

CONSTRUCTIVE  
ANARCHY:  
CONTEMPORARY  
ANARCHY IN ACTION

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*Jeff Shantz*



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# ORGANIZING ANARCHISM

The modern spectacle, on the contrary, expresses what society *can do*, but in this expression the *permitted* is absolutely opposed to the *possible*.

—Guy Debord

The visionary is the only true realist.

—Fellini

An old and seemingly vanquished spectre is once again haunting politics — the spectre of anarchism. In the past few years striking media coverage of angry, black-clad, balaclava wearing youth demonstrating outside of the global meetings of government and corporate power-holders has stirred memories of the moral panic over anarchism which marked the beginning of the 20th century. The “uncivil” disobedience, especially where it concerns damage to corporate property, attributed to so-called “black bloc” anarchists at global capitalist summits since the 1999 World Trade Organization (W.T.O.) meetings in Seattle have returned anarchists to the headlines and landed them on the covers of Time and Newsweek in addition to a feature story on television’s Sixty Minutes II.

For many commentators on anti-globalization movements and politics, it is undeniable that “anarchism is the dominant perspective within the movement” (Epstein, 2001: 10). While most participants in anti-globalization struggles would not describe themselves as anarchists,

there is much agreement that the movement, in broad terms, is organized along anarchist lines, consisting of small affinity groups that come together to work on specific actions or projects and which express a politics of direct action rather than a politics oriented towards seeking state-centred reforms. Yale anthropologist David Graeber (2002: 62) suggests that, “Anarchism is the heart of the movement, its soul; the source of most of what’s new and hopeful about it.”

## A CRY OF PAIN FOR THE FUTURE

When pondering the possibilities for an emergent radical politics that might contest capitalist globalization, at the approach of the new millenium, it is unlikely that much thought was being devoted to the place of anarchism as a harbinger of the future world. “From Marx and Engels, who attacked all forms of unscientific socialism as ‘utopian’, onwards, anarchism has been dismissed as chimerical and fanciful at best a romantic dream, at worst a dangerous fantasy” (Marshall 661). For example, Eric Hobsbawm has characterized anarchism both as a “primitive rebellion” and as the death sigh of the historically condemned. In even harsher terms, Alexander Gray has scolded anarchists for being “a race of highly intelligent and imaginative children, who nevertheless can scarcely be trusted to look after themselves outside the nursery pen” (Marshall 661). Such unfavourable depictions have served to reinforce anarchism’s reputation as a case of arrested development,<sup>1</sup> a remnant of the past, to be outgrown, rather than a glimpse of the future “new world.”

Still others, trying to be more generous, have seen in anarchism “a cry of pain for the future,” (Apter 1). In this case, anarchism is presented, mistakenly, as just another variant of utopianism. Anarchism here stands in relation to the future as nostalgia stands to the past – as little more than a comforting dream.

The tendency to associate anarchism with the past, in an evolutionary schema

of political development, is not limited to analyses of "classical" anarchism. Even observers of latter-day manifestations of anarchy insist that, despite its enhanced psychological sophistication, anarchism "remains a primitive doctrine" (Apter 1). Anarchism, it is said, is a movement of the past, out of touch with the realities of late twentieth-century hypercapitalism – certainly not a movement of the future or for the future.

Indeed, the story of anarchism in the twentieth century gives some credence to the popular assessments of the prospects for anarchy. Anarchist political movements, so vibrant to begin the new century, already appeared exhausted by its fourth decade. and the brutal defeat of anarcho-syndicalism during the Spanish Revolution seemed to signal the end of the line for the “primitive revolutionaries” of anarchism. By the early 1960s three prominent histories of anarchism concluded that anarchism had no future.<sup>2</sup>

## **ANARCHY NOW (AND AGAIN)**

The presence of several hundred people participating in an anarchist conference may be cause for much surprise. After all, anarchism was supposed to have died, at least as a relevant “movement” or “politics”, by the beginning of the Second World War. The mass suppression of North American anarchism and syndicalism during the “Red Scare” of the 1910s, including the crushing of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the violent suppression of anarchism by the Bolshevik regime its early years of institutionalization in Russia and the resultant hegemony of Leninism<sup>7</sup> among leftist movements worldwide, the brutal defeat of the anarcho-syndicalists during the Spanish Revolution,<sup>8</sup> the rise of mass (and legal) labour movements and social democratic parties supposedly spelled the end for poor old “pre-political,”<sup>9</sup> prefigurative anarchism.

The 1940s found anarchism at its nadir. Long-running non-English language anarchist papers

(such as Freie Arbeiter Shtimme and Il Martello) suffered sharply declining readership, activists were split over the question of support for the Allied forces and the IWW was marginalized by a patriotic working class. Hargis notes the emergence at this time of a growing division between “counterculturalist” and “class struggle/ syndicalist” anarchists which has characterized the movement up to the present. This split was exemplified in major new publications including Resistance, Retort! (counterculturalist) and New Trends and New Essays (class struggle).

By 1950 the original IWW lost their last connection with industry when the Cleveland metal shops quit the group. Its activities were reduced to putting out the weekly Industrial Worker. The Libertarian League was founded in 1954 by Esther and Sam Dolgoff as an attempt to keep anarcho-syndicalism alive through meetings and solidarity work. The primary contribution was a monthly journal Views and Comments (1955-1965). Despite some worthwhile activities (such as defending Cuban anarchists) the League remained quite small. The “counterculturalist” anarchist activities of the 1950s included the Living Theater and a variety of new artistic expressions, including mail art and performance art.

The 1940s and 1950s were grim periods for anarchist politics in North America. Movements had collapsed, revolutionary internationalism had waned and the only ongoing anarchist projects were book clubs and study groups. By the early 1960s three major histories of anarchism (Woodcock, 1962; Horowitz, 1964; Joll, 1964) came to the same conclusion: anarchism as a movement was dead, its vision remaining only as a reminder of how much had been lost.

Reports of anarchism’s demise would prove premature, however. The corpse soon began to stir. By the mid-1960s the New Left, with its emphasis upon decentralization, direct action and mutual aid, and the counter-culture, through its experiments in alternative communities and its libertine sensibilities resurrected fundamentally anarchist themes (See Marshall, 1993). The 1960s brought a revival of anarchist tactics and themes within organizations which were not explicitly (or even nominally) anarchist. Hargis (1998) notes the emergence of anarchist positions within SNCC

and SDS. While those groups have received a relatively large deal of attention by historians little has been said about anarchist activities within them. Instead the authoritarian Leftist factionalism that marked much of the organization's later years preoccupies most histories of SDS. This has overshadowed any discussion of the anarchist caucus' "Radical Decentralist Project" within SDS.

Among the more interesting developments in the sixties involves the Wob- bly shift to "student syndicalism" (based on an analysis of the university as knowl- edge factory) and the union's movement onto university campuses. During this period the Wobblies even had a branch with a membership of 100 at the elitist Uni- versity of Toronto. Unfortunately little is known about their activities.

Soon explicitly anarchist movements began to emerge again. The Situationist Inter- national (SI) in France offered a compelling mix of council communism and anarchy.<sup>10</sup> Developing a more nuanced analysis of power beyond the State and Capital they demanded a "revolution of everyday life"<sup>11</sup> in order to resist the passifying tendencies which ren- dered people mere consumers of "spectacular society."<sup>12</sup> Situationist-inspired rebellions in the summer of 1968 almost brought down the ruling government of France.<sup>13</sup> While the (SI) itself dissolved in the early 1970s, its message and tactics were taken up by oth- ers elsewhere. In Britain, the Situationists played some influence in the emergence of punk (Marcus, 1989) and in the extremist rhetoric of the Class War Federation.

Hargis' (1998) primary assessment of sixties anarchism is that it did much to contribute to the conception of anarchism as a "lifestyle" rather than a social revolutionary movement. This was especially so, he argues, because of the affinity between anarchist ideas and practices and aspects of counter-cultural activity. Among the most interesting examples are the Dig- gers who disrupted a 1967 SDS conference by "challenging the Old New Leftists to liberate themselves rather than attempting to organize others" (Hargis, 1998: 18). Also of note were the confrontational street actions of the surrealist/anarchist Black Mask/ "Up Against The Wall,

Motherfuckers” who proposed the formation of affinity groups, “a gang with an analysis,” (Hargis, 1998: 21-22) and advocated disruptive public theatrics (on the lines of Situationist *dérive*).

By the end of the sixties and start of the seventies, the resurgence of anarchism was signalled by the emergence of new publications including *The Match*, *Solidarity Bulletin*, *Root and Branch* and *Black Cross Bulletin*. Around this same time, *The Fifth Estate* developed an ecological anarchist perspective, in part, through the influence of Black and Red co-founders Fredy and Lorraine Perlman.

In 1969 an effort was begun to develop a continental anarchist federation to bring the new groups together. While 20-30 groups affiliated to this Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation (SRAF) the experience served primarily to convince many anarchists that such a federation was either unnecessary or impossible (Hargis, 1998: 27). Again, a key division seems to have been one between class struggle and cultural anarchists.

Still there were groups that attempted articulate class struggle politics through counter-cultural anarchist practices. The *Kabouters*, an anarchist grouping active during the 1970s in the Netherlands, declared in the humorous proclamation of their “Orange Free State” that “the new society would emerge out of the old society like a toadstool from a rotting trunk” (Marshall, 1993: 554). An alternative society would spring forth from the new subcultures of the existing order. Furthermore this future culture would bring with it a new human type – the “culture elf”(kabouters) – who will reconcile humankind with the natural world (Marshall, 1993: 555; Van Duyn, 1969).

In the 1970s the anarchist tide began to subside once more. Rather than simply disappearing, however, anarchist themes became more diffuse, turning up in the activities of the peace and feminist movements. Concern with questions of hierarchy, domination, representation and consensus became key components of the “new social movements” (NSMs) of the 1980s.<sup>14</sup> While much of NSM practice emphasized traditionally anarchist themes and forms, (e.g. direct action, affinity groups and participatory democracy) few

of the movements or organizations were explicitly anarchist. Rather, they were largely reformist, seeking primarily to effect legislative change through appeals to the State.

Consciously anarchist politics did not re-emerge with any force until the mid-1980s. This re-emergence was largely driven by the explicitly anarchist practices and ideas of radical environmentalism. Ecological crises and a re-thinking of nature/society relations led some ecology activists to develop radical analyses of social relations of hierarchy and domination, and their relationship to the exploitation of nature. Dissatisfaction with the capacity and willingness of states to deal with environmental degradation contributed to a newfound appreciation for anarchist traditions. Anarchist insights were important in the early formulation of deep ecology and Tolstoyan anarchism found a welcome place in animal rights movements. Perhaps of greatest significance for the re-emergence of anarchism has been Murray Bookchin's "social ecology" which draws inspiration from the anarchist geographers Peter Kropotkin and Elisée Reclus.

Since the early 1990s anarchism as a self-aware political force has enjoyed a rather remarkable resurgence. Global economic transformations, along with the social dislocations and ecological crises accompanying them, have impelled a rediscovery of anarchism by people seeking alternatives to both capitalism and communism. The simultaneous collapse of state capitalism in the Soviet Union and the move of Western social democratic parties to the Right have left socialism discredited as an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. These remnants of Leninism and Social Democracy respectively, which had supposedly put anarchism to rest, have themselves suffered death blows recently. With the political Left in dissaray, anarchism presents to many an overlooked alternative to both liberal democracy and Marxism.

Indeed anarchism is back. During the final weeks of August 1996, over 700 activists from North America and Europe took part in the first major anarchist gathering in more than a decade. Held in Chicago to oppose the Democratic Party's National Convention, the Active Resistance (AR) convention provided a space for anarchists to share the experiences

nurtured daily in their home communities. Workshops were organized to discuss such concerns as cooperative economics, community organizing, building revolutionary movements and alternative media.<sup>3</sup> So successful was AR that a second gathering was organized in Toronto in August 1998. AR98 drew over 1000 participants for a week of workshops and social action culminating in a march to defend the rights of street youth and “squeegee kids.”

The Active Resistance gatherings were only the first of a growing number of visible recent manifestations of a surprisingly rejuvenated anarchist movement in North America (and, indeed, globally). Since the early-1990s anarchist politics have enjoyed renewed popularity among people seeking a future of alternative social arrangements free from the hierarchies, authoritarianism, violence and ecological destruction marking global capitalism.

## **ANARCHY IS ORDER**

Contemporary anarchists maintain a commitment to historic anarchist goals of creating a society without government, State and private ownership of means of production in which people associate voluntarily. Indeed, the definition of anarchism presented at both gatherings highlights the inclusiveness of its conception of liberty.

Anarchy: A self governed society in which people organize themselves from the bottom up on an egalitarian basis; decisions made by those affected by them; direct democratic control of our workplaces, schools, neighborhoods, towns and bio-regions with coordination between differing groups as needed. A world where women and men are free and equal and all of us have power over our own lives, bodies and sexuality; where we cherish and live in balance with the earth and value diversity of cultures, races and sexual orientations; where we work and live together cooperatively (Active Resistance n.p.).



The word “anarchy” comes from the ancient Greek word “anarchos” and means “without a ruler” (Woodcock, 1962; Horowitz, 1964; Joll, 1964; Marshall, 1993). While rulers, quite expectedly, claim that the end of rule will inevitably lead to a descent into chaos and turmoil, anarchists maintain that rule is unnecessary for the preservation of order. Rather than a descent into Hobbes’ war of all against all, a society without government suggests to anarchists the very possibility for creative and peaceful human relations. Proudhon neatly summed up the anarchist position in his famous slogan: “Anarchy is Order.”<sup>12</sup>

The first systematic political philosophy which could be called anarchist is usually attributed to William Godwin. For Godwin, laws discourage creative responses to social problems, firstly because they reduce human experiences to a general measure, and secondly because they consign human thought to a fixed condition, thereby impeding improvements. Godwin (1977: 120) sees coercion as an injustice, incapable of convincing or conciliating those against whom it is employed. Coercion, as expressed in law and punishment, only teaches that one should submit to force and agree to being directed not “by the convictions of your understanding, but by the basest part of your nature, the fear of personal pain, and a compulsory awe of the injustice of others” (Godwin, 1977: 121-122). The road to virtue, for Godwin, lies not in submission to coercion but only in resistance to it. In place of punishment, which he regards as evidence of a profound lack of imagination, Godwin advocates removing the causes of crime (government and property) and “rousing the mind” through education.

Tolstoy, himself a pacifist anarchist, offered these reflections on laws: “[L]aws are demands to execute certain rules; and to compel some people to obey certain rules (i.e. to do what other people want of them) can only be effected by blows, by deprivation of liberty, and by murder. If there are laws, there must be the force that can compel people to obey them” (1977: 117). For Tolstoy, then, the basis of legislation is not found in such uncertain notions as rights or the “will of the people” but in the capacity to wield

organized violence, in the coercive power of the State. Laws represent the capacity of those in power to use violence to effect practices profitable to them (Tolstoy, 1977).

Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, the first to call his social philosophy “anarchist”, argued that vice and crime, rather than being the cause of social antagonisms and poverty as popularly believed, are caused by social antagonisms and poverty (1969: 49). He considered State order to be “artificial, contradictory and ineffective,” thereby engendering “oppression, poverty and crime” (1969, 53). In his view the constitution of societies under States was strictly anomalous. Furthermore, “public and international law, together with all the varieties of representative government, must likewise be false, since they are based upon the principle of individual ownership of property” (1969: 54). For Proudhon, jurisprudence, far from representing “codified reason” is nothing more than “simply a compilation of legal and official titles for robbery, that is for property” (1969: 54). Authority is incapable of serving as a proper basis for constituting social relations.<sup>13</sup> The citizen must be governed by reason alone, and only those “unworthy and lacking in self-respect” would accept any rule beyond their own free will (1969: 94). In place of political institutions Proudhon advocated economic organizations based upon principles of mutualism in labour and exchange, through co-operatives and “People’s Banks”, as means towards that end.<sup>14</sup> The consequences of this reorganization of social life include the limiting of constraint, the reduction of repressive methods, and the convergence of individual and collective interests (1969: 92). This Proudhon calls “the state of total liberty” or anarchy, and suggests that it is the only context in which “laws” operate spontaneously without invoking command and control.<sup>15</sup>

Michael Bakunin, who popularized the term “anarchy” and whose work was instrumental in the early development of the anarchist movement, argues in his scattered writings that external legislation and authority “both tend toward the enslavement of society” (1953: 240). All civic and political organizations are founded upon violence exercised from the top downward as systematized exploitation. Again political law is understood as an expression of privilege. He

rejects all legislation, convinced that it must turn to the advantage of powerful minorities against the interests of subjected majorities. Laws, inasmuch as they impose an external will, must be despotic in character. For Bakunin, political rights and “democratic States” are flagrant contradictions in terms. States and laws only denote power and domination, presupposing inequality. “Where all govern, no one is governed, and the State as such does not exist. Where all equally enjoy human rights, all political rights automatically are dissolved” (Bakunin, 1953: 240). Bakunin distinguishes between the authority of example and knowledge, “the influence of fact”, and the authority of right. While he is willing to accept the former, situationally and voluntarily, he rejects the latter unconditionally. “When it is a question of houses, canals, or railroads, I consult the authority of the architect or engineer...though always reserving my indisputable right of criticism and control....Accordingly there is no fixed and constant authority, but a continual exchange of mutual, temporary, and, above all, voluntary authority and subordination” (Bakunin, 1953: 253-254). The influence of right, an official imposition, he terms a “falsehood and an oppression” which inevitably leads to absurdity (1953: 241). Like Proudhon, Bakunin envisions future social organizations as economic rather than political. He sees society as organized around free federations of producers, both rural and urban. Any co-ordination of efforts must be voluntary and reasoned.

Peter Kropotkin divided all laws into three main categories: protection of property, protection of persons and protection of government (Kropotkin, 1970). Kropotkin saw that all laws and governments are the possession of privileged elites and serve only to maintain and enhance privilege, and he argued that most laws serve either to defend the appropriation of labour or to maintain the authority of the State. Speaking of the protection of property, Kropotkin noted that property laws are not made to guarantee producers the products of their labour but rather to justify the taking of a portion of the producer’s product and placing it into the hands of a non-producer. For Kropotkin (1977: 213), it is precisely because this appropriation of labour (and its products) is a glaring injustice that “a whole arsenal of laws and a whole army of soldiers, policemen and judges

are needed to maintain it.” In addition, many laws serve only to keep workers in positions subordinate to their employers (Kropotkin, 1970: 213). Other laws (those regarding taxes, duties, the organization of ministerial departments, the army and police) serve no other end than to “maintain, patch up, and develop the administrative machine,” which is organized “almost entirely to protect the privileges of the possessing classes” (Kropotkin, 1970: 214). With regard to “crimes against persons” he viewed this as the most important category because it is the reason the law enjoys any amount of consideration and because it has the most prejudices associated with it. Kropotkin’s response is twofold. First, because most crimes are crimes against property their removal is predicated upon the disappearance of property itself. Second, punishment does not reduce crime. His reflections led him to conclude that not only is law useless, it is actually hurtful – engendering a “depravity of mind” through obedience, and stoking “evil passions” through the performance of atrocity (Kropotkin, 1970). Because punishment does not reduce the amount of crime, Kropotkin also called for the abolition of prisons. The best available response, he argued, is sympathy.

20th Century anarchists have developed these readings of State/society relations in more nuanced ways. Of much significance for contemporary anarchist analysis is the work of Gustav Landauer who, more than a half century before Foucault offered a vision of power as decentred and situationally enacted. Landauer conceptualized the State not as a fixed entity outside of extraneous to society, but as specific relations between people dispersed throughout society.

The state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behaviour between them; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another...We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institutions that form a real community and society of men [sic] (Landauer, quoted in Lunn, 1973).

In a recent work Murray Bookchin (1982) speaks of the State as “an instilled mentality” rather than a collection of institutions. In the liberal democracies of the 20th Century power is exercised less through displays of naked force and more through nurtur-

ance of what La Boetie called “voluntary servitude”. Contemporary practices of governance lead Bookchin to characterize the State as “a hybridization of political with social institutions, of coercive with distributive functions, of highly punitive with regulatory procedures, and finally of class with administrative needs” (Quoted in Marshall, 1993: 22).

With the profusion of laws and regulations governing everything from smoking to the baring of breasts the line dividing State and society has certainly blurred if not disappeared entirely. As laws and legal surveillance extend into ever-increasing realms of human behaviour everyone stands accused, subject to the judgements of state authority.

While respecting the gains won from the State through centuries of social struggle, and not wishing to see these gains unilaterally and callously removed, anarchists nonetheless refuse to follow social democrats in embracing the Welfare State. For anarchists, the regulatory and supervisory mechanisms of the Welfare State are especially suited to producing docile and dependent subjects. Through institutions like social work and public education authorities extend the practices of ruling from control over bodies to influence over minds. Moral regulation provides a subtle means for nurturing repression and conformity. “By undermining voluntary associations and the practice of mutual aid [the Welfare State] eventually turns society into a lonely crowd buttressed by the social worker and the policeman” (Marshall, 1993: 24).

Where defenders of the State appeal to its protective functions as a justification for its continued existence, anarchists respond that the coercive character of the State, as exemplified in the proliferation of regulations, police and prisons, far exceeds whatever protection it might extend (Marshall, 1993). Furthermore, States are, in practice, incapable of providing equal protection for all members of society, typically protecting the interests of more privileged members against the less fortunate. Laws which overwhelmingly emphasize property protection, the restricted and elite character of legal knowledge, guarded by law schools with their exorbitant tuition fees and exclusionary entrance requirements, and racist overtones in the exercise of “law and order”,

provide anarchists with evidence enough of the injustices of State “justice”. For anarchists, the State with its vast and complex array of law, prisons, courts and armies stands not as the defender of social justice against inequality but as a primary cause of injustice and oppression.

Additionally, and this is the uniquely anarchist critique, State practices actually undermine social relations within communities, even when not exhibiting a specific bias against the less powerful. This occurs through the substitution of State networks for mutual aid networks in ever-spreading realms of human activity. It results, in relations of dependence rather than self-determination as the external practices of the State increasingly come to be viewed as the only legitimate mechanisms for solving disputes or addressing social needs. For anarchists the “rule of law” administered through the institutions of the State is not the guarantor of freedom, but, rather, freedom’s enemy, closing off alternative avenues for human interaction, creativity and community while corralling more and more people within its own bounds.

Furthermore, the State is not even efficient as a mechanism for redistributing resources. In actuality the State diverts resources from those in need and channels them into itself. “Instead of paying taxes to the State which then decides who is in need, anarchists prefer to help directly the disadvantaged by voluntary acts of giving or by participating in community organizations” (Marshall, 1993: 24). Anarchists propose that the social service and welfare functions of the State can be better met by voluntary mutual aid associations which involve the people affected and respond directly to their needs. Mutual aid at the face-to-face level is regarded as preferable to institutionalized programs or charity.

Once again contemporary anarchists follow Landauer in understanding anarchism not as a revolutionary establishment of something new, a leap into the unknown, or as a break with the present. Rather, he regarded anarchism as “the actualisation and reconstitution of something that has always been present, which exists alongside the state, albeit buried and laid waste” (Landauer quoted in Ward, 1973: 11). Similarly, Paul Goodman ar-

gued that “[a] free society cannot be the substitution of a ‘new order’ for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of social life (Quoted in Ward, 1973: 11). Starting from this perspective contemporary anarchists seek to develop non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical relations in the here-and-now of everyday life.

Anarchists nurture loyalties other than to States through extended networks of autonomous groupings. Through “day-to-day disavowals of state legality” anarchism exists as “a secret history of resistance” which, by force or by choice, is forever “flowing under and against state and legal authority” (Ferrell, 1997: 149).

There is an order imposed by terror, there is an order enforced by bureaucracy (with the policeman [sic] in the corridor) and there is an order which evolves spontaneously from the fact that we are gregarious animals capable of shaping our own destiny. When the first two are absent, the third, as infinitely more human and humane form of order has an opportunity to emerge. Liberty, as Proudhon said, is the mother, not the daughter of order (Ward, 1973: 37)

The idea that the form of post-revolutionary society must be foreshadowed in the form of the “revolutionary” organization has been a primary feature of anarchist theory, at least since Michael Bakunin’s famous disagreements with Marx over the role of the state in the transition to socialism. Bakunin’s central conflict with Marx was related precisely to the former’s conviction that an authoritarian revolutionary movement, as Marx espoused, would inevitably initiate an authoritarian society after the revolution. For Bakunin, if the new society is to be non-authoritarian then it can only be founded upon the experience of non-authoritarian social relations. The statement produced by Bakunin’s supporters in the IWMA during his battle with Marx in 1871 asked: “How can you expect an egalitarian and free society to emerge from an authoritarian organization?”<sup>5</sup> (Joll 216). This conviction was repeated a century later by participants in the Paris insurrection of 1968: “The revolutionary organization has to learn that it cannot combat alienation through alienated forms”<sup>6</sup> (Marshall 658).

## OF HETEROTOPIAS AND AUTONOMOUS ZONES: ANARCHIST FUTURES IN THE PRESENT

Recent anarchist initiatives have gone well beyond Bakunin's preoccupation with prefiguring the future society in contemporary revolutionary forms to creating the future immediately. As James Joll noted with respect to the activities of participants of the May 1968 uprising in Paris: "For these young people, the revolutionary movement is not only the pattern of future society which Bakunin believed that it should be: it is future society. Their Utopia is realized here and now in the process of revolution itself" (217).

In bringing their social visions to life anarchists have marked the urban landscapes of North America with a variety of living examples of what I term "futures-present." Directing their energies to the enormous tasks of transforming everyday life through alternative social arrangements and organizations they refuse to wait either for elite-initiated reforms or for future "post-revolutionary" utopias. In order to bring their ideas to life anarchists develop working examples of future worlds or "futures in the present." It is through the living examples of these "futures-present" that they attempt to "form the structure of the new world in the shell of the old."<sup>4</sup> These actually existing utopias provide everyday instances of what Foucault termed "heterotopias." Their politico-theoretical expression in the writings of Hakim Bey serve as a starting point for a reconsideration of anarchist politics.

### A BRIEF NOTE ON HETEROTOPIAS

In a 1967 lecture, "Of Other Spaces," Michel Foucault introduced one of the minor theoretical devices of his vast and diverse corpus of work, the concept heterotopia. Foucault meant by heterotopias "something like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which



the real sites that can be found within the culture are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted” (24). These are the places which, although they may be located in reality, are really outside of all places. As Edward Soja notes, in his commentary on heterotopias, these “other spaces” were contrasted by Foucault to “their apparent reflections in utopias, sites with no real place, nowhere lands, fundamentally unrealized spaces which present society in either a perfected form or else turned upside down” (14). Unlike the fictional place of utopia, in which one sees oneself where he or she is absent, the heterotopia is a place of reconstitution, a return to where one is (Soja 14). Not simply literary, heterotopias are “actual extra-discursive locations” (Genocchio 37). As opposed to utopias, “heterotopias were sketched out as ‘real’ existing places of difference that are variably constituted and formed, over and against a homogeneous and shared spatiality, in the very founding of all societies as part of the ‘presuppositions of social life’” (Genocchio 38). Among the heterotopias in his discussion Foucault identified those sacred or forbidden spaces which are sites of personal transition.

## **THEORIZING THE AUTONOMOUS ZONE: THE WRITINGS OF HAKIM BEY**

The most extensive and exhilarating theoretical expressions of explicitly anarchist future-presents are found in Hakim Bey’s short essays “The Temporary Autonomous Zone” (TAZ) and “Immediatism.” Bey takes his inspiration for the TAZ from the many heterotopias and intentional communities of history, from the “pirate utopias” of the 18th century to Fourier’s “Phalansteries.” Among more recent large-scale examples include the insurrection of Paris in 1968<sup>10</sup> and the urban autonomist uprisings in Italy during the 1970s.<sup>11</sup> Bey offers a re-reading of the history of classical anarchism viewed through the prism of the TAZ concept. Many of these experiments were short-lived and therefore “failures” in the eyes of “scientific” socialism

and evolutionist social science. As such, they remain largely undiscussed and unconsidered.

Bey also finds inspiration for the TAZ concept in Stephen Pearl Andrews' literary depiction of anarchist society as a dinner party in which structures of authority are replaced by conviviality and celebration. In the ideal type of the dinner party, participants come together directly, face-to-face, for the mutual satisfaction of diverse desires (for company, conversation, food, drink, aesthetic or erotic enjoyment) — what Kropotkin called “mutual aid.”

Pearl Andrews was right: the dinner party is already “the seed of the new society taking shape within the shell of the old” (IWW Preamble). The sixties style “tribal gathering,” the forest conclave of eco-saboteurs, the idyllic Beltane of the neo-pagans, anarchist conferences, gay faery circles...Harlem rent parties of the twenties, nightclubs, banquets, old-time libertarian picnics — we should realize that these are already “liberated zones” of a sort, or at least potential TAZs. Whether open only to a few friends, like a dinner party, or to thousands of celebrants, like a Be-In, the party is always “open” because it is not “ordered”; it may be planned, but unless it “happens” it's a failure. The element of spontaneity is crucial (Bey 106).

In forming speculative impressions of future-TAZ Bey also draws upon exponents of Cyberpunk fiction such as Bruce Stirling (author of *Islands in the Net*). In Stirling's future-vision, the decay of political systems encourages a “decentralized proliferation of experiments in living” (Bey 98).

This does not mean that future-presents are nostalgic replays of previous failed utopian projects or theatrical presentations of speculative dramas (though they have their comedic and tragic moments). As Bey writes: “I believe that by extrapolating from past and future stories about ‘islands in the net’ we may collect evidence to suggest that a certain kind of ‘free enclave’ is not only possible in our time but is existent” (98-99).

Indeed, Bey goes on to describe the TAZ in words which are strikingly evocative of Foucault's definition of heterotopia.

The TAZ is “utopian” in the sense that it envisions an intensification of everyday life, or as the Surrealists might have said, life’s penetration by the Marvelous. But it cannot be utopian in the actual meaning of the word, nowhere, or NoPlace Place. The TAZ is somewhere. It lies at the intersection of many forces, like some pagan power-spot at the junction of mysterious ley-lines, visible to the adept in seemingly unrelated bits of terrain, landscape, flows of air, water, animals. But now the lines are not all etched in time and space (111).

