts include J. Garin's *L'Anarchie et les Anarchistes* (1885), who Fleming names as possibly the first person to elucidate the idea that anarchism is natural human behavior. She also mentions other late-nineteenth-century secondary works including Cesare Lombroso, *Les Anarchistes* (1894); Félix Dubois, *Le Péril Anarchiste* (1894); A. Hamon, *Psychologie de l'Anarchiste-Socialiste* (1895); and E.V. Zenker, *Anarchism* (1898).
3. Kropotkin, "Peter Kropotkin entry on 'anarchism' from the Encyclopaedia Britannica (eleventh ed.)."
4. Miller, *Anarchism*, 3.
5. Marie Fleming takes exception to Eltzbacher using anti-statism as the common defining point of anarchism. See *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 19–20.
6. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 37, 38.
7. "Twenty Years Later...Seeking a Balanced Viewpoint: Introduction to the 1991 Edition," in Bookchin, *The Ecology of Freedom*, 24. Elsewhere, in "Deep Ecology, Anarcho-Syndicalism, and the Future of Anarchist Thought" (part of Morris, et. al., *Deep Ecology and Anarchism: A Polemic*), Bookchin says:

Moreover, a revolutionism that is primarily rooted in a 'revolutionary instinct' (Bakunin) and a mutualism that is primarily rooted in a 'social instinct' (Kropotkin) are little more than vague substitutes for serious explanations. Instinct theory has to be dealt with very cautiously, lest it devolve into outright sociobiology. Kropotkin's rather loose attribution of 'social instinct' to animals generally in order to validate mutualism is particularly troubling, in my view, not only because it is based on a highly selective study of animals—he tends to ignore a host of solitary animals, including highly advanced mammals. Even more troubling is that he tends to confuse animal troops, herds, packs, and transient communities with societies: that is to say, with highly mutable institutions, alterable as they are by virtue of the distinctly human ability to form, develop, subvert, and overthrow them according to their interests and will.
8. Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 16.
9. Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 12, 131; on liberalism and socialism, see 21.
10. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 39.
11. Ibid, 42, 60; for the four French thinkers, see 276–85.
12. Ibid, 468, 468–69.
13. On syndicalism, see *ibid*, 470; lost causes, 474; and as a personal idea, 475–76.

14. George Woodcock, "Anarchism: A Historical Introduction," in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, 55.
15. Joll, *The Anarchists*, 12, 13.
16. Ibid, 276, 277.
17. Ibid, 278, 279, 280.
18. Guérin, *Anarchism*, 12, 7, 13; on the State as primary, see 14.
19. Sonn, *Anarchism*, xiv; on dual revolutions, see xiii.
20. Ibid, 6.
21. Ibid, 10.
22. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 37–39.
23. Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible*, 3.
24. Ibid, 4.
25. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, 90, 92. He devoted a whole chapter to the rural Andalusian anarchists (74–92)—while completely avoiding the more urban CNT-FAI—and included Makhno in this assessment (28, 183–86). Unlike many of his marxist contemporaries who ignored anarchists completely, Hobsbawm's approach was a mixture of curious interest, begrudging respect, befuddled frustration, and contemptuous dismissiveness. His writings on anarchism also included a biographical sketch of Sabaté, the post-Spanish Civil War guerilla (*Bandits*, 125–38), and three essays in *Revolutionaries* ("Bolshevism and the Anarchists," "The Spanish Background," and, especially, "Reflections on Anarchism," 57–70, 71–81, 82–91).
26. Bookchin, "The Ghost of Anarcho-Syndicalism."
27. Bookchin, *The Spanish Anarchists*, 137.
28. Bookchin, *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, 19.
29. The full quote is: "The economic idea of capitalism, the politics of government or of authority, and the theological idea of the Church are three identical ideas, linked in various ways. To attack one of them is equivalent to attacking all of them... What capital does to labour, and the State to liberty, the Church does to the spirit. This trinity of absolutism is as baneful in practice as it is in philosophy. The most effective means for oppressing the people would be simultaneously to enslave its body, its will and its reason." Cited in Nettlau, *A Short History of Anarchism*, 43–44; originally from Proudhon, *Confessions of a Revolutionary*, published in 1849.
30. The national question before the social question quote is in Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, 221. There were numerous back-and-forths over the issue of World War One between Kropotkin and his allies (a small but vocal minority, which included Jean Grave) and Malatesta and others (who were the majority of anarchists). Some of these include:

Kropotkin, "Letter to Steffen" and the "Manifesto of the Sixteen" (which he signed). Malatesta's replies include "Anarchists Have Forgotten Their Principles" from November 1914 (in Malatesta, *Life & Ideas*, 243–47) and "Pro-Government Anarchists" in April 1916 (Ibid, 248–51). For Kropotkin's views of nationalism and World War One, see Miller, *Kropotkin*, 225–32.