While recognizing the utopian within the TAZ, Bey has no interest in spinning out yet another utopian yarn.

[W]e have no time for theory which merely limits itself to the contemplation of utopia as “no-place place” while bewailing the “impossibility of desire.” The penetration of everyday life by the marvelous – the creation of “situations” – belongs to the “material bodily principle”, and to the imagination, and to the living fabric of the present (4).

For Bey, liberation is immanent, it is already existing in the here-and-now of the everyday. Bey’s concern is not to define the TAZ or to present plans for how it should be created. “Our contention is rather that it has been created, will be created, and is being created” (116).

This is a way of saying that the TAZ wants to live in this world, not in the idea of another world, some visionary world born of false unification (all green OR all metal) which can only be more pie in the sky by-&-by (or as Alice put it, “Jam yesterday or jam tomorrow, but never jam today” ) (Bey 111).

As Bey suggests, whatever is to be done must be done, as much as possible, outside of the “psychic-economic” structure which constitutes the space of the permissible (43). Above all hyper-capitalism and its cybernetized mode of expression represents hyper-mediation. For anarchists, however, the arrival of the future must be beyond mediation, by parties, ideologies, media, etc. Mediation signals alienation, a gulf or separation between production and consumption, dream and life.

In the face of capitalist alienation and mediation of creativity, one of the options left is “to begin right now immediately live as if the battle were already won, as if today the artist were no longer a special kind of person, but each person a special sort of artist” (Bey 43). So, anarchists make insurrections now rather than wait for their desires to be revealed to them at some later date. This immediacy contributes to a widening of the circle of pleasure.

If Immediatism begins with groups of friends trying not just to overcome isolation but also to enhance each other’s lives, soon it will want to take a more complex shape: — nuclei of mutually self-chosen allies, working (playing) to occupy more & more time and space outside all mediated structure and control. Then it will want to become a horizontal network of such autonomous groups — then, a “tendency” — then, a “movement” — then, a kinetic web of “temporary autonomous zones.” At last it will strive to become the kernel of a new society, giving birth to itself within the corrupt shell of the old (Bey 17).

Adopting the popular metaphor of information technology, Bey refers to the emergent cultural network of anarchy as “The Web.” The Web provides logistical support for the TAZ, but, even more fundamentally, it also helps bring the TAZ into being. In Bey’s view the TAZ “exists in information-space as well as in the ‘real world’” (109). The Web, in part, makes up for the lack of duration and locale experienced by the TAZ.

At this moment in the evolution of the Web, and considering our demands for the “face-to-face” and the sensual, we must consider the Web primarily as a support system, capable of carrying information from one TAZ to another, of defending the TAZ, rendering it “invisible” or giving it teeth, as the situation might demand. But more than that: if the TAZ is a nomad camp, then the Web helps provide the epics, songs, genealogies and legends of the tribe; it provides the secret caravan routes and raiding trails which make up the flowlines of tribal economy; it even contains some of the very roads they will follow, some of the very dreams they will experience as signs and portents (Bey 110).

Despite his use of the conventional terminology of “the Web,” Bey is at pains to make clear that what he is speaking of in terms of the TAZ does not refer to computer technology.<sup>12</sup> The information webwork of the TAZ consists of the network of zines and marginal publications, pirate radio “stations,” listservers, mail art and “phone trees.” These networks make up the anarchist underground of the future-present. Its significance resides not in the specifics of technology, but in “the openness and horizontality of the structure” (Bey 11).

Bey’s writings confront the reader with a future-present theorizing in which tribal myth, anarchist polemics and science fiction converge. His is a theory simultaneously of the past, present and future but in which time disappears. It presents to us a time travelling, spectral wanderer of theory.

The TAZ by its very nature seizes every available means to realize itself – it will come to life whether in a cave or an L-5 Space City – but above all it will live, now, or as soon as possible, in however suspect or ramshackle a form, spontaneously, without regard for ideology or even anti-ideology (Bey 112).

Contemporary anarchist practices along with the writings of Hakim Bey have been cause for much angry debate within anarchist circles.<sup>13</sup> The notion of the TAZ has been the subject of great controversy, a point which is explored in a following chapter.<sup>14</sup>

## **THE NEW WORLD IN THE SHELL OF THE OLD**

Historically, anarchists have sought to create a society without government or State, free from coercive, hierarchical and authoritarian relations, in which people associate voluntarily. Bakunin, for example, viewed trade unions not merely as economic institutions but as the “embryo of the administration of the future” and argued that workers should pursue co-operatives

rather than strikes (Marshall 627). Recognizing the impossibility of competing with capitalist enterprises he called for the pooling of all private property as the collective property of freely federated workers' associations. These ideas would serve as the intellectual impetus for anarcho-syndicalism and its vision of the industrial syndicate as the seed of the future society.

Anarchists emphasize freedom from imposed authorities. They envision a society based upon autonomy, self-organization and voluntary federation which they oppose to "the State as a particular body intended to maintain a compulsory scheme of legal order" (Marshall, 1993: 12). Contemporary anarchists focus much of their efforts on transforming everyday life through the development of alternative social arrangements and organizations. Thus, they are not content to wait either for elite-initiated reforms or for future "post-revolutionary" utopias. If social and individual freedoms are to be expanded the time to start is today.

In order to bring their ideas to life, anarchists create working examples. To borrow the old Wobbly phrase, they are "forming the structure of the new world in the shell of the old."<sup>8</sup> These experiments in living, popularly referred to as "DIY" (Do-It-Yourself), are the means by which contemporary anarchists withdraw their consent and begin "contracting other relationships. DIY releases counterforces, based upon notions of autonomy and self-organization as motivating principles, against the normative political and cultural discourses of neoliberalism. Anarchists create autonomous spaces which are not about access but about refusal of the terms of entry (e.g. nationalism, etc).

The "Do-it-Yourself" ethos has a long and rich association with anarchism. One sees it as far back as Proudhon's notions of People's Banks and local currencies (See, Proudhon, 1969) which have returned in the form of LETS (Local Exchange and Trade Systems). In North America, 19th Century anarchist communes, such as those of Benjamin Tucker, find echoes in the A-zones and squat communities of the present day.

In the recent past, Situationists, Kabouters,<sup>9</sup> and the British punk

movements have encouraged DIY activities as means to overcome alienating consumption practices and the authority and control of work. Punks turned to DIY to record and distribute music outside of the record industry.

At the forefront of contemporary DIY are the “Autonomous Zones” or more simply “A-Zones.” “Autonomous Zones” are community centres based upon anarchist principles, often providing meals, clothing and shelter for those in need. These sites, sometimes but not always squats, provide gathering places for exploring and learning about anti-authoritarian histories and traditions. Self-education is an important aspect of anarchist politics. A-Zones are important as sites of re-skilling. DIY and participatory democracy are important precisely because they encourage the processes of learning and independence necessary for self-determined communities.

A-Zones are often sites for quite diverse and complex forms of activity. The “Trumbellplex” in Detroit is an interesting example. Housed, ironically, in the abandoned home of an early-Century industrialist, the Trumbell Theatre serves as a co-operative living space, temporary shelter, food kitchen and lending library. The carriage house has been converted into a theatre site for touring anarchist and punk bands and performance troops like the “Bindlestiff Circus.”<sup>10</sup>

Because of their concern with transcending cultural barriers, residents of A-Zones try to build linkages with residents of the neighbourhoods in which they were staying. The intention is to create autonomous free zones which may be extended as resources and conditions permit.

Communication across these diasporic communities is made possible, in part, by recent technological innovations (e.g. Xerox, videocameras, internet and micro-transmitters). While remaining highly suspicious of the impacts of technology, its class-exclusivity and its possible uses as means of social control anarchists have become proficient in wielding these technological products as tools for active resistance.

Emphasis on direct action and “Do-It-Yourself” has given rise to activists using camcorders in social struggle to document important events or to observe police to prove what happened

on a demo or picket. Video activism serves as an important alternative to reliance upon corporate media for coverage of events or dissemination of information. Harrassment of anarchists and racist practices by police in home communities have led to the formation of Copwatch which utilizes video cameras to watch police and to discourage the use of force by police. The aggression displayed towards anarchists beyond the view of mainstream media shows the significance of this form of documentation. That many police actions and arrests are directed against the media activists shows that the authorities also recognize the significance of the video witness.

Anarchy has also developed a busy presence on the internet. The main venue for direct exchange among anarchists is A-Infos, a daily multi-language international anarchist news service produced by tireless activist groups in five countries. Also much used is Spunk Press, run by an international collective since 1992. Their catalogue contains over 1000 items, including speeches, essays or lectures by prominent anarchists, works on issues such as ecology, alternative education, anarchist poetry, and anarchist art, addresses for groups and reviews of anarchist books. Work is done by volunteers, in their spare time, often with borrowed equipment.

The major means for distributing information remains the lively anarchist press. Long-standing publications include Freedom, Fifth Estate, Anarchy, and Kick it Over. At the local level DIY zines such as The Match, Anarchives, Demolition Derby, and Agent 2771 have kept anarchist thought alive while expanding the range of anarchist politics to include new participants.

Additionally there has been a recent explosion in micro-broadcasting. Numerous illegal radio stations have sprung up in North America, such as Free Radio Berkeley.

These various practices are all part of complex networks which are transnational, transboundary and transmovement.<sup>11</sup> They encourage us to think about writing against the movement as movement. Movement processes involve complex networks outside of and alongside of the State (transnational and transboundary).

These are the building blocks of what Howard Ehrlich refers to as the anarchist



transfer culture, an approximation of the new society within the context of the old. Within it anarchists try to meet the basic demands of building sustainable communities.

A transfer culture is that agglomeration of ideas and practices that guide people in making the trip from the society here to the society there in the future....As part of the accepted wisdom of that transfer culture we understand that we may never achieve anything that goes beyond the culture itself. It may be, in fact, that it is the very nature of anarchy that we shall always be building the new society within whatever society we find ourselves (Ehrlich 329).

In their efforts to build anarchist transfer cultures activists often come to occupy positions of marginality. This situation arises, in part, from anarchists' determination to sustain themselves outside of the capitalist labour market. Support comes through such activities as performances, food or craft sales and free-lance journalism. In addition, there are those who support themselves clandestinely through squats or "dumpster-diving."<sup>9</sup>

Reducing our dependency on the capitalist workplace means removing ourselves from the consumer-oriented culture, reducing our economic needs, developing alternative institutions, and building an alternative economic network.

Communal living, the trading of labor and resources, skills exchanges, time and labor banks, land trusts, people's funds, and even an alternative money system are all part of the economic program for a transfer culture (Ehrlich 346).

Many anarchists voluntarily quit mechanisms of social integration, others are violently expelled. This further encourages the construction of autonomy which is believed to be necessary for the development of anarchy.

We are "marginal" in part because we are not a part of the mainstream institutions or cultural practices of the society, but also because we live in that borderland between the existing society and the new society. We live our lives and build our alternatives in that borderland (Ehrlich 349).

In this sense, anarchist autonomous zones are liminal sites, spaces of transformation and passage. As such they are important sites of re-skilling, in which anarchists prepare themselves for the new forms of relationship necessary to break authoritarian and hierarchical structures. Participants also learn the diverse tasks and varied interpersonal skills necessary for collective work and living. This skill sharing serves to discourage the emergence of knowledge elites and to allow for the sharing of all tasks, even the least desirable, necessary for social maintenance.

Anarchists encourage a cultivated “deepening” of knowledge as remedy to the anonymous, detached, knowledge broadening which they believe is endemic to conditions of postmodernity. This does not mean isolation or insularity, however. Rather, it speaks to social relations, whether local or federated, organized in a decentralized, grassroots manner. This new radicalism lives outside of the State and is organized towards self-reliance. Participants are encouraged to identify local problems, and to broaden and unite the individual “do-it-yourself” actions, such as saving a park or cleaning up an abandoned lot, in which they are already involved. Lacking the drama of street clashes with police such small-scale actions of anarchists are almost never reported.

Anarchists see their efforts as laying the groundwork to replace State and Capital with decentralized federations. Activists argue for the construction of “place” around the contours of ecological regions, in opposition to the boundaries of nation-states which show only contempt for ecological “boundaries” as marked by topography, climate, species distribution or drainage. Affinity with bioregionalist themes is recognized in appeals for a replacement of nation-states with bioregional communities. While media create confusion about the message of anarchism, the anarchists “are clear on their objectives of building sustainable democratic grassroots communities that respect the environment and minimizing domination in any form” (Phillips, 2000, p. 44). For anarchists such communities might constitute social relations in an articulation with local ecological requirements rather than the bureaucratic, hierarchical interferences of distant corporate bodies.

## WHICH ANARCHY?

Anarchism is not a singular movement or philosophy. A reading of major histories of anarchism reveals a rich diversity of perspectives and practices. Anarchism might best be described as a multi-tendency movement of movements.

It is not the intention of this project to document or detail the various tendencies and expressions of anarchism. Neither is the intention to argue for one version of anarchism over any others, although criticisms and debates are certainly addressed. For the most part, different tendencies within anarchism have co-existed in complex, if strained, relationships of mutual engagement. The acrimony and antagonism that marks much of the Marxist left has largely, though never entirely, been absent.

My intention in this project is to focus on an aspect of anarchy that is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in most theories of anarchism. This theme relates to what I call “everyday anarchy” or what some anarchists call practical anarchy. Rather than take an approach that views anarchism as a political or revolutionary movement that “enters into” specific social struggles, I address those anarchists who emphasize the immanent anarchy in everyday practices of mutual aid and solidarity. In a different context other commentators refer to these practices as “acts of citizenship.” In a later chapter I discuss this in relation to Giorgio Agamben’s notions of “citizenship without citizens” and the “coming community.” Within perspectives of “everyday anarchy” anarchism as a movement builds upon ways of living and relating that are already present in people’s everyday lives rather than reflecting aspects of a future post-revolutionary society. At the same time “everyday anarchy” engages these practices from a political or revolutionary perspective that seeks a broader anti-authoritarian transformation of social relations.

In theoretical terms this project engages with the works of several anarchists, including Colin Ward, Paul Goodman, Gustav Landauer, Hakim Bey and Sam Dolgoff, who, I suggest, are

significant developers of an everyday or practical anarchism. I also examine the works of non-anarchist social theorists, such as Giorgio Agamben, Michel Maffesoli and Hermann Schmalenbach whose works have affinities with the anarchist writings on anarchy and everyday life. I also discuss autonomist Marxist theories of “self-valorization” that discuss creative activity in the production of use values rather as opposed to production of surplus value for capitalist exchange.

Empirically I focus on several projects, including free schools, squats, communications projects and “autonomous zones,” in which anarchists have attempted to develop and extend non-authoritarian mutual aid relationships. These are all projects that I have had the opportunity to observe or participate in.

## CONCLUSION

The non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical and pluralistic communities envisioned by anarchists have much to offer critical thinking about power, authority and the State. As Ferrell (1997: 153) argues, anarchism serves “by standing outside the law” and through its “disavowal of legal authority and its destructive effects on social and cultural life” works “to remind us that human relations and human diversity matter – and that, in every case, they matter more than the turgid authority of regulation and law”. Anarchism ensures that we are never without reminders that things can be done differently than they are. It encourages us to question ingrained assumptions and to rethink habitual practices. Anarchism “offers a clear-sighted critique of existing society and a coherent range of strategies to realize its ideal both in the present and the future” (Marshall, 1993: 662).

Perhaps, as Colin Ward (1973: 11) argues, anarchy is always here, “like a seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste,

privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties.” In a manner reminiscent of Landauer, Ward sees anarchism not as “a speculative vision of a future society”, but as “a description of a mode of human organisation, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society” (1973: 11).



# TOWARDS AN ANARCHIST THEORY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Since the early 1990s anarchism as a self-aware political force has enjoyed a rather remarkable resurgence. Global economic transformations, along with the social dislocations and ecological crises accompanying them, have impelled a rediscovery of anarchism by people seeking alternatives to both capitalism and communism. The simultaneous collapse of state capitalism in the Soviet Union and the move of Western social democratic parties to the Right have left socialism discredited as an alternative to neoliberal capitalism. These remnants of Leninism and Social Democracy respectively, which had supposedly put anarchism to rest, have themselves suffered death blows recently. With the political Left in disarray, anarchism presents to many an overlooked alternative to both liberal democracy and Marxism.

In an earlier article (see Shantz, 1998), written almost three years before the dramatic anarchist interventions during the Seattle WTO meetings of 1999, I suggested that theories of social movements were ill-suited either for understanding or even appreciating the innovative practices and ideas then being undertaken by anarchists in North America. In that article and a series of follow-up articles (see Shantz, 1999a; 1999b), I also predicted the return of anarchist movements to a place of importance within anti-capitalist struggles and offered the view that sociological movement analysis would largely be taken by surprise by the development.

Unfortunately, in the years following Seattle change has been slow in coming for social movements analyses that might properly understand the political practices and visions of anarchism and their significance in the development of political movements within North America.

Former Yale anthropologist David Graeber (2002: 61) uses rather bracing terms to discuss the gap that exists between social movement activists and analysts in the social sciences:

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. Writers who for years have been publishing essays that sound like position papers for vast social movements that do not in fact exist seem seized with confusion or worse, dismissive contempt, now that real ones are everywhere emerging. It's particularly scandalous in the case of what's still, for no particularly good reason, referred to as the 'anti-globalization' movement, one that has in a mere two or three years managed to transform completely the sense of historical possibilities for millions across the planet. This may be the result of sheer ignorance, or of relying on what might be gleaned from such overtly hostile sources as the New York Times; then again, most of what's written even in progressive outlets seems largely to miss the point – or at least, rarely focuses on what participants in the movement really think is most important about it.

In even more provocative terms Graeber (2002: 61) goes on to suggest that part of this gap relates to a conscious refusal on the part of some social scientists to engage with the ideas and practices of anarchism.

Much of the hesitation, I suspect, lies in the reluctance of those who have long fancied themselves radicals of some sort to come to terms with the fact that they are really liberals: interested in expanding individual freedoms and pursuing social justice, but not in ways that would seriously challenge the existence of reigning institutions like capital or state. And even many of those who would like to see revolutionary change might not feel entirely happy about having to accept that most of the creative energy for radical politics is now coming from anarchism – a tradition that they have hitherto mostly dismissed – and that taking this movement seriously will necessarily also mean a respectful engagement with it.

In order to address this situation, with an eye toward developing alternative ap-



proaches to social movement analysis, it is important to look at the context in which new movements are emerging, especially the shifting social relations experienced in the transformation from Keynesian to neo-liberal capitalism. It is also necessary to examine the various ways in which activists have responded, and are responding, to these changing conditions and the innovations they are constructing in terms of movement organizations and repertoires of action, as well as their development of values and ideas.

In attempting to re-think social movements in the current context I focus on overlooked or under-appreciated tactics, practices and forms of organizing that have been central to recent movement development and which pose important challenges to conventional thinking about politics. The key principles of contemporary movements that I identify and examine in the following sections of this work are affinity-based organizing, self-valorization, as discussed in autonomist Marxism, and do-it-yourself (DIY) politics, as developed in anarchist and punk movements. Taken together these aspects of movement practice express a striving for autonomy and self-determination rather than a politics of dissent or demand.

## **POLITICS BEYOND THE STATE**

Philip McMichael (1996) suggests that market flows are becoming the dominant reality of a “New World Order”. Financial capital has become the organizing principle of the world economy while nation-states are subordinated to maintaining global circuits of capital. O Tuathail and Luke (1994) speak of dynamics of de-territorialization and re-territorialization marking the post-Cold War order, in which previously stable territorial formations (nation-state, ideological blocs, and markets) are devolving into chaos while unstable territorial flows (communications, and cultural codes) are evolving into “coherent cohesions”. McMichael (1996) concludes that the newly forming

governance of flows generates unconventional countermovements to reassert popular governance which may refuse the terms of previous protests and may create some uncertainties for capital circuits. Thus, we have anarchists running wild in the streets. As O Tuathail and Luke so succinctly put it at the end of the last century: “It is the 1990’s and everything is changing” (1994: 381).

Well, perhaps not everything. Conventional analyses of social movements continue to overlook the emergence of unconventional manifestations of resistance. Such vibrant manifestations are invisible in the social movements’ literature. Analyses have been constrained by a rather myopic preoccupation either with organizational structures and resources which allow for access to the state or with “civil actions” (including civil disobedience) by which activists might register dissent or popularize claims. Where emergent movements have been addressed these same categories have been replicated, this time at a global scale. Thus we get a profusion of literature about “transnational social movement organizations”<sup>1</sup> or “global civil society”<sup>2</sup> focused upon attempts to access transnational decision-making bodies. In each case analyses are confined to specific movements conceptualized in relation to “single issues” or limited to readily identifiable appeals for civil redress via state means. Such approaches are ill-suited to address more obscure attempts to rearticulate identity and community emerging out of the “New World (Dis)Order”. Left out of conventional theorizing are movements which want no part of world order, new or otherwise, which they view as authoritarian, hierarchical, and inevitably genocidal (or “eco-cidal”). What do they want? How do they mobilize?

Part of the problem for theorists may be related to the widespread, if unrecognized, attachment to the metaphors of civil society, citizenship and civil disobedience usually employed to understand social movements. Conventional theories of identity, community or politics attempt to contain political actors within specific institutions or practices. Chief among these is the identity “citizen” founded upon relations of the subject to a sovereign nation-state (See Krishna, 1994). As Richard Falk (2000) points out the modern idea of citizenship was linked with the emergence of

individuals in relation to sovereign territorial states. Such conceptions of (unitary and fixed) identity reject multiple or layered notions of identity (or sovereignty). As Simon Dalby (1997) notes, the language of territoriality, with its conjoining of identity and spatial enclosure, has furnished powerful ontological categorizations for politics. Significantly, “the territorial state remains the dominant frame for containing the citizen, both physically and symbolically” (Shapiro, 2000: 80).

John Ruggie (1993) identifies a tendency in mainstream political theorizing to conceptualize challenges to the system of states only in terms which suggest reproductions of the state. Within social movement theories these categorizations have given rise to notions of the territory of movement activities. Part of this ground has been the privileging of “legitimate” or “permitted” means, “civil politics,” via state-centered politics. For Warren Magnusson, politics as “creative popular activity” is obscured by the “reification of political community as the state and political theory as the theory of the state” (1990: 55). Such thinking cannot grasp the significance of recent transformations. “Uncivil” movements, which do not take as their motivation the achievement of state reforms or access to state power, are overlooked, denigrated or dismissed.

Further, in the context of progressive forms of resistance to the abusive sides of economic globalization, the strong tendency has been for individuals to bond across boundaries, which weakens in other respects traditional territorially based citizenship and its core reality of a symbiotic relationship to the state (Falk, 2000: 7)

Recent post-structuralist theorizing has attempted to move beyond “essentialist” notions of politics (identity or class) and privileged spaces for political action (the State). This is reflected in recent talk of “global citizens,” “nomadic citizenship,” “netizens” and similar notions. Peter Taylor (1995) suggests that we need to get beyond the “state as container” metaphor because it neglects the multiplicity of states, nations and territories, and their interrelationships. Similarly, Michael Shapiro encourages a new “understanding of politics that resists the identity-fixing effect of a state-oriented model of political space” (2000: 79). This implies, of course, re-thinking the various

“identity as container” metaphors which offer stable, fixed, disconnected, “essential” identities.

## KEYNESIANISM AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Theories of social movements must become attuned to the specifics of the current context and prepared to recognize the new movements and antagonisms that are only now emerging in North America. These movements necessitate a rethinking of the social movements theorizing typical of Keynesian sociology. To begin that rethinking it is useful to examine the contextual shift signaled at the level of state-society relations by transformations from a Keynesian social citizenship state to a neoliberal crisis state.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the threat of militant working-class movements pushed advanced capitalist societies to shift from a Rights State, in which government activity was limited largely to securing the conditions for the free market, to the social citizenship state, or what some autonomist Marxists call a Planner State. Movements in response to the “insecurity of access to the means of survival for citizens” (Del Re, 1996: 102) pushed the state to assume expanded responsibilities for the population. The social citizenship, or Planner State “administratively distributes legality so as to reintegrate the underprivileged classes within the fiction of a guaranteed community in exchange for renouncing the virtual subversiveness of difference” (Illuminati, 1996: 176). Under the Planner State the reproduction of labour power was managed by the state through the institutional networks of schools, hospitals, welfare programs and unemployment provisions (Dyer-Witford, 1999). This is the general framework of what has come to be understood as the welfare state.

These structures of welfare under Fordist relations were based on the logic of “the reproduction of the norm of the wage relationship” (Vercellone, 1996: 84). Welfare state provisions and the

distribution of social services, such as social assistance, social security, and public health represent a form of income (Del Re, 1996: 101). Part of this is a crucial shift from the sphere of production to the sphere of reproduction “where what is guaranteed and controlled (without direct links to production but nonetheless aimed at it) is the reproduction of individuals” (Del Re, 1996: 101).

Most social movement analyses in North American sociology are largely confined to the forms of the Keynesian state and those movements which emerged during the epoch of Keynesianism (or the first years of its demise). This leads to a restricted focus, as in much social movement analysis, upon statist or reformist or integrative movements and strategies. “Protesting by using the language of rights obviously means asking the State’s permission for protection. ‘Rights’ are invoked, contested, distributed, and protected, but also limited and appointed by the law” (Del Re, 1996: 107). Mainstream social movement theories give attention to structures, organizations and practices that are relatively effective for making such rights based demands upon states or for gaining recognition or legitimacy for marginalized or “excluded” identities. All of this reflects the priorities of state-centric or integrationist politics or what has been called a politics of demand. None of which is to dismiss or reject the significance of such movements. Rather it is a question of emphasis and the recognition of a need to understand the important emerging movements that are mobilized according to different political priorities and for which mainstream sociological theories are less appropriate. Recognizing these limits, emerging political movements have turned away from the politics of demand with its symbolic demonstration or marches, and towards a politics of autonomy.<sup>3</sup>

## THE EMERGENCE OF CRISIS STATES

The vast social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, including the struggles of the new social movements, began to corrode the basis of the Planner State. “Movements of workers, the unem-

ployed, welfare recipients, students and minority groups began to make demands on the vast system of social administration that transgressed the limits set by capitalist logic” (Dyer-Witford, 1999: 101).

These various and often overlapping cycles of struggle elicited multiple responses from the constituted authorities of state and capital. As Dyer-Witford suggests: “In the realm of government, the Planner State is replaced by the ‘Crisis State’ – a regime of control by trauma” (1999: 76). Under the Crisis State, the state governs fundamentally by planning or, more commonly, simply allowing crises within the subordinate classes. Dyer-Witford (1999: 76) suggests that the post Fordist phase, in which the Fordist organization of the social factory is dismantled “must be understood as a technological and political offensive aimed at decomposing social subordination.”

The Crisis State emerges as part of shifting forms of accumulation, notably the projects of capitalist globalization “in which certain sectors throughout the world, capital is moving away from dependence on large-scale industries toward new forms of production that involve more immaterial and cybernetic forms of labor, flexible and precarious networks of employment, and commodities increasingly defined in terms of culture and media” (Hardt, 1996: 4). This might be called “the postmodernization of production.” These new forms of production marked a radical break from the Fordist arrangement of mass concentrations of labor power and have impacted the conditions under which opposition movements might be expected to emerge and the types of strategies and practices they might be encouraged to undertake.

Recent transformations to bring the state more in line with the needs of global capital have led to the emergence of what might be called a “crisis state”<sup>7</sup> which claims to be feeble in the face of global forces while flexing its muscles against the poor and disadvantaged. Ruling elites have been hard at work removing reforms won from capital, through great struggles, over the past century. Social programs continue to be dismantled with cuts to health care and public education, the introduction of anti-labour legislation, restrictions

upon social assistance (and workers' compensation and unemployment insurance), and "loosened" environmental regulations among the more familiar minarchist initiatives. Rather than offering a "safety net" or some manner of "social security," these policies create various crises within the working classes of Western industrial nations, crises which undermine attempts to expand demands for services or to resist transformations which favour capital.

Notably these policies have been embraced by mainstream political parties of both the Left and the Right. In the U.S., for example, the Democratic Party has routinely adopted positions quite similar to the Republicans on matters such as welfare, affirmative action and NAFTA. One sees similar shifts in Britain and Australia under so-called Labour governments. In response to this convergence, anarchists refer to the "Republicrats," signifying their belief that there is no difference between these parties of the ruling classes. Anarchists mobilize against Republicrat policies which advocate building more prisons and developing tougher sentencing practices including mandatory terms. For anarchists such policies appeal only to "racist crime hysteria" (Subways, 1996: 11) and sentiments which demonize the poor.

These "crisis state" transformations have given shape to an austerity politics with the conversion of the Welfare State into a penal state, the primary function of which is understood to serve as a law and order mechanism. Worthy social services now include boot camps, "workfare", changes to Young Offenders legislation, and violent repression of peaceful demonstrations and contravention of previously recognized rights to freedom of speech and assembly. Dismantling of the Welfare State, without simultaneously developing adequate alternatives, has meant an increase in poverty and more extreme disparities between rich and poor (Heider, 1994). These conditions have been ideologically justified through a vigorous redeployment of laissez-faire discourses. The broken record of neoliberal policies, in harmony with manipulated debt "crises" and a chorus of pleas for competitiveness, have provided the soundtrack for the current box office smash, "Return to 19th-Century Capitalism."

## THEORETICAL AFFINITIES: POST-STRUCTURALISM AND ANARCHY

In order to develop perspectives on social movements that are attuned to the recently developing movement practices and the social contexts in which they mobilize a growing number of contemporary anarchists, most notably Hakim Bey, Todd May, Richard Day and Andrew Koch, have sought to gain insights from recent theories that have been identified as, for lack of a better word, “postmodern.” Most important in this development have been the disparate works of Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The most extensive attempt to begin a re-thinking of social movements through an engagement with these authors has come from Richard Day and his attempt to articulate rather abstract postmodern writings on state forms with the practical political writings of anarchists.