## 7. Contemporary Anarchist Theoretical Approaches

1. The term "ideal type" anarchism is adopted from Benjamin Franks in *Rebel Alliance*, introduced on page 13 and used throughout the book—although it is used here with a different meaning.

2. Some see anarchism as at its core an ethics or (morals)—sometimes in conjunction with one of the four claims mentioned above. While this resolves issues regarding naturalism, it does not produce the kind of social theory we are looking at here, and raises its own set of troublesome questions. Among other recent writers in the last decade, Cindy Milstein, David Graeber, Nathan Jun, and Jesse Cohn have invoked this approach. See Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, 12, 25, 47–50, 128n4; Graeber, "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America," 123, "The Twilight of Vanguardism," in *Possibilities*, 304, and (with Grubačić) "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century"—while elsewhere he refers to it as a moral project (see *Direct Action*, 211–12); Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity*, 120; Cohn, *Anarchism and the Crisis of Representation*, 14 (he says it is a "moral opposition").

3. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 60–65 (sections 91–94); Negri and Hardt, *Empire*, 350.

4. Although I have considered it to be one of the five elements of the classical anarchist tradition, anarcho-syndicalism could alternately be considered the first *hybrid* form, combining syndicalism (a movement which emerged outside of anarchism) with the anarchist movement proper. Numerous writers—including classical anarcho-syndicalists such as Max Nettlau, Rudolf Rocker, and Juan García Oliver—saw anarchism and syndicalism as different movements, with anarcho-syndicalism being an attempt to combine two unlikes. In 1914 Nettlau wrote "I dissent from certain recent attempts to revindicate Bakunin almost exclusively as a *Syndicalist*"; see "Michael Bakunin," in Nettlau, *Writings on Bakunin*, 7 (see also 11). García Oliver said "The notion of anarcho-syndicalism is an attempt to arrive at some possible blending of the class fighting methods and anarchism, in the knowledge that revolutionary syndicalism serves the proletariat, whereas anarchism is one brand of humanism"; see García Oliver, *My Revolutionary Life*, 8. Rocker said that whereas anarchism was a transhistorical impulse, in contrast syndicalism as a "movement developed quite spontaneously within the French working class as a reaction against political Socialism"; see Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 131.

### 7a. Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt's *Black Flame* (restatement of classical anarchism)

1. Maurizio Antonioli, "Introduction," in Antonioli, ed., *International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam (1907)*, 16, 12–13, 21.

2. Antonioli, ed., *International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam (1907)*, 115, 121, 122, 123. George Woodcock's translation renders the Malatesta passage about means and ends more forcefully: "I would not want us to lose sight of the totality of anarchist conceptions...." See Errico Malatesta, "Syndicalism: An Anarchist Critique," in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, 221.

3. In Antonioli, ed., *International Anarchist Congress of Amsterdam (1907)*, 126. Again, the Woodcock translation differs significantly, rendering the most interesting lines as: "The anarchist revolution which we desire far exceeds the interests of a single class: it proposes the complete liberation of enslaved humanity, from the triple viewpoint, economic, political, and moral." See Errico Malatesta, "Syndicalism: An Anarchist Critique," in Woodcock, ed., *The Anarchist Reader*, 225.
4. Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 71–79.
5. Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 7.
6. Ibid, 19.
7. In defense of this narrative, they say that just because "some syndicalists describe themselves as Marxists or rejected the anarchist label does not invalidate their place in the broad anarchist tradition; we do not use self-identification but rather ideas as the basis for inclusion in the broad anarchist tradition." Ibid, 17.
8. Ibid, 18.
9. Ibid, 43.
10. Ibid, 34, 254.
11. Ibid, 45.
12. Regarding Bakunin, Sam Dolgoff says "between 1964 and 1867...his anarchist ideas took final shape; see Dolgoff's introduction to "The Anarchism of Michael Bakunin" chapter in Bakunin, *Bakunin on Anarchism*, 69. Daniel Guérin refers to Bakunin's "conversion to anarchism in 1864," in *Anarchism*, 35. Albert Meltzer called the *Cosmopolitan Review*, published in Britain in 1861, the "first anarchist paper." See his *The Anarchists in London 1935–1955*, 9; and for more on this paper, see his *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, 140. Alexandre Skirda says that "the very first anarchist periodical, published in 1850" was Anselme Bellegarrigue's; see Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 8.
13. Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 190.

### **7b. Murray Bookchin (hybrid)**

1. Biehl, "Bookchin's Trotskyist Decade."
2. Biehl, "Bookchin's Originality"; the Trotsky reference is also cited in this essay.
3. Ibid.
4. Biehl, "A Bibliography of Published Works by Murray Bookchin." The mainstream publishers were Knopf (the original edition of *Our Synthetic Environment*), Harper & Row (the 1974 republication of the latter, as well as *The Limits of the City* and *The Spanish Anarchists*), and Sierra Club (*The Rise of Urbanization and the Decline of Citizenship*).
5. Biehl, "Bookchin Breaks with Anarchism."