Foucault offers an analytics of power and an ethic of care for the self which allow him to differentiate between various modalities of power relations. In this perspective one can give oneself rules which allow for power to be exercised with a minimum of domination (which minimizes relations of domination). Power is always present but how is it practiced, what kinds of power?

Foucault makes a distinction between “liberties” and “states of domination,” a distinction that is actually quite similar to distinctions made by anarchists Gustav Landauer and Rudolph Rocker. Liberties represent “live” relations of power in which most of the players, most of the time, have some ability to alter the situations in which they find themselves. Within states of domination, the flow (or process) of power has “congealed” or been blocked, preventing movement for some of the players most of the time. This represents a “dead” power brought about by specific “techniques of government.”

At this point a third type of power relation emerges: struggle or resistance. Local and regional practices of resistance are one way in which groups can work against relations of domination. Another way is by exerting “control over oneself”



so one does not “give in to an urge to exercise tyrannical control over others”

Day is unsatisfied by these negative responses. Instead he asks about positive possibilities for social action and transformation. To do so he turns to Deleuze and Guattari for boldly constructive social criticism and the creation of alternatives, including new concepts of society and new concepts of social relations. Deleuze and Guattari utilize a network of contingent dualisms to enable their critique of particular power relations and Day finds this particularly useful for thinking about contemporary politics.

At the level of structure, Deleuze and Guattari identify arborescent and rhizomatic forms of organization. Arborescent forms consisting of “hierarchical systems with centres of significance and subjectification,” operating through unidirectional “chains of command,” are characteristic of contemporary Western societies. Conversely rhizomatic forms consist of “acentred systems, finite networks...in which communication runs from any neighbour to any other” (Day, 2001). Local operations are coordinated without a central agency. No one is in control, decisions are emergent, as are the identities and connections by which they are made.

Also important is the distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari between state forms and war-machines. State forms represent apparatuses of capture “that bring ‘outside’ elements ‘inside’ by connecting them up with an arborescent system” (Day, 2001: 33). War machines are exterior to state apparatuses and work to undo the bonds of state capture. Notably, however, states operate in competition and co-operation with war-machines. States perpetuate arborescent forms while war-machines tend to destroy old forms and initiate new ones through rhizomatic connections.

States can, and indeed they must, incorporate war-machines, tame them and put them to use in “an institutionalized army.” They must be made part of the “general police “ function which includes practices of the social citizenship state which have been a part of drawing subordinate classes under the state’s police function as reflected in welfare policies and policies around homelessness among others.

In order to ward off development of the state form social movements need to set up lateral affiliations and a system of networks and popular bases. This system would provide bases for social forces that neither ask for gifts from the state (as in the liberal-democratic new social movements) nor seek state power themselves (as in classical Marxism). In Day's (2001) words they resist the will to domination in favour of affinity.

Among anarchists Hakim Bey is at the forefront of efforts recently to develop the political implications of the writings of Deleuze and Guattari to bring the insights of these analyses to bear on socio-political practice. Along with critics such as Ronaldo Perez and the Critical Art Ensemble, Bey has attempted a conjoining of Deleuzian analysis with anarchism. One exciting outcome of his adventurous forays into theory is to re-read Proudhonian federalism as Deleuzian rhizome. Here the "non-hegemonic particularities" of federalism express a "nomadological mutuality of synergistic solidarities", the revolutionary structure of opposition to the "one world" of capitalism (1996: 43). For Bey, and other anarchists who have drawn from postmodern theories, this is the structure of revolution and resistance in the contemporary context.

While Bey offers an original and innovative, if somewhat esoteric, articulation of anarchy and recent poststructuralist theory, I suggest that his work continues and extends a thread of everyday anarchism that is a recurrent, if overlooked, presence in earlier waves of anarchist thinking ranging from Kropotkin in the nineteenth century through Gustav Landauer in the early twentieth century to the current writings of Colin Ward. In a following chapter I develop these connections in sketching an outline of everyday anarchy.

## **TOWARDS THE NEW MOVEMENTS**

The insights of Deleuze and Guattari, and their interpretation by contemporary anarchists, are offered at a quite abstract level. Rather than commenting on specific states in specific contexts

they are addressed at state forms generally. It is necessary to engage with the specific practices of actual movements and their development through experiences of organizing and struggle.

Among the most notable forms of resistance recently have been the variety of “new poor people’s movements that have emerged since from the late 1980s to today in response, partly, to the intensifying destruction of social safety nets (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 103). Significantly, these movements have refused confinement within the parameters of actions or activism considered appropriate for “responsible citizens.” Beyond the practices of civil disobedience characteristic of many new social movements, these new poor people’s movements have developed and practiced a diverse repertoire of “uncivil practices.” These movements are engaged in projects to develop democratic and autonomous communities/social relations beyond political representation and hierarchy. The political significance of their politics is found less in the immediate aims of particular actions or in the immediate costs to capital and the state but “more in our creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance” (Aufheben, 1998: 107).

Contemporary movements for autonomy, of which anarchists are a major part, take a critical stance with regard to the statism of both the revolutionary left and the more reformist social movements. For anarchists both so-called revolutionary and so-called reformist positions converge around a representational politics that substitutes a generally hierarchical and authoritarian form of organization for a politics of self-determination and autonomy. As the editors of the libertarian communist newspaper *Aufheben* suggests: “What both leftist and eco-reformist positions have in common is that they both look outside ourselves and our struggles for the real agent of change, the real historical subject: leftists look to ‘the party’ while eco-reformists look to parliament (1998: 106).

Key aspects of movements such as anarchism include an emphasis on autonomy and the construction of alternative social structures (Hardt, 1996). Through the daily experiences of “thoroughgoing struggle” these movements constitute “a positive pointer

to the kind of social relations that could exist: no money, the end of exchange values, communal living, no wage labour, no ownership of space (Aufheben, 1998: 110). Autonomist Marxists refer to these radical and participatory forms of democracy which thrive “outside the power of the State and its mechanisms of representation” as a constituent power, “a free association of constitutive social forces” (Hardt, 1996: 5-6).

## LINES OF AFFINITY

For many contemporary anarchists, including prominent commentators such as Day and David Graeber, those who conceive of theory as a struggle against power work according to a logic of affinity rather than a logic of hegemony. This logic of affinity, which includes intersubjective reasoning as one of its modes, also involves typically discounted affects such as passion, strategy, rhetoric and style (Day, 2001: 23)

This mode of shared decision-making in a terrain of undecidability, this kind of community, cannot take the form of a *Sittlichkeit*, or even a multicultural *civitas*. It cannot, in fact, be a community at all as these are currently conceived. Rather, individuals and groups linked by affinities that are temporary and always shifting are best seen as examples of what Giorgio Agamben has called “coming” communities (23).

In my view glimpses of these coming communities, are already here, prefigured in the *bunde* or affinity groups and heterotopias of contemporary anarchism.

As Epstein (2001: 10) and others suggest:

This anarchist form of organization makes it possible for groups that disagree in some respects to collaborate in regard to common aims. At the demonstrations in Quebec City in May 2001, affinity groups formed sectors defined by their willingness to engage in or tolerate violence, ranging from those committed to nonviolence to those intend-

ing to use “unconventional tactics.” This structure made it possible to incorporate groups which otherwise would not have been able to participate in the same demonstration.

This non-centralized and adaptive form of organization allows for an inclusive movement that is open to a diversity of tactics perspectives and goals. This is an important aspect of organizing in a post-Fordist context as participants eschew the more stable forms of organization such as unions or community groups in favour of a flexible and variable coming together of generally small affinity groups.

Hetherington (1992: 92) suggests that the emergence of such groups relates to two specific processes: “the deregulation through modernization and individualization of the modern forms of solidarity and identity” and the “recomposition into ‘tribal’ identities and forms of sociation”. Transformations in capitalist economies encourage reflexive forms of individualism which are not easily referred to such characteristics as class.

These non-ascriptive ‘neo-Tribes’ as Maffesoli calls them, are inherently unstable and not fixed by any of the established parameters of modern society; instead they are maintained through shared beliefs, styles of life, an expressive body-centredness, new moral beliefs and senses of injustice, and significantly through consumption practices (Hetherington, 1992: 93).

It is suggested by Hetherington that the concept Bund, expressing an intense form of solidarity which is highly unstable and which requires ongoing maintenance through symbolic interaction, better expresses the character of these forms of sociation than does community. Active involvement in anarchist projects provides participants with important experiences and lessons in solidarity, mutual aid and collective action, all cornerstones of anarchist politics.

According to Epstein (2001: 2) the anarchist practice “combines both ideology and imagination, expressing its fundamentally moral perspective through actions that are intended to make power visible (in your face) while undermining it.” For anarchists, the convergence between ideology and organization is crucial.

It is not opposed to organization. It is about creating new forms of organization. It is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization are its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy. Ultimately it aspires to reinvent daily life as whole (Graeber, 2002: 70).

Anarchist tactics, such as black blocs, exhibit another characteristic of *bunde*, as described by Epstein (2001: 2) who suggests that “today’s anarchist activists draw upon a current of morally charged and expressive politics.” This moral approach to politics is expressed through a focus on tactics of direct action. As Graeber (2002: 62) suggests, direct action tactics like the black bloc are symbolic of the “rejection of a politics which appeals to governments to modify their behaviour, in favour of physical intervention against state [and capitalist] power.”

## **BEYOND AFFINITY**

Recent celebrations of the supposed newness of anarchist affinity groups, as offered especially by Richard Day and David Graeber, neglect important debates and developments within actual anarchist projects. They also fail to contextualize affinity as itself a contested and varied aspect of broader practices and relations that are engaged in what might be called anti-systemic struggles. Thus neither Graeber nor Day offer much engagement with critics who offer cautions about the limits of uncritical celebrations of affinity-based lifestyles within contemporary anarchism. Similarly they have little to say about the renewal of explicitly class struggle oriented forms of anarchism that have emerged recently as contemporary anarchists come up against limits in the politics of affinity. Thus, where class struggle anarchism, or anarchist communism, is addressed at all, Graeber, explicitly and Day, implicitly, relegate these manifestations of anarchist organizing to the status of anachronistic holdover from a so-called “old anarchism” (see Graeber, 2002).

Affinity, which because of its playful and affective expression within anarchist movements has gained the most attention from recent anarchist theorists, especially those informed by sociological and anthropological perspectives, is perhaps not even the most significant aspect of contemporary anarchist politics. While affinity is crucial in developing networks and cycles of struggle, clearly in terms of contesting state and capital, affinity is not enough.

Much of new social movement theory, including the new anarchist social science of Day and Graeber, is based on a premise that capitalist societies have entered a “post-modern” age in which conflict over class has given way to cultural issues. Certainly the class locations of participants within recent social movements (especially students and radical youth) and the issues raised by those movements (environmentalism, gay and lesbian rights, feminism) have posed a compelling challenge to class analyses.

Clearly new categories of subordination have emerged as points for mobilization. Recognition of these categories and the practices which sustain them is important in overcoming the economism of much of Marxist theory. Explanations which view new movement issues as secondary to class or as diversions from class struggles are obviously inadequate. Class must be contextualized as it is lived and the lived experience of class includes problems of race, gender, sexuality and environment.

However, the actions of new social movements also have real effects upon the exercise of property rights and state power (Adam, 1992: 39). “To confine them to a form of cultural expression is to ignore their effects on the amplification of civil liberties, on curbing the violence of state and capitalist institutions, and on more equitable distribution by employers and bureaucrats” (Adam, 1992: 39). As several authors (Adam, 1992: Darnovsky, 1995: Starn, 1997: Tarrow, 1994) stress, social movements are resistant to uncausal explanations. As Starn (1997: 235) suggests, the decision to mobilize “underscores the need to insist on social analysis that avoids the extremes of an ungrounded culturalism or a deterministic economism to examine the

inseparable intertwining of cultural meaning and political economy in human experience.”

Even movements which are viewed as being expressive of “new values,” such as environmentalism, have interesting intersections with class movements which are largely excluded in new movement theories. Adam (1992: 46) raises, for example, the significant and sustained efforts of union health-and-safety committees to control industrial impacts upon nature. To separate these efforts from “environmentalism” proper is purely arbitrary. This is especially so if one considers that environmental contaminants and their consequences are concentrated and most severely felt in working-class communities.

Against claims that new social movements reflect a shift to “postindustrialism” or “postmodernism” Adam (1992: 50) further points out that “all of these movements have representation in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe.” Similarly, Starn (1997) finds new movement themes and strivings in the mobilization of Andean peasants who have hardly moved beyond conflicts over property and the government. Additionally recent movements against global trade organizations such as the WTO and IMF and World Bank have strongly challenged the imperialist practices of global capital and its agents in national states.

In the face of economic restructuring and “downsizing,” dismantled social services and declines in real wages since the mid-1970s one might well conclude with Brym (1998: 475) that the claim that most people in industrialized nations are satisfied materially is quite dubious. Likewise increased levels of poverty and homelessness forcefully suggest that conflicts over class, property and government, far from diminishing, have become more prevalent in the first years of the 21st Century. Theories which ignore political economy in favour of cultural issues or “postmodern values” do a disservice by “denying the ways in which the origins, identities, and development of subordinated categories of people remain fully rooted in the dynamics of advanced capitalism.

Both Adam (1992) and Brym (1998) argue that the focus on social movement “newness” reflects a short historical memory. Adam (1992: 46) suggests that the perception of movement



newness more likely results from a new recognition of movements which had long been discounted or devalued or a revival of movements after decades of Nazi, Stalinist or McCarthyite repression.

What is now necessary is an explanatory framework which accounts for the intersection of cultural transformations with both the ongoing and emerging practices of the state and capital. “To ignore the dynamics of capitalist development, the role of labour markets in reorganizing spatial and family relations, and the interaction of new and traditional categories of people with dis/employment patterns is to ignore the structural prerequisites that have made the new social movements not only possible, but also predictable” (Adam, 1992: 56). Analyses which ignore political economy also fail to understand the lived experiences through which new movement identities and practices emerge and the ways in which they are related to state and capital.

## **DO-IT-YOURSELF CLASS STRUGGLE: SELF-VALORIZATION**

The new subjectivities emerging from the transition to neo-liberalism have sought to contest and overcome the impositions of productive flexibility within regimes of capitalist globalization. Rather than accepting the emerging socio-political terrain or, alternatively and more commonly, attempting to restrain it within the familiar territories of the welfare state, recent movements have “appropriated the social terrain as a space of struggle and self-valorization” (Vercellone, 1996: 84).

For many contemporary activists and theorists the concept of self-valorization offers an important starting point for thinking about “the circuits that constitute an alternative sociality, autonomous from the control of the State or capital” (Hardt, 1996: 6). Originating in autonomist Marxist reflections on the social movements that emerged most notably in Italy during the intense struggles of the 1970s, the idea of self-valorization has influenced a range of libertarian communist and anarchist writers. As Hardt (1996: 3) suggests:

Self-valorization was a principal concept that circulated in the movements, referring to social forms and structures of value that were relatively autonomous from and posed an effective alternative to capitalist circuits of valorization. Self-valorization was thought of as the building block for constructing a new form of sociality, a new society.