6. Biehl says that, "In the late 1950s he had been attending meetings of the Libertarian League in New York and learning about anarchism." Ibid.
7. Murray Bookchin, "Deep Ecology, Anarcho-Syndicalism, and the Future of Anarchist Thought," in Morris, et. al., *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*.
8. Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment*, chapter 4.
9. Ibid, chapter 2.
10. Ibid, chapter 7.
11. Bookchin, *Post Scarcity-Anarchism*, 177.
12. Ibid, 181, 182–84, 208–10.
13. Ibid, 181.
14. Ibid, 34, 36.
15. Ibid, 40. Bookchin had inherited from marxism the notion of contrasting dualisms, which would lead to a positive or negative outcome—Rosa Luxemburg's notion of "Socialism or Barbarism" being the most well-known of these. This tradition was carried on by Leon Trotsky, Josef Weber, and Bookchin himself, and his later "lifestyle versus social anarchism" can be seen in this light.
16. Ibid, 186, 192, 191.
17. Ibid, 211, 212.
18. Ibid, 192.
19. Ibid, 40.
20. "Twenty Years Later," in Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom*, 18.
21. "Preface to the 2005 AK Press Edition," in Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom*, 10.
22. Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom*, 67.
23. Ibid, 88.
24. Ibid, 121.
25. Ibid, 130.
26. Ibid, 153, 154.
27. For the "Mother Goddess," see *ibid*, 128, 172; the "quasi-animistic respiritualization of phenomena" is on 78.
28. Ibid, 84.

29. "Twenty Years Later," in Bookchin, *Ecology of Freedom*, 17. At times Bookchin seems to say that these trends originate in a misreading of his own work—which is a little ridiculous, since almost all of these trends have genealogies that date well into the prewar era.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid, 37.

32. Ibid, 35.

33. Ibid, 33.

34. Bookchin, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism*.

35. In an extended passage in "The Communalist Project," Bookchin says:

By the same token, anarchism—which, I believe, represents in its *authentic* form a highly individualistic outlook that fosters a radically unfettered lifestyle, often as a substitute for mass action—is far better suited to articulate a Proudhonian single-family peasant and craft world than a modern urban and industrial environment. I myself once used this political label, but further thought has obliged me to conclude that, its often-refreshing aphorisms and insights notwithstanding, it is simply not a social theory. Its foremost theorists celebrate its seeming openness to eclecticism and the liberatory effects of "paradox" or even "contradiction," to use Proudhonian hyperbole. Accordingly, and without prejudice to the earnestness of many anarchistic practices, a case can be made that many of the ideas of social and economic reconstruction that in the past have been advanced in the name of "anarchy" were often drawn from Marxism (including my own concept of "post-scarcity," which understandably infuriated many anarchists who read my essays on the subject). Regrettably, the use of socialistic terms has often prevented anarchists from telling us or even understanding clearly *what* they are: individualists whose concepts of autonomy originate in a strong commitment to *personal* liberty rather than to *social* freedom, or socialists committed to a structured, institutionalized, and responsible form of social organization. Anarchism's idea of self-regulation (*auto nomos*) led to a radical celebration of Nietzsche's all-absorbing will. Indeed the history of this "ideology" is peppered with idiosyncratic acts of defiance that verge on the eccentric, which not surprisingly have attracted many young people and aesthetes.

In fact anarchism represents the most extreme formulation of liberalism's ideology of unfettered autonomy, culminating in a celebration of heroic acts of defiance of the state. Anarchism's mythos of self-regulation (*auto nomos*)—the radical assertion of the *individual over or even against society and the personalistic absence of responsibility for the collective welfare*—leads to a radical affirmation of the all-powerful will so central to Nietzsche's ideological peregrinations. Some self-professed anarchists have even denounced mass social action as futile and alien to their private concerns and made a fetish of what the Spanish anarchists called *grupismo*, a small-group mode of action that is highly personal rather than social.

36. Ibid.

37. Murray Bookchin, "Deep Ecology, Anarcho-Syndicalism, and the Future of Anarchist Thought," in Morris, et. al., *Deep Ecology and Anarchism*.

38. Cited in Biehl, "Bookchin's Originality."
39. Biehl, "Bookchin Breaks with Anarchism."
40. Some of these issues are addressed in Sunshine, "Reply to Andy Price."

**7c. John Zerzan: Syncretic Criticisms of Modernity as "Anarchy" (intellectual hybrid of multiple non-anarchist traditions, but anarchist in self-identification)**

1. Albert, "Albert Replies 2."
2. "Twilight of the Machines," in Zerzan, *Twilight of the Machines*, 59–60.
3. His six essays in *Telos* are: "Organized Labor versus 'The Revolt Against Work': The Critical Contest" (#21, Fall 1974); "Unionization in America" (#27, Spring 1976); "Unionism and the Labor Front" (#28, Summer 1976); "Origins and Meaning of World War I" (#49, Fall 1981); "Anti-Work and the Struggle for Control" (#50, Winter 1981–82); and "Taylorism and Unionism" (#60, Summer 1984). All of these, except "Unionism and the Labor Front," are collected in Zerzan's *Elements of Revolt* which, like all of Zerzan's books, is an anthology of his essays.
4. "So...How Did You Become an Anarchist?," in Zerzan, *Running on Emptiness*, 178–79. In his "Preface" to *Creation and Its Enemies*, 5, Zerzan says he was the SSEU Vice-President in 1968 and President in 1969, and also notes his membership in the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers, as well as the Teamsters, unions.
5. "Enemy of the State: An Interview with John Zerzan," in Zerzan, *Running on Emptiness*, 92. For more on the Long March Through the Institutions, see Ingo Cornil, "'The Struggle Continues': Rudi Dutschke's Long March," in DeGroot, ed., *Student Protest*, 100–149. For a short history of the SSEU, see Cabins, "No Paid Officials."
6. "So...How Did You Become an Anarchist?," in Zerzan, *Running on Emptiness*, 175, 181.
7. Some of these include *Fifth Estate*, "Introduction" to Zerzan's "The '80s So Far" (1983); George Bradford, "Confronting the Enemy: A Response on Time" (1983); E.B. Maple, "Introduction" (to John Zerzan's "Agriculture: Essence of Civilization") (1988); and Bob Brubaker, "Comments on John Zerzan's Critique of Agriculture" (1988).

In the E.B Maple (Peter Werbe's pen name) 1988 introduction, he wrote "Almost *all* John Zerzan essays [in *The Fifth Estate*] feature accompanying introductions in which the word most frequently used to describe his method and conclusions is 'provocative'.... Some may think this only an ugly little term meant to distance a publication from the wild assertions that John so often makes in his writings.... Realistically though, provocative accurately describes what is the common reaction to reading a Zerzan article—you are provoked, to anger or to thought."

8. Zerzan, "Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers," 119.
9. "Who Killed Ned Ludd," in Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 108.
10. Zerzan, "The Decline and Fall of Everything," 1.
11. "New York, New York," in Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 201.

12. "The Refusal of Technology," in Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 203.
13. "Beginning of Time, End of Time," in Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 15, 20, 23, 15.
14. Ibid, 21, 22, 23.
15. Ibid, 16.
16. "Language: Origin and Meaning," in Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 31.
17. See, for example, "Origins and Meaning of WW1," in which he posits the war as a psychic release from the strains of modernity and a way to divert people from then-popular radical political currents. In Zerzan, *Elements of Refusal*, 145–64.
18. Young, "Against Everything That Is," 27, 28.
19. In 1976 a translation of Simon's essay "The New Movement" was published by *Solidarity* in Britain, and in 1977 Black & Red published *Poland: 1970–71, Capitalism and Class Struggle*, attributed to the ICO (but written by Simon). It documents uprisings by the workers after price increases and the formation of workers councils. It was followed by *Poland 1980–82: Class Struggle and the Crisis of Capital* (under Simon's name this time), which Black & Red published in 1985.
20. Simon, "The New Movement."
21. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 90. Compare this with Guy Debord's description of the spectacle: "The self-movement of the spectacle consists in this: it arrogates to itself everything that in human activity exists in a fluid state so as to possess it in a congealed form"; *Society of the Spectacle*, 26 (section 35).
22. Martin Jay uses the term "collective meta-subject" in *Marxism and Totality*, 269.
23. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, 12 (section 1).
24. The passage is by Raoul Vaneigem in *Revolution of Everyday Life*, 269. Zerzan re-tells it in the interview "Enemy of the State," *Running on Emptiness*, 93–94; it is also in a flyer ("Dear Abby") which was reprinted in a project Zerzan worked on, Anti-Authoritarians Anonymous, *Adventures in Subversion* (not paginated; on the third page after the introduction). This AAA flyer is in turn cited by John Zerzan in a reply to a letter in *Fifth Estate*; see "More Debate on Technology."
25. Vaneigem said, "I am not suggesting that the 'abstraction' of mediations has to be countered by some wild, 'instinctive' spontaneity: that would merely reproduce on a higher level the idiotic choice between pure speculation and mindless activism, the disjunction between theory and practice. I am saying that tactical adequacy involves launching the attack at the very spot where the highwaymen of experience lay their ambush, the spot where the attempt to act is transformed and perverted, at the precise moment when spontaneous action is sucked up by misinterpretation and misunderstanding"; see *Revolution of Everyday Life*, 96–97. Debord also denied setting up the two in contradiction to each other, saying "The spectacle cannot be set in abstract opposition to concrete social reality"—since both are already interwoven; see *Society of the Spectacle*, 14 (section 8).

26. Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization*, 3–5.

27. Herbert Marcuse, "Some Social Implications of Modern Technology," in Arato and Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 138–39.

28. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 10. He emphasizes the totality of technology again later: "when technics becomes the universal form of material production, it circumscribes an entire culture; it projects a historical totality—a 'world,'" and says "the capacity to contain and manipulate subversive imagination and effort is an integral part of the given society." *Ibid.*, 154, 23.

29. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 168–69; the unattributed line from Zerzan ("Technology has unmistakably become the great vehicle of reification") is in "That Thing We Do," in *Running on Emptiness*, 55.

30. Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, 256, 257.

31. Walter Benjamin's "Theses on the Philosophy of History" is in his *Illuminations*, 253–64; the shooting of the clocks is on 262. Zerzan refers to the clock shootings in "Beginning of Time, End of Time," in *Elements of Refusal*, 24, as well as in his "The Modern Anti-World," 17; Marcuse also quotes it in *Eros and Civilization*, 213.

The "document of civilization" quote is in *Illuminations*, 256 (although this line originally appeared in Benjamin's essay "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian," in Arato and Gebhardt, eds., *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, 233). It is cited by Zerzan in the "Beginning of Time, End of Time," in *Elements of Refusal*, 274n47.

Benjamin's famous "angel of history" passage is in *Illuminations*, 257–58; Zerzan cites this entire section in his "The Nihilist's Dictionary" entry on "Progress," in *Future Primitive*, 153, and also mentions it in "The Age of Grief," in *Running on Emptiness*, 122–23.

32. Löwy, *Redemption and Utopia*, 116–17, 120.

33. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, 18–19.

34. Harrington, *Reenchanted Science*, xvii, 189, xvii–xviii.

35. Adorno says that "Forgotten, Spengler takes his revenge by threatening to be right" about world history. See "Spengler after the Decline," in Adorno, *Prisms*, 54. Zerzan's praise of F.G. Jünger is in the "Bibliographical Note" to Zerzan and Carnes, eds., *Questioning Technology*, 217. The other two texts are Jacques Ellul's *The Technological Society* and Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment*.

36. Millet, "Divergence and Disagreement in Contemporary Anarchist Communism." The quote appears in "Appendix 6—Context and Considerations."

#### **7d. Postanarchism: Todd May and Richard Day (hybrid)**

1. May, "Is Post-Structuralist Political Theory Anarchist?," in Rousselle and Evren, eds., *Post-Anarchism*, 44.

2. Antliff, "Anarchy, Power, and Poststructuralism," 64.

3. I remember one sign at the demonstration that read "Schizoanalyze the WTO." It is a loss for the historical record that I failed to take a picture.

4. Among others, Lewis Call also offers a mostly literary reading of more "postmodern" currents in *Postmodern Anarchism*.

5. Duane Rousselle, "Preface," in Rousselle and Evren, eds., *Post-Anarchism*, vii.

6. This point requires some elaboration. Many of the "post-anarchists" in fact claimed in their works they did not identify with "anarchism" but rather with some other term, such as "anarchistic" or "anarchy." For example, Richard Day ends *Gramsci Is Dead* by saying "Now, more than ever, it would seem that we are faced with a choice between anarchy and anarchism"; 217. Nonetheless, all of these writers accept the term "postanarchism," and publish and promote their ideas in explicitly "anarchist" ideological circles.

7. Ibid, 87, 209.

### **7e. David Graeber: Anarchists Without Anarchism, Anarchism Without Anarchists (ideal type)**

1. "Introduction," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 6.

2. Ibid, 6–7; Graeber, *Direct Action* 12.

3. "Introduction," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 8; Graeber, "The Shock of Victory."

4. Graeber, *Direct Action*, 183, 437.

5. Ibid, 211–22.

6. He says elsewhere that he did not write this phrase, and the editors added it; according to Teoman Gee, in "New Anarchism: Some Thoughts," the name was circulating before.

7. Graeber, "The New Anarchists," including the first footnote.

8. Graeber, "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America," 123.

9. In "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century" (coauthored with Andrej Grubačić), it is claimed that "for an anarchist, in fact, to try to create...true democracy, is an ethical imperative." In "The New Anarchists," he says "this is a movement about reinventing democracy." In "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America," he says he is not interested in anarchism as an identity or self-conscious organizational form, but in "the convergence between concerns to develop new forms of direct democracy and dedication to principles of direct action." He goes on to say that "All reflect this same conjunction between direct action and direct democracy. It is precisely in the conjunction between these two phenomenon...that the future of anarchism really lies"; 124, 130. In "There Never Was a West," he says "My own approach has normally been to openly embrace both terms, to argue, in fact, that anarchism and democracy are—or should be—largely identical"; see Graeber, *Possibilities*, 330.

10. "Social Theory as Science and Utopia," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 323.

11. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 76.

12. Ibid, 3–4. But while this might be true of Kropotkin and Reclus, it certainly is not true of Bakunin or Proudhon. In fact, Proudhon believed that anarchy was only possible after a linear progress had reached his present time.