A key aspect of self-valorizing, affinity-based politics is a focus on direct action tactics and do-it-yourself (DIY) activities. For participants in a diversity of contemporary movement groups, DIY activities offer a context for coming together, a shared opportunity for mutual expression and, perhaps most significantly, unalienated labor. Contemporary usage of the term DIY in underground movements comes from punk rock and its visceral attack on the professionalization of rock and the related distance between fans and rock stars. This anti-hierarchical perspective and the practices that flow from it are inspired by a deep longing for self-determined activity that eschews reliance on the products of corporate culture.

As an alternative to the market valorization and production for profit embodied in corporate enterprises, anarchist DIYers turn to self-valorizing production rooted in the needs, experiences and desires of specific communities. In place of a consumerist ethos that encourages consumption of ready-made items, anarchists adopt a productivist ethos that attempts a re-integration of production and consumption.

It is perhaps highly telling that in an age of multinational media conglomerates and gargantuan publishing monopolies a number of younger people have turned towards artisanal forms of craft production in order to produce and distribute what are often very personal works. Even more than this, however, are the means of production, involving collective decision-making as well as collective labor in which participants are involved, to the degree that they wish to be, in all aspects of the process from conception through to distribution.

While cultural theorist Walter Benjamin spoke of disenchantment in the “age of mechanical reproduction,” DIY projects offer expressions of re-enchantment or authenticity. This authentic-

ity is grounded at least in the sense that such works help to overcome the division between head and hand that reflects the division of labor in a society of mass-produced representation. As attempts to overcome alienation and address concerns with overly mediated activities, DIY activities suggest a striving for what an earlier era might have called control over the means of production and what has now come to include control over the means of representation. Perhaps ironically this has been aided by the availability of inexpensive desk top publishing and other means of “mechanical reproduction” since the 1980s (though not all anarchists choose to use it).

Along with DIY production often comes the collective production of alternative subjectivities. For many the content as well as the process of DIY production expresses a confrontation with the cultural codes of everyday life. While such activities express a variety of styles and viewpoints, they tend to present a vision of a desired society which is participatory and democratic. In production, content and, often through distribution in gift economies, they advocate active production of culture rather than passive consumption of cultural (or even entertainment) commodities. Self-production provides an opportunity for producers to act against the proprietorship of information. Most DIY literature, for example, is produced as anti-copyrights or as “copylefts” and sharing of material is encouraged. Indeed as a key part of gift economies, DIY takes on an important place in experimenting with communities that are not organized around market principles of exchange value. They help to create a culture of self-valorization rather than giving creativity over to the logics of surplus value.

Twentieth century notions of self-valorization echo the arguments made by classical anarchist communists such as Kropotkin and Reclus, regarding the construction of grass-roots forms of welfare developed through mutual aid societies. Self-valorization is one way by which a variety of recent theorists have sought to identify social forms of welfare that might constitute alternative networks outside of state control (Hardt, 1996; see Vercellone, 1996 and Del Re, 1996). As Del Re (1996: 110) suggests, part of the new parameters

for change includes “the proposal to go beyond welfare by taking as our goal the improvement of the quality of life, starting from the reorganization of the time of our lives.”

For radical political theorists in Italy, the experiences of the social movements “show the possibilities of alternative forms of welfare in which systems of aid and socialization are separated from State control and situated instead in autonomous social networks. These alternative experiments may show how systems of social welfare will survive the crisis of the Welfare State” (Vercellone, 1996: 81). These systems of social welfare, however, are based on social solidarity outside of state control through practices of autonomous self-management. Beyond providing necessary services these practices are geared towards freeing people from the necessity of waged labour, of valorization for capital.

We might refer to Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova in suggesting that autonomy movements offer “alternative visions and projects of social transformation that reject the patterns of domination, exploitation and exclusion embedded in the current forms of globalization” (1996: 22). In constructing this alternative, anarchists often develop practices that disrupt the smooth functioning of capitalist economics or liberal democratic politics. This suggests, following sociologist Leslie Sklair, that that anarchist movements exemplify a “disruption” model of social movements and resistance to capitalism which does not seek an organizational model that would allow for greater integration within mainstream political channels. Through their uncompromising rhetoric and immodest strategies anarchist movements resist attempts to divert their disruptive force into normal politics. Activists attempt to reject the entire context within which they can be either marginalized or assimilated; they occupy their own ground. Thus one must also move beyond Sklair’s focus on disruptive politics to look at the constructive projects which make up so much of contemporary anarchism.

Politics which impede the capacities of states and capital to impose their global agenda offer possible beginnings for revolutionary politics in an age when many thought revolution-

ary politics had run their course. The collapse of authoritarian communism and the seeming triumph of neo-liberal capital throughout much of the world led many to lower their sights to little more than a radical democracy. Anarchism shatters such “end of history” scenarios and provides a radical vision for the renewal of struggles for a future beyond statist capitalism.

### **TOWARDS THE COMING COMMUNITIES?**

For anarchist sociologist Richard Day, today we require an analysis of the relation of projects of social transformation with “actually existing democracy.” Despite the contributions of the liberal-democratic state (redistribution of wealth, “rights” enforcement), liberal democracy “remains a frighteningly arborescent form which relies upon dead power to achieve its effects.” The analysis undertaken by contemporary anarchists is, for Day, compatible with a move away from subject positions associated with the system of liberal-capitalist nation-states, in favour of identifications produced by what Giorgio Agamben has called “coming communities.” Such a perspective provides a way to think about “community without universality” and “history without teleology.” For Agamben the task of contemporary politics will no longer be “a struggle for conquest or control” of power as domination, but will involve the creation of “a community with neither presuppositions nor a State”

Day rejects the idea of a radically democratic society, especially as expressed in the works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, because it maintains a global-singular level of community with a specific identity which would contain a plurality of spaces. As I have argued above, and in an earlier work (see Shantz, 1998), this radical democratic vision has generally appeared as something like “global civil society” or cosmopolitan democracy or cosmopolitan citizenship.

It would seem that this form of radical democracy is reliant upon something akin to, if

not formally identical with, the nation-states that make up the current system of states, within which 'the liberal institutions – parliament, elections, divisions of power – are maintained' (34)

In both Marxist and social democratic visions the answer to questions posed by the presence of difference within subordinate groups and movements has been the unifying space of the party. For Day, contemporary radical projects seek alternatives that may not be in need of a universalistic component.

Rather, let us imagine that they will thrive only as a multiplicity of coming communities, working together and in disparateness to simultaneously ward off corporate, national and state identifications, and to nurture new forms of creative commonality (2001: 36)

For Hakim Bey, another anarchist writer influenced by poststructuralist theories, the greatest hope for resistance (revolution) rests in the assertion of difference against capitalist hegemonism (sameness). Difference is revolutionary in an age of one-world capitalist globality precisely because it disrupts the single-world, the mono-culture (1996: 25). To be revolutionary, however, particularity must not seek hegemony, it must remain anti-hegemonistic in character. As in classical anarchism, the two forces of the opposition are autonomy and federation. Autonomy without federation would be reaction, whereas federation without autonomy would end self-determination. Authentic difference is non-hegemonic and must be defended against the hegemonism of reaction (and Capital). Against (one world) sameness and separation, difference and presence. Bey's favourite example of revolutionary difference, and indeed the favourite of many anarchists including Graeber and Day, is the Zapatistas of Mexico because they defend their difference (as Mayans) without asking others to become Mayans.

## CONCLUSION

Anarchy encourages a critical reconceptualization of politics as currently constituted. It offers a glimpse of politics which refuse containment by any of the usual containers such as protest, "civil disobedience" or the state. Thus, it may further challenge the meanings of sovereignty in the current context. Such manifestations may open spaces for a (re)constitution of politics by destabilizing tendencies towards enclosure of any totalizing discourse, be it one of state, class or identity. Just as global transformations de-stabilize "state-as-container" metaphors, reformulations of identity and community as in anarchism de-stabilize "identity-as-container" notions. Political spaces are created in defiance of political containers.

Following Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova (1996), one might suggest that autonomy movements respond to the processes of social precarization and cultural alienation currently associated with global processes of governance by challenging the global order, disrupting circuits of exploitation and asserting counter-institutions. Attempts are made to (re)construct cultural meaning through specific patterns of experience in which participants create meaning against the logics of global intrusions which would render them meaningless. Radical social movement alliances are largely engaged in transforming the normative cultural and political codes of emerging global relations.

Autonomy movements are movements involving individuals, social groups or territories excluded or made irrelevant by the "new world order". This distinguishes them somewhat from institutional global social movements which seek increased participation by members who are not yet rendered irrelevant (and who thus have something with which to bargain). In any event, how does one ask a global (or national) body to grant the "subversion of the dominant paradigm" or the "liberation of desire?"

Theory requires a more sophisticated understanding of those struggles which allow

for the (re)production of categories, which inhibit or encourage the forging of community, and which prevent alternatives from emerging. Conventional social theories have failed to recognize alternatives, in part due to their uncritical acceptance of dubious metaphors. Studies of social movements have undertheorized the significance of "unreasonable" or affective aspects of movement behaviour. The present work offers an attempt to understand such "unreasonable" discursive strategies, beyond condemnation (or rejection) as illegitimate or impractical. "Interests and groups defined as marginal because they have become 'disturbances' in the system of social integration are precisely the struggles which may be the most significant from the point of view of historical emancipation from social hierarchy and domination [emphasis in original]" (Aronowitz, 1990: 111). Anarchy asks us why we should assume that a "global civil society" will be any better than the civil society that brought poverty, homelessness, racism, and ecological annihilation in the first place.

## NOTES

1. For examples of the "TSMO" literature see recent works by Jackie Smith, Ron Pagnucco and Winnie Romeril (1994) and John McCarthy (1996).
2. See Laura MacDonald (1994) or Martin Shaw (1994).
3. Anarchists are respectful of the reforms which oppressed people have been able to secure and especially of the struggles it has taken to win those reforms. Anarchists actively defend those reforms against neo-liberal governments and their capitalist backers who seek to dismantle them. At the same time anarchists do not privilege reforms as ends but view them as reified moments of struggle.



# BACK IN BLACK: THEORIZING BLACK BLOCS AND THE RETURN OF ANARCHISM

That anarchists should run afoul of the authorities is hardly surprising. Indeed, anarchism has a long history of direct conflict with State institutions and their defenders. Some of the most striking images from this history are the caricatures of black trenchcoat wearing “bomb throwers” who owe their fame to activities at the turn of the Century. Novels such as Joseph Conrad’s *The Secret Agent* and Frank Harris’ *The Bomb* have kept the character of the fanatic alive. In the popular imagination the spectre of anarchy still conjures notions of terror, chaos, destruction and the collapse of civilization (Marshall, 1993).

Of course, few anarchists have ever engaged in terrorism or even advocated violence. The characterization stems largely from the startling bombings and assassinations which arose from the despair of the 1890s (Marshall, 1993). Certainly, anarchism has counted assassins and bomb-makers among its number, figures like Ravachol and Emile Henry during the 19th Century and Leon Czolgosz who assassinated President McKinley in 1901. Some contemporary anarchists choose as an element of style to play up this image, dressing entirely in black and printing “zines” with such titles as “The Blast”<sup>1</sup> and “Agent 2771.”<sup>2</sup>

There is no surprise, of course, that rulers should so desire to construct anarchists as nihilistic fanatics for they question the very legitimacy of rulership itself. As Marshall (1993: x) notes, the radical implications of anarchism have not been lost on rulers (of the Left or Right) or ruled, “filling rulers with fear, since they might be made obsolete, and inspiring the dispossessed and the thoughtful with hope since they can imagine a time when they might be free to govern

themselves.”

While anarchist history has not been free of violence, anarchism has been largely a peaceful tradition (Woodcock, 1962; Marshall, 1993; Kornegger, 1996). The writings of people such as Godwin, Proudhon, Kropotkin and Reclus are moved by sentiments of mutuality, conviviality, affinity and affection. Most anarchist practical initiatives have been directed towards building new communities and institutions. If anything, the history of anarchism shows that it is anarchists themselves who have fallen victim to political violence. As Marshall (1993: ix) notes, anarchism “appears as a feeble youth pushed out of the way by the marching hordes of fascists and authoritarian communists” (not to mention the hordes of nationalists and populists). Anarchists are certainly not lacking when it comes to martyrs (The Haymarket Martyrs, Joe Hill, Frank Little, Gustav Landauer, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Kronstadt sailors and the Maknovists of Ukraine are only a few of the anarchist victims of State violence).

While sociologists have paid little attention to such unruly movements, criminologists have recently shown some interest in taking anarchism seriously as politics. Ferrell (1997) suggests that becoming attuned to anarchist practice and the anarchist critique of the State is especially relevant in the current context. In his view, close attention to anarchism should encourage criminologists to develop a criminology of resistance. This criminology of resistance would take seriously the criminalized activities undertaken by anarchists (and others), e.g. graffiti, squats, pirate radio, sabotage, “as means of investigating the variety of ways in which criminal or criminalized behaviours may incorporate repressed dimensions of human dignity and self-determination, and lived resistance to the authority of state law” (Ferrell, 1997: 151). These behaviours should no longer be dismissed as symptomatic of an “infantile disorder,”<sup>3</sup> or “banditry,”<sup>4</sup> but taken for what they are — political acts. This, of course, requires making a break with assumptions of privileged forms of resistance and received notions about activism.

## NOT PROTEST AS USUAL: BLACK BLOCS FOR BEGINNERS

The tactic of organizing black blocs emerged from the autonomen movements in West Germany in the 1980s. Autonomen, often squatters and punks who were influenced by libertarian versions of Italian Marxism as well as anarchism, took to wearing black during squat defences and demonstrations against nuclear energy and apartheid. Notably, the autonomen, as early as 1988, organized mass militant demonstrations against the IMF and World Bank as identifiable agents of global capitalism (See Katsiaficas, 1997).

Given the circulation of anti-capitalist strategies and tactics, spurred even further by the growth of the internet, anarchists and punks in North America eventually picked up on the black bloc. In February 1991, during demonstrations against the Gulf War in Iraq, anarchists associated with the federation Love and Rage brought the black bloc to the streets of America.

As anarchist commentator Liz Highleyman (2001) suggests, the black bloc itself emerged as an expression of frustration with the disempowering character of symbolic protests that in no way threatened state or capitalist authorities: “Coming out of the stultifying political climate of the Reagan and Bush pere years, many young activists had gotten sick of ‘protest as usual.’ Mostly in their teens through thirties, few black blockers remembered the glorified 1960s; they grew up on a diet of well-choreographed rallies, permitted marches, and planned mass arrests.” For many activists, protests that were too much civil and not enough disobedience had run their course. Organizing hundreds of people for a demonstration, only to have them stand around and hold placards and chant slogans, had come to be seen as an inefficient use of resources or worse a waste of time, given that such protests hardly captured even the media attention that might lend them a broader symbolic value (Highleyman, 2000).

The first point to be made about the black bloc is that it is not an organization or group, but rather a tactic. This is a point that participants emphasize universally against media claims that

the bloc is a pre-established anarchist group. As there are no members there are also divisions of participants into “members” or “leaders.” As anarchists are fond of saying: “We are all leaders here.”

The black bloc takes its name from the black clothing worn by participants. In addition to the symbolic value of black as the colour of anarchy, the similar clothing guards against identification by police or security officers. If everyone in the bloc is dressed relatively alike it will be difficult for police to identify who has done specific acts. This protection extends beyond the immediate action since the uniform clothing also provides cover against film or video records that might be used to identify and arrest someone after an action. Masks and bandanas further conceal identities as well as providing some protection against tear gas or pepper spray.

By the act of masking up in order to avoid recognition by police, the black bloc illustrates its disinterest in “open” dialogue or negotiation. It further states the refusal to elevate movement leaders or figureheads who might be singled out for special attention, either favorably by a media clamoring for interviews or negatively by police seeking to clamp down on perceived ringleaders.

It has long been a tactic of police to target social movement leaders in an attempt to disrupt movement activities. Simultaneously the black bloc registers its view that police, rather than being neutral peacekeepers, are agents of repression /paid defenders of private property who, in the normal discharge of their duties, rather than as an exceptional circumstance, will be charged with identifying and apprehending activists in order to circumscribe or contain political actions within channels sanctioned by the state.

Black bloc participants are involved in various autonomous affinity groups and there may be multiple black blocs within any given demonstration. While the specific political perspectives of participants will vary, though most are anarchists, those involved in the bloc are committed to unified action to defend themselves and other demonstrators against police attack. Collective self-defence then is another reason for organizing in the bloc. This may include “de-arresting” people

who are have been taken by police or building street barricades to keep police from entering an area occupied by demonstrators. This marks the black bloc as distinct from much of what has come to be understood as acts of civil disobedience over the last few decades. As Highleyman (2001) suggests: "Unlike traditional civil disobedience protesters, the black bloc doesn't see any nobility – or use – in turning themselves over to the police in orchestrated arrests. As fences and armies of police keep protesters ever more isolated from their targets, black blockers find the traditional tactics of a bygone era less than inspiring."

As well as confrontations with police, the most distinguishing characteristic of the black bloc as image event is most likely its willingness to engage in dramatic street actions that may include destruction of corporate property. Black blocs have provided such a striking and memorable presence at demonstrations because they are also organized and prepared to confront institutions of capitalist power, especially banks, corporate offices, multinational chain-store outlets video surveillance cameras and gas stations. Consistent with an anarchist perspective, black blockers have no regard for institutions of capital and the state and reject the legitimacy both of private property claims and defence of private property by the police. Regardless of what some would call the ominous black outfits, it is clear that no one would worry much about the black bloc without this confrontational aspect of its practice.

In addition to the more dramatic black bloc activities, participants are active as medics and communication people. In this way there is a space within the black bloc for people who do not feel that they can take part in more confrontational activities but still support the black bloc as an important presence in the streets. Within the bloc there are a variety of tasks that need to be done.

As demonstrations have developed and participants have learned from their experiences, some black bloc activists have experimented with new ways to improve tactics and organization within the blocs. Some have elected tactical facilitators for specific actions to increase the speed of decision-making and to improve mobility, especially where there is limited knowledge of

unfamiliar streets. In other cases specific affinity groups have taken on specialized tasks within the bloc, such as offense, self-defense, communications or medics (Highleyman, 2001).

Beyond its tactical value, black blocs highlight Kevin Hetherington's assertions regarding the significance of the spatial dimension of conflict. According to Hetherington (1992: 96) the "use of space is fundamentally a conflict between control through surveillance and the establishment of new lifestyles in the public view".

### **PROPAGANDA OF THE DEED: RE-IMAG(IN)ING ANARCHY**

In the 1890s anarchists were publicly identifiable by the billowing black flags they carried at May Day marches, at mass demonstrations and during labor strikes. The black flag has long stood as the universal negation of all national flags that symbolize, for anarchists, the dividing and conquering of subordinate groups that finds its ultimate expression in the wars that primarily kill the working class, peasants and poor people (see Ehrlich, 1995: 31-32). Today, as one black bloc participant suggests: "The black bloc is our banner." The black bloc is a vibrant contemporary manifestation of anarchist identity, a personification of the black flag. Anarchist webmaster Chuck Munson refers to the black bloc as "the anarchist equivalent of a gay pride march" (quoted in Highleyman, 2001).

Both Barbara Epstein and David Graeber make a point of suggesting that for many contemporary activists anarchism is more a sensibility than a movement or philosophy with historical roots.

For contemporary young radical activists, anarchism means a decentralized organizational structure, based on affinity groups that work together on an ad hoc basis, and decision-making by consensus. It also means egalitarianism; opposition to all hierarchies; suspicion of authority, especially that of the state; and commitment to living according to one's values. Young radical

activists, who regard themselves as anarchists, are likely to be hostile not only to corporations but to capitalism. Many envision a stateless society based on small, egalitarian communities. For some, however, the society of the future remains an open question. For them, anarchism is important mainly as an organizational structure and as a commitment to egalitarianism. It is a form of politics that revolves around the exposure of the truth rather than strategy. It is a politics decided in the moment (Epstein, 2001: 1).

While I disagree with aspects of Epstein's description of anarchism as sensibility, I would suggest that this view of anarchism is related to the focus on those anarchist activities related to black bloc actions at political protests. The black bloc, as a tactic, is by definition a politics of the moment, based on action-specific affinity groups, solidarity and self-defence. The black blocs form, dissolve and re-form as the situation requires, re-constituting themselves on a different basis for each political demonstration.

For many anarchists, one step in overcoming exploitation and building movements that might challenge capitalism is breaking the cultural and legal codes that uphold injustices and inequalities based on private control of collectively produced property. From this perspective, the black bloc is a contemporary expression of "propaganda of the deed", a notion popular in the 19th century that exemplary acts against representatives of the state and capital might serve as pedagogical tools in the processes of delegitimizing bourgeois morality and encouraging the oppressed to shed such ingrained values as respect for property and the law.

Thus the black bloc, and its attacks on corporate property, represents a dramatic, if symbolic, shattering of hegemonic corporate claims on ownership and property rights which are deeply ingrained but which anarchists hold to be illegitimate. The black bloc is a rushing wave of negation crashing against the material manifestations of the most central and vigorously defended beliefs of capitalism and liberal democracy. Significantly, black bloc participants are careful (as much as one can be in the heat of battle) to select targets that convey the anti-capitalist message most directly

and forcefully.

There is a well-considered method to their seeming madness; black blockers know whose property they are destroying, and why. Banks and oil companies often become targets, as do retail outlets that sell sweatshop merchandise and fast food restaurant chains that contribute to the global monoculture. In Seattle, black blockers used rocks, crowbars, newspaper boxes, and eggs filled with glass-etching solution to attack corporate storefronts such as Niketown and Starbucks, leaving nearby “mom and pop” businesses untouched. Most back blockers steer clear of damaging small shops, homes and cars (although some are less discriminating when it comes to luxury autos and SUVs) (Highleyman, 2000).

In addition to its visual rejection of property rights, the black bloc offers a rejection of the role of protesters as petitioning subjects. The black bloc is also a vibrant manifestation of the refusal to accept one’s position as obedient subject or even of loyal opposition. Where government and corporate leaders seek protest permits or allow the right of assembly only within elite sanctioned and heavily circumscribed “protest pits,” the black bloc asserts its right to occupy public space and to seek direct access to ruling corporate and government bodies.

Perhaps nowhere was the black bloc refusal to accept the statist or capitalist-sanctioned restrictions on popular assembly and participation more symbolically powerful than at the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) meetings in Quebec City in 2001.

At the FTAA summit in Quebec City last summer, invisible lines that had previously been treated as if they didn’t exist (at least for white people) were converted overnight into fortifications against the movement of would-be global citizens, demanding the right to petition their rulers. The three-kilometre ‘wall’ constructed through the centre of Quebec City, to shield the heads of state junketing inside from any contact with the populace, became the perfect symbol for what neoliberalism actually means in human terms. The spectacle of the Black Bloc, armed with wire cutters and grappling hooks, joined by everyone from Steelworkers to Mohawk warriors to tear down the



wall, became – for that very reason – one of the most powerful moments in the movement's history (Graeber, 2002: 65).

For many outside observers watching the events in Seattle unfold on their television or computer screens, has been the striking scenes of black-clad demonstrators putting bricks through corporate windows and battling with police that provided the compelling and indelible images from the streets. It was also those images that suggested a break with previous forms of civil disobedience and hinted at the emergence of a new and more militant movement against global capitalism. To a certain extent the anti-globalization movement was born, at least in the eyes of the general public, in the unexpected actions of the black-clad demonstrators who refused to play by the assumed rules of public protest in expressing their opposition to the WTO and its corporate backers.

In the series of demonstrations that took place over the course of several days, the young, radical activists who engaged in civil disobedience were greatly outnumbered by trade unionists and members of mostly liberal environmental organizations. But it was the young radicals who blockaded the meetings of the WTO, fought the police, liberated the streets of Seattle, and whose militancy brought the attention of the media to a mobilization that would otherwise have gone unnoticed outside the left (Epstein, 2001: 9).

And in a limited way this is significant. Every social movement requires a foundational image or event, something that marks it as recognizable and memorable for people outside of the movement. As well such images or events serve a social mythic role in the minds of movement activists, serving to provide a marker of solidarity, commonality and shared history.

To a certain extent the black bloc has served for contemporary anarchists the mythic role ascribed to the general strike by Georges Sorel in his writings on social myths in working class movements. Sorel was primarily interested in the myths by which agents actively organize to undermine a political status quo. “An important aspect of those social movements concerned with

social change, Sorel noted, is the creation of myths which help members to make sense out of the present, justify their efforts at change, and point to a new future” (Neustadter, 1989: 345). Any myth, for Sorel, consists of “a body of imprecise meanings couched in symbolic form” (Hughes, 1958: 96). Included within myths are symbolic elements introduced by what Sorel terms “expressive supports.” These expressive supports bridge the gaps in discourse and, laden with emotion, they provide part of the appeal of social movements.

The black bloc’s pedagogical effort goes beyond bodies in the streets. In a popular series of anarchist posters produced with various images under the heading “Support Your Local Black Bloc” one of the most widely distributed posters included an image of a brick smashing a Niketown window. The caption, a take-off on a Nike slogan, read: “Life’s Short: Throw Hard.” This suggests the mythic character of the black bloc as its image becomes a widely circulated symbol of defiance, disobedience and transgression. The significance of this aspect of the black bloc within anarchist movements becomes readily apparent if one looks at the prevalence of black bloc imagery within major anarchist publications or on popular anarchist websites.

## **TAMING THE ANARCHIST BEAST: MAINSTREAM MEDIA IMAGINE THE BLACK BLOC**

The most contentious point of debate around the black bloc, and the anti-globalization movement more broadly, involves the question of violence. This has been a heated and ongoing debate since Seattle when the black bloc made literally its breakthrough appearance in mainstream consciousness by shattering the windows and otherwise destroying the property of corporations in the downtown area near the WTO meeting sites. Certainly, accusations of violence have been regularly leveled against the black bloc by the mainstream media.

In addition to disputes over the legitimacy or necessity of property destruction, some have

argued that the black bloc actions incite police violence or provoke greater police violence against protestors. In particular it is claimed that the black bloc spurs police violence against protestors who are not part of the black bloc.

Such expressions are typically invoked when a simple, plain-English description of what took place (people throwing paint-bombs, breaking windows of empty storefronts, holding hands as they blockaded intersections, cops beating them with sticks) might give the impression that the only truly violent parties were the police. The US media is probably the biggest offender here – and this despite the fact that, after two years of increasingly militant direct action, it is still impossible to produce a single example of anyone to whom a US activist has caused physical injury. I would say that what really disturbs the powers-that-be is not the 'violence' of the movement but its relative lack of it; governments simply do not know how to deal with an overtly revolutionary movement that refuses to fall into familiar patterns of armed resistance (Graeber, 2002: 66).

Chomsky (1989) argues that liberal democracies, which cannot rely on the iron fist of repression to control subordinate populations, must nurture systems of legitimacy in order to manufacture the consent and loyalty of the governed. Herman and Chomsky (1988) argue that the news media in the US is both part of the ruling power structure and reflects the ruling interests in the presentation of media messages. Support for status quo interests is not only, or even most significantly, the result of the conscious individual biases of journalists, but is part of the structures and processes of corporate news production, including professional conventions and ideologies, economic links, organizational needs and hegemonic worldviews (McLeod and Detenber, 1999: 4).

While corporate media will occasionally criticize groups in power, McLeod and Detenber (1999) note that this is most likely in cases in which there is elite conflict. In contexts where there is little elite conflict, as is the case in free trade summits or responses to domestic movements against neoliberalism, media support for the status quo tends to be solid (McLeod and Detenber, 1999; Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

Mainstream media support for the status quo in new coverage of social movements and demonstrations has been well established for some time now (Gitlin, 1981; Chomsky, 1989; McLeod and Detenber, 1999). Chan and Lee (1984) even suggest that the common assumptions that guide media coverage of political demonstrations constitutes a "protest paradigm." McLeod and Detenber (1999: 5) identify a variety of characteristics of a protest paradigm in the mainstream media, including: "narrative structures; reliance on official sources and official definitions; the invocation of public opinion; and other techniques of delegitimization, marginalization and demonization." Donohue, Tichenor and Olien (1995) argue that rather than playing the watchdog role often attributed to it, the mainstream media play a guard dog, defending the system against a range of threats.

Social protest, particularly that which advocates radical change, may present a threat to the social system. The normative theory that underpins the watchdog media holds that the media should objectively explore the protestors' social critique by launching a serious investigation of its merits with respect to all available facts. The guard dog media, on the other hand, take a hostile stance toward the threat posed by social protest. Because of their ties to the power structure, the guard dog media often cover protests from the perspective of those in power. Guard dog media coverage highlights the deviance of the protestors, diminishing their contributions and effectiveness, insulating the power structure, and defusing the threat (McLeod and Detenber, 1999: 5).

As McLeod and Hertog (1992: 260) note "protest coverage adopts 'official' definitions of the protest situation by focusing on questions of the 'legality of actions' as opposed to the 'morality of issues.' In the process, coverage legitimizes official authority and marginalizes radical protest groups." Through close examinations of news content, McLeod and Detenber (1999: 3) are led to suggest that "news stories about protests tend to focus on the protestors' appearances rather than their issues, emphasize their violent actions rather than their social criticism, pit them against police rather than their chosen targets, and downplay their effectiveness." Such coverage works to re-inscribe hegemonic assumptions relating to acceptable forms of dissent, law and order and the

status of opposition groups, among other issues.

Chomsky (1989) goes on to note that among the most enduring symbols available to American consensus makers has been the phantom menace of anarchism. In the image of the anarchist, especially the shadowy figure of the black trench coat-wearing bomb thrower that has persisted since the nineteenth century, condenses fears of disorder, social instability and the threat of the outside agitator acting to undermine fundamental "American values" or, even further, the "American way of life."

It should be remembered that the first "Red scare" in the US was actually directed at anarchist during the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries. The 1880s began a period of intense, and highly charged, public discussion of anarchism culminating in the passage in 1903 of an immigration law that sought to prohibit anarchists from entering the US (Hong, 1992). As Hong (1992:111) suggests: "The anarchist was the constructed devil of the American civic religion of the late nineteenth century. It was made the bogeyman to guard the borders of the political allegiances, loyalties, and obedience of American citizens." The anarchist Red scare introduced a durable theme in American political life, not only as a justification for hegemonic ideologies and the construction of social cohesion, but also to delineate and to reinforce the acceptable features of American political culture (Hong, 1992: 110).