13. Graeber, "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America," 123; "The Twilight of Vanguardism," in *Possibilities*, 304; and (with Grubačić) "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century." Elsewhere he refers to it as a moral project, saying anarchism "does not see itself as fundamentally a project of analysis. It is more a moral project.... The basic principles of anarchism—self-organization, voluntary association, mutual aid, the opposition to all forms of coercive authority—are essentially moral and organizational"; Graeber, *Direct Action*, 211–12.

14. Graeber, *Direct Action*, 214–15.

15. Ibid, 215–16. A little strangely, in one passage, he says "anarchism is, itself, an idea, even if a very old one"; *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 7. This seems to point in a different direction than his older statements, however: if these behaviors got labeled in the nineteenth century, how is it a "very old" idea? It is possible that he is referring to the tendency of some anarchists to trace anarchism back to the ancient Greeks and Taoists. As with many of his claims, this passage remains unclear.

16. Graeber, "The New Anarchists," note 6. Uri Gordon points out that NEFAC is, in fact, "the only group Graeber mentions," before disputing his reading of them. See Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!*, 24–25.

17. Graeber and Grubačić, "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century"; Graeber, *Direct Action*, 216.

18. On a related note, he also says "I think it's deceptive to write the history of anarchism in the same way one would write the history of an intellectual tradition like Marxism," before noting that this is exactly how "most books on anarchism do"; Graeber, *Direct Action*, 213. The implication here once again is that, excepting his work, "most" scholarship on anarchism is deceptive.

19. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* 7–8, 9.

20. "The Twilight of Vanguardism," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 305.

21. Ibid, 306. There is also yet another, different version of this statement in Graeber and Grubačić, "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century."

22. "Social Theory as Science and Utopia," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 323; and "The Twilight of Vanguardism," *ibid*, 301.

23. Graeber extends his critique of marxism to include "academics" more generally, which he then uses this to explain why there are so few anarchists in the university. He says that "Vanguardist, even sectarian, attitudes have become so deeply ingrained in academic radicalism it's hard to say what it would mean to think outside them." See "The Twilight of Vanguardism," in Graeber, *Possibilities*, 301.

24. Graeber and Grubačić, "Anarchism, or the Revolutionary Movement of the 21st Century."

25. Graeber, *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*, 11, 12.

26. Graeber, "The New Anarchists."

27. For his repeated use of this phrase, see Graeber, *Direct Action*, 189, 211, 212, 225, 320, 321, 362, 405, and 420. In all of his works, I could only find a single instance where he admits that "most anarchists" don't actually hold views identical to his: "My own approach has normally been to openly embrace both terms, to argue, in fact, that anarchism and democracy are—or should be—largely identical. However, as I say, there is no consensus on this issue, nor even a clear majority view." He is correct on this point. See Graeber, "There Never Was a West," in *Possibilities*, 330.

### **8. Real Origins of Supposed "New Anarchists": How U.S. Anarchism in the 1990s Led to the Seattle Demonstrations**

1. Student Environmental Action Coalition, "Systems of Domination."

2. See material at [www.jailhurwitz.com](http://www.jailhurwitz.com).

3. For example, the cover letter to the Direct Action Network Against Corporate Globalization organizing packet, distributed nationally in October 1999, says "the WTO and its 'free-trade' dogma presents a great organizing opportunity because it is a global issue that is not linked to any single-issue identity. We come ever closer to a solution to this 'identity politics' dilemma that has plagued radical people the world over!" There is not a word about direct democracy. See also note 15 to this section.

4. Watson, "Swamp Fever, Primitivism & the 'Ideological Vortex.'" Elsewhere he says that the intervention of younger editors, soon after the Seattle demonstrations, "saved the paper from extinction; see Watson, "Notes Toward a History of the *Fifth Estate*," 37n10.

5. In 1998, Chris Day, Love and Rage ideologue, wrote "Love and Rage was founded with the expectation that the 1990s would be a period of heightened activity for the social movements that most of the founding members of the project came out of. Instead, we have witnessed the almost complete decimation of the pale shadow of a radical movement that existed in the US at the end of the 1980s." See "What We Do," in San Fillipo, ed., *A New World in Our Hearts*, 102.

6. Abby Scher's Spring 1999 piece for *Dollars & Sense*, "Anarchism Faces the '90s," was the only article I could find on anarchism in a major progressive publication in the years directly before Seattle. There were certainly generational and political reasons for this media blackout. The 1960s and 1970s generation by-and-large mostly refused to recognize countercultural radicalism as legitimate; refused to see anarchism as legitimate; and refused to be interested in the voices of younger people (insofar as they did not sound exactly like theirs). The younger anarchists were also by-and-large unable to field many articulate spokespeople—or did not want to.

7. For critical views of anarchist participation in the demonstrations, see Landstreicher, *Summits, Countersummits, and Social War*, as well as the pamphlet *A Perfectly Good Riot Ruined by a Business Meeting*.

8. See, for example, Neal, "Anarchism: Ideology or Methodology?"

9. Thanks to Ruth Kinna for this insight.

10. See, for example, the *60 Minutes* show which was broadcast soon after Seattle, "CBS 60mins WTO Seattle Riots.wmv" (a partial transcript is available as well: CBSNews, "The New Anarchists").

11. Thanks to Kristian Williams for this clarification.

12. See, for example, Adams, "Straying from the Script."

13. Graeber, *Direct Action*, 39.

14. Graeber, "The New Anarchists."

15. The broadsheets looked at were for Seattle in 1999 ("Shut Down the World Trade Organization"—the main publicity broadsheet from DAN that was widely circulated in anarchist circles; and "Mobilize Against Globalization," put out by a coalition of fifteen groups, including DAN and SEAC); the World Bank/IMF in 2000 and 2001 (Mobilization for Global Justice, "Shut Down the IMF/World Bank" and "Quarantine! The IMF/World Bank," respectively); "Stop the FTAA: No NAFTA for the Americas!" (2001); and Direct Action, "Direct Action: Challenge the Republican & Democratic Parties This Summer in Philadelphia & Los Angeles" (2001). I also looked at a single-issue magazine called *Reflections on Seattle* which was published by DAN and *WW3* magazine in 2000, immediately after Seattle.

Other than denouncing the WTO as undemocratic, the language of direct democracy is almost entirely absent from these free organizing propaganda pieces, which typically seek to disseminate the rudiments of their ideological perspectives along with their calls to actions. In the thirty pages of *Reflections on Seattle*, the only mention of democracy in relation to the politics of activists is a quote leading an article, which refers to the chant "This is what democracy looks like," which was famously used at the anti-WTO demonstrations. The two main broadsheets distributed before Seattle don't mention democracy at all in a proactive sense, and nor does "Stop the FTAA." The two World Bank/IMF broadsheets do both mention democracy in a positive sense, but mostly in passing.

The only broadsheet where it is a central element is "Direct Action." This broadsheet is unusual in that it actually lists all the contributors by name, and among these is David Graeber himself, in addition to Brooke Lehman (who was affiliated with the pro-direct democracy ISE). There is certainly a sense that, at least in the first couple years, "direct democracy" was only a central part of the discourse of the anti-globalization movement insofar as it was "added in" by intellectuals for whom this was their political agenda; it was in fact not a central notion that activists—especially anarchists—held, nor was it central in the formation of the coalition that actually organized the N30 Seattle and A16 DC demonstrations. (While Lehman was part of the organizing running up to Seattle, the ISE as a whole was not. However, a number of ISE activists passed out thousands of copies of Cindy Milstein's pamphlet "Democracy is Direct" at the A16 demonstration; see Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, 2).

This is not to say that no one focused on this concept. "This is what democracy looks like" was chanted on the streets of Seattle. Bookchin and the ISE *had* pushed this ideological line for many years, and "radical democracy" was one concept bouncing around the non-Leninist left-wing milieu, especially in pro-Zapatista circles. But "direct democracy," as a term or a concept, was never *central* to the *majority* of anarchists—even if we redefine them as

vaguely left anti-authoritarian anti-globalization activists, as Graeber does—nor was it hegemonic in their discourse. In fact, the main themes stressed in all these early anti-globalization broadsheets is not democracy at all. What you find are tactical calls for mass direct action, affinity groups, and consensus decision making; and political calls for opposition to global capitalism and environmentalism.

16. See the Alliance for Freedom and Direct Democracy archived website.

17. Graeber, "The New Anarchists," n6; "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America," 124.

18. Some of his attacks on others have been preserved for posterity. See for example his denunciations of Bob Black (under the collective-use pseudonym Wanda Tinasky, "Ego-Porn: Or the Work of Bob Black"); Wayne Price (Graeber, "Comments"), and Jason Adams (Graeber, "Response to Jason Adams's review").

Graeber's response to Adams is representative. (Adams, then a graduate student, was the founder of the "postanarchist" listserv the reply appeared on; he was also—unlike Graeber—deeply involved in the organization and execution of the Seattle demonstrations; see Adams, "Straying From the Script"). In his reply to Adams's critical but unexceptionally worded review, Graeber talks about Adams's "stranger assertions," says he takes the "predictable academic course of levelling cheap shots at any possible foolishness," says his "results are bizarre," accuses Adams of seeing Foucault as "a semi-divine figure," calls him "an indifferent reader of the book," and dismisses his questions by saying, "We could whizz around in circles on these kind of questions all day and no doubt some would find this entertaining, but I must admit as I grow older I start to find it increasingly boring." Finally, Graeber says "The fact is that rather than having a monopoly on the life of the mind, academics have developed certain habits which I would call downright anti-intellectual: notably, the tendency to caricature, simplify and misrepresent arguments of other scholars, habits which Jason's review, unfortunately, does occasionally tend to exhibit."

In fact, it is Graeber's own works that personify these trends, and he even admits it at times: it displays anti-intellectualism, caricature, simplification, and misrepresentation. He then projects his own characteristics on others, finally claiming that, "As in so many cases, Jason accuses me of precisely what he's doing himself." This kind of language and argumentation is hardly unique for Graeber; in fact, a slightly more moderate version can be found throughout his writings, which are comparable in their logic to the more psychologically challenged conspiracy theories.

19. Sunshine, "Rebranding Fascism: National-Anarchists."

## **9. Of Tool Boxes and Hodge-Podge: A Critique of Postanarchism and Ideal Type Anarchism**

1. "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michael Foucault and Gilles Deleuze," in Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, 208.

2. Alvin W. Gouldner presents evidence for this argument in "The Two Marxisms," in *For Sociology*, 425–59.

## **10. Prolegomena to a Future Anarchist Social Theory**

1. I am familiar with this saying from a British punk song, and as I was looking for the lyrics online to cite, I was surprised to learn that it is actually a paraphrase of a Biblical passage; see Genesis 25:29–34.

2. When starting this project, I assumed that the goal was a new theoretical perspective that would match the politics of the contemporary movement. In the process of writing this, however, I realized that to attempt this would raise precisely the same issues that exist with ideal type anarchism, and for the same reasons—since what gets called “anarchism” is composed of too many conflicting and irreconcilable elements to make anything but a vague outline. Now I think what is needed is a new Bookchin, in some way, without any pretense to a claim to represent what “most anarchists” think.

3. Kropotkin said that anarchism could be approached in the same mechanistic scientific way as the physical sciences: “Anarchism is a conception of the Universe based on the mechanical interpretation of phenomena, which comprises the whole of Nature, including the life of human societies and their economic political, and moral problems. Its method is that of natural sciences, and every conclusion it comes to must be verified by this method if it pretends to be scientific.” From *Modern Science and Anarchism*, in Kropotkin, *Evolution and Environment*, 51.

4. However, any such revised anarchism will have to define, not just its relation to Marx, but to the differing marxisms, as well as post-structuralism and other intellectual currents that developed in the intervening years. It would also be necessary to go through some of the major arguments of classical anarchism which have more-or-less been forgotten, such as the debates between Malatesta and Kropotkin over questions of naturalism versus conscious revolutionary subjectivity, which parallel debates between spontaneists and Gramscians.

5. For the New Right, see Bar-On, *Where Have All the Fascists Gone?* New Right ideas spread widely, and across the political board: de Benoist’s “right to difference” influenced Le Pen’s National Front in France and the formerly radical-left journal *Telos*; the New Right has affected U.S. neo-Nazi groups like W.A.R. (White Aryan Resistance) and the National Alliance, as well as paleoconservatives like Pat Buchanan; see Sunshine, “Rebranding Fascism.” While the New Right is in no way hegemonic in the fascist milieu, it is a known and respected place for far-right intellectuals to practice a rigorous theoretical stance that avoids some of the intellectual crudity of classical fascism, such as the outdated biological racism of the 1930s and 1940s that was an important part of the ideology of the Nazi party.

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*(Dis)Connection*  
*Earth First! Journal*  
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*Journal of Aesthetics & Protest*  
*Left Green Notes*  
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*Live Wild or Die!*  
*Love and Rage*  
*The Match!*  
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*Processed World*  
*Profane Existence*  
*Race Traitor*  
*Rolling Thunder*  
*Social Anarchism*  
*SRAF Bulletin*  
*Utopian*  
*Wind Chill Factor*  
*Yipster Times* (later *Overthrow*)

#### **CANADA**

*Bulldozer*  
*Demolition Derby*  
*Endless Struggle*  
*Kick It Over*  
*Open Road*  
*Our Generation*  
*Upping the Anti*

#### **U.K.**

*Anarchist Studies*  
*Anarchy*  
*Black Flag*  
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*Class War*  
*Freedom*  
*Green Anarchist*  
*Here & Now*  
*Turbulence*

#### **WEBPAGES:**

[anarkismo.org](http://anarkismo.org)  
[anarchistnews.org](http://anarchistnews.org)  
[anarchistblackcat.org](http://anarchistblackcat.org)  
[indymedia.org](http://indymedia.org) (various)  
[infoshop.org](http://infoshop.org)  
[libcom.org](http://libcom.org)

#### **NATIONAL GROUPS**

**(including public statements, internal documents, and digital resources):**

Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF)  
Anarcho-Communist Federation (ACF)  
CrimethInc. Ex-Workers Collective (CWC)  
Direct Action Network (DAN)  
Earth First! (EF!)  
Industrial Workers of the World (IWW)  
Left Green Network (LGN)  
Love and Rage Network (LRN)  
    (later the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, LRRAF)  
Network of Anarchist Collectives (NAC)  
Northeastern Federation of Anarcho-Communists (NEFAC) (later Northeastern Federation of  
    Anarchist-Communists; much later became Common Struggle—Libertarian  
    Communist Federation)

Occupy Wall Street (OWS)  
Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation (SRAF)  
Workers Solidarity Alliance (WSA)

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