The anarchist trope has been especially prominent during periods of great social upheaval and transformation such as the present period of capitalist globalization, characterized by the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, the welfare state to neoliberalism. Similarly, the era of the first Red scare was one of intense social conflict and dislocation as traditional social relations and values were undermined or dismantled. Under such shifting circumstances, forces vying for hegemony are faced with the task of developing institutional and ideological strategies for forging some social consensus and cohesiveness, typically in the face of grassroots movements seeking to establish their own forms of solidarity and social cohesion on their own terms. "Lurking behind

the attack on one kind of revolution of social relations was a different revolution: the appropriation and concentration of power in corporate capitalism and in the strong nation-state. A common interest with the ideology of the latter revolution was cultivated in inverse proportion to the anxiety created about the challenger" (Hong, 1992: 111).

As described by Hong (1992: 111), during the first Red scare the image of the anarchist was deployed in a manner that prefigures the official response to anti-globalization movements today: "The symbolic anarchist enemy came to personify the challenge of anti-capitalist ideas and values. It was constructed to evoke associations that fostered dependency on authority, freezing political perceptions and conceptions within an acceptable framework. By putting the 'anarchist beast' beyond the pale, it kept citizens within the fold." Despite the claims of some that the period of globalization has witnessed a decline in the nation state, it is more accurate to suggest that authorities within the present period, like the period of the first Red scare, have responded to social upheaval through the promotion of a strengthened nation-state and of values that support it.

As Hong (1992: 110) suggests the Red scare against anarchists, which marks the beginning of an American political tradition, is significant "because it produced an evocative condensation symbol that has retrained its power into contemporary use. An excess of democracy can still be discredited as the threat of impending anarchy." The anarchist beast remains, even a century after it was supposedly vanquished, a key ideological symbol in legitimizing state or corporate discourses and practices, especially in the face of growing opposition movements against capitalist globalization.

As black bloc participants are quick to point out, such characterizations of activists and demonstrations will be put forward by mainstream media regardless of the presence or size of any black bloc. In this they have clearly learned a lesson shared by media historians: "The intensity of Red scares far exceeds the actual threat the scapegoat groups represent. This makes sense, insofar as the primary object of these campaigns is not to defeat the weak and resourceless enemy but to

win favor for elements within the governing elite and to accomplish the ideological rearmament of a population" (Hong, 1992: 127, n. 4).

Anarchists, as well as any media analysts, are also cognizant of the fact that corporate media are not forums for explaining complex issues. They realize that in the absence of controversial acts and open conflict the media would likely give little attention to the protests. Indeed some would claim that the most significant factor contributing to the attention given to issues of global trade recently has been the emergence of the black bloc. By comparison activists point out the lack of attention given to protests against free trade agreements in the 1980s and early 1990s and the relative lack of attention given to the massive anti-war demonstrations against the war in Iraq, which were free of black bloc activities.

Given the tendency of mainstream media depictions of protesters to marginalize or delegitimize activist events during political demonstrations, there are clearly limitations to the effectiveness of the black bloc tactic as a means of "propaganda of the deed." While anarchists have correctly criticized symbolic protests for their reliance upon mainstream media to get the message out, there has been less willingness to recognize that the situation is even more precarious for more confrontational actions that, in fact, carry more complex messages such as the refusal to recognize property rights. In light of the mainstream media's well-documented preference for what McLeod and Detenber (1999: 6) describe as "news stories that focus on conflicts with the police, obfuscating the issues raised by the protestors...and characterizing the protesters as 'deviants' and 'criminals,'" it is questionable whether or not the black bloc's messages could have any chance of getting out in anything resembling their intended form. The prospects become even less likely when one considers that "the more a protest group challenges the status quo, the more closely the media will adhere to the characteristics of the protest paradigm. In short, news coverage will marginalize challenging groups, especially those that are viewed as radical in their beliefs and strategies" (McLeod and Detenber, 1999: 6). As I have pointed out elsewhere (see Shantz, 2003),

this is particularly relevant given that prior to September 11, no groups were viewed as more radical than the black bloc anarchists.

Having said this, however, it must be remembered that the black bloc tactic, as propaganda, is not specifically directed at general audiences watching the events on television. The above discussion serves as confirmation of the black bloc thesis that the mainstream media cannot be looked to as reliable carriers of oppositional messages and thus protesters should not waste time on symbolic actions that rely on the mass media to "get the message out." In actuality the black bloc tactic is more clearly presented as a lesson for other activists or observers who are already politicized to some extent. When the black bloc speaks its key messages of self-defence against police aggression, the limitations of liberal democracy and the illegitimacy of corporate property it is speaking primarily to fellow protesters to convince them of the necessity and the possibility of struggles that disrupt, rather than negotiate with, power holders. Against messages that ask for access to government structures or seek to influence the state or capital, the black bloc visibly poses an alternative that seeks to make it impossible to for such authorities to act. And, it must be noted that anarchists do not rely on black bloc actions on the street to make this point. In order to explain the ideas behind the image anarchists make use of a variety of their own "do-it-yourself media," especially websites, radio and e-mail lists to ensure that propaganda is not left to the deed alone.

## **"WE NEED THE BLACK BLOC, OR SOMETHING LIKE THEM": THE BLACK BLOC WITHIN THE MOVEMENT**

More properly stated the supposed debate over violence is more a debate over the place of property destruction within the movement since few, if any, groups in North America advocate,



defend or engage in acts of violence against people. In fact, even the most militant contemporary anti-capitalist organizations in North America have been extremely careful to avoid any actions that would cause physical harm to humans. As Graeber (2002) notes, many of these groups even work scrupulously to avoid harm to animals.

For black bloc participants, on the issue of property destruction there is really no debate at all, since, from an anarchist perspective, corporate property is only a visual marker of exploitation, of labor stolen from working people. In the famous words of the nineteenth century anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: "Property is theft." And in saying this anarchists are careful to make the distinction between property as means of exploitation and personal possessions.

For anarchists, property damage or vandalism cannot be compared with violence regularly directed against people by states, corporations or police in the defense of property. As one anarchist describes the conflation of vandalism with violence: "The media treats property destruction as being the same thing as destruction of people. This is pretty much in keeping with the values of the people who run society – that their property is worth more than everyone else's life" (James Hutchings quoted in Highleyman, 2001). Furthermore to suggest that destruction of property has no place in nonviolent movements, as some critics of black blocs have, is to throw out the histories of the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements, as well as much of environmentalism and feminism.

The larger danger for anarchists is when other activists start to believe the hype and allow themselves to become caught up in false debates carried out on terms established by corporate media and government spokespeople. To a certain extent the black bloc leaves itself open to these sorts of misrepresentation. In movements of pacifists, hordes of masked guerrilla lookalikes can be a bit disconcerting.

Some organizers of the Seattle demonstrations were surprised by the actions of the black bloc and have tried to distance themselves from those actions. In almost every anti-globalization

demonstration since, there have been members of more liberal protest groups that have tried to distance themselves from the black bloc. More than that, there have been numerous instances, of protestors attempting to restrain black bloc members and even some cases of activists turning them over to police. The significance of these actions is that they suggested an early fissure within the anti-globalization movement; a fissure marked as a black dividing line within the anti-globalization protests.

Media-favoured activists like Susan George of ATTAC France have suggested: "If we can't guarantee peaceful, creative demonstrations, workers and official trade unions won't join us....Our base will slip away, the present unity – both trans-sectoral and trans-generational – will crumble" (2001). George (2001) went even further to say that "either we will manage to contain and prevent the violent methods of the few, or we risk shattering the greatest political hope in the last several decades." George (2001) cynically attempted to maintain the "good protester/bad protester" division even after the police killing of Carlos Giuliani during the G8 meetings in Genoa in 2001, suggesting that "his own convictions...weren't ours."

Since 9/11 in the US in fact there have been some opponents of anti-globalization forces who have used the image of the black bloc to suggest some sort of "internal" terrorist organization. More strikingly, within the movement itself some liberal activists have argued that following 9/11 attacks on corporate targets are inexcusable.

In response to increasingly sharp criticism of the black bloc and property destruction, especially from liberal participants in anti-globalization protests, black bloc supporters have argued that the movement's strength derives largely from the commitment to a "diversity of tactics." Autonomous actions carried out by affinity groups allow for the broadest range of forces to be brought to bear against the organizations and institutions of capitalist globalization.

As Graeber (2002: 66) and others suggest:

The effort to destroy existing paradigms is usually quite self-conscious. Where once it seemed

that the only alternatives to marching along with signs were either Gandhian non-violent civil disobedience or outright insurrection, groups like the Direct Action Network, Reclaim the Streets, Black Blocs or Tute Bianche have all, in their own ways, been trying to map out a completely new territory in between. They're attempting to invent what many call a 'new language' of civil disobedience, combining elements of street theatre, festival and what can only be called non-violent warfare – non-violent in the sense adopted by, say, Black Bloc anarchists, in that it eschews any direct physical harm to human beings (Graeber, 2002: 66).

In another interesting use of colour-coded imagery, organizers of the Quebec City actions attempted to establish different zones in the downtown so participants could choose where to go based on anticipated levels of engagement with police. Green Zones were areas set up for festive street party activities and anticipated little involvement with police while Yellow Zones were areas in which it was expected a larger police presence would be met by low intensity forms of civil disobedience. Red Zones were areas reserved for the black bloc and other direct action activists. Many black bloc participants suggested at the outset that this arrangement was dangerously naive since demonstrators, especially in Green and Yellow Zones would have a false sense of security while police would pay no regard to such activist designations. The events of Quebec City in which a massive police presence showered the entire downtown with tear gas while making repeated runs through the crowd with water cannons once again bore out the realist assessment of the black bloc. At the same time the events in Quebec City showed the potent force of the black bloc as a symbol of resistance and determination in the face of massive and sustained repression.

In an attempt to shelter heads of state and corporate leaders from any sign of protest, security officials built a fence around the entire section of the downtown in which the conference hotels and meeting centres were located. For many, even casual observers, this presented a striking symbol for the exclusionary governance practices accompanying neoliberalism.

On the first day of the actions, the black bloc, the "white overalls," and other militant activists

attacked and breached the fence. Police let loose with tear gas, water cannons, dogs, and plastic bullets, which only had the effect of enraging the crowd. By the end of the second day, protesters of all persuasions – along with many local residents – were standing their ground, cheering the bloc on, and lobbing their own tear gas canisters and rocks at the cops (Highleyman, 2000).

Significantly, rank-and-file unionists, who had been led, on the second day, to an open field away from the fence by leadership hoping to avoid any confrontation, disobeyed union marshals and made their way to the red zones to stand with the black bloc in battling police and asserting the right to be in the streets. This was an extremely important development that both refuted the claims of moderates that the black bloc tactic would only alienate working people and showed that broader sections of the anti-globalization movement were becoming convinced of the rightness of more militant actions.

Following the Quebec City actions rank-and-file members of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) openly condemned their leadership for not holding the union rally at the fence and, even further, demanded direct action training workshops for CAW members so that they might be better prepared to defend themselves and fellow activists during future demonstrations. As the anarchist writer Cindy Milstein (2001) noted afterward: "The widespread hatred of the wall and all it embodied meant that those who took a leadership role to bring it down stepped not only into the limelight but gained the respect and admiration of other demonstrators, much of the local populace, and a healthy cross section of the broader Canadian public."

All of this flew in the face of dire prediction made by moderate activist opponents of the black bloc such as Susan George. Significantly, other activists who had worried about the role of black bloc actions began to recognize the part the blocs have played in encouraging and even uplifting other demonstrators during protests. Starhawk, a well-known participant and commentator on anti-globalization demonstrations, believed, prior to Quebec City that broad participation in mass actions would only happen if those actions maintained clear non-violence guidelines. From her

perspective as a longtime activist and direct action trainer:

I thought high levels of confrontation would lose us popular support, but we had the strongest support ever from the local people. I thought people new to direct action would be terrified by the level of conflict we experienced. But by the second day, more people were ready to go to the wall. By the third day, they were demanding better gas masks (Starhawk, 2001).

Despite the criticisms of others, and some of her own concerns about the disproportionate attention garnered by the black bloc, Starhawk (2001) concludes: "We need the black bloc, or something like them. We need room in the movement for rage, for impatience, for militant fervor."

Rather than scaring away members of the base movements, community groups have turned to black bloc techniques, if not the black clothing, for local actions. As one example, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) a grassroots anti-poverty organization in Ontario, Canada has effectively used co-ordinated self-defense to protect members from police attacks during anti-poverty demonstrations. These techniques were put to good use on June 15th 2000, when OCAP members and allies held off a massive attack by police, including waves of mounted officers, for an hour during a police riot at the seat of Ontario's provincial government. Elsewhere groups organizing locally around anti-racism or anti-fascism have also adopted black bloc tactics in defending neighbourhoods against organized racists.

## **BEYOND THE BLACK BLOC**

Even more than outside commentators, however, anarchists themselves have debated the character and value of the black bloc strategy. Many have drawn conclusions that would find them in agreement with Epstein's assessment:

A swarm of mosquitoes is good for harassment, for disrupting the smooth operation of power

and thus making it visible. But there are probably limits to the numbers of people willing to take on the role of the mosquito. A movement capable of transforming structures of power will have to involve alliances, many of which will probably require more stable and lasting forms of organization than now exist within the anti-globalization movement (2001: 13).

As Epstein (2001: 2) notes, “telling truth to power is or should be part of radical politics but it is not a substitute for strategy and planning.” For many anarchists the black bloc strategy was fine for a small movement focused on direct action protest politics, but as anarchist movements have grown and developed something of a broader appeal beyond anarchist circles new strategies are necessary. Anarchists who are critical of the black bloc argue that the focus now must be on preparing for longer term struggles by developing roots in community and labor movements new strategies. Its time to drop the masks and come out and walk with the workers, in the words of one anarchist critic.

The black bloc has made the most sense in the context of mass demonstrations in which direct action was certain to be met by a large and often violent police presence. Under circumstances in which simply being out on the street could lead to arrest, detention, trial and possible convictions the anonymity provided by the black bloc offered some protection – for a time. Over time the black bloc has become something of a self-fulfilling prophecy as police shifted their tactics to zero in on the black bloc, targeting its participants for often-severe violence usually before the demonstration even started.

Images of masked figures directly violating some of the most ingrained and unexamined moral and legal assumptions within capitalist democracy, notably the inviolability of private property, will cause a certain shock to the system for many outside observers. At the same time, the upholders of dominant values, such as mainstream media, (which are often owned by the same corporations that are targeted in anti-globalization actions, it should be noted), will seek to contextualize and contain such openly transgressive acts as the black bloc within the customary

modes of understanding. As Graeber (2002: 67) suggests: "It's this scrambling of conventional categories that so throws the forces of order and makes them desperate to bring things back to familiar territory (simple violence): even to the point, as in Genoa, of encouraging fascist hooligans to run riot as an excuse to use overwhelming force against everybody else."

Black bloc participants are aware of the numerous challenges faced in developing effective movements against the state and capital. Part of meeting this challenge is regularly reviewing and revising strategies and tactics. Creativity and unpredictability, hallmarks of the black bloc itself, give the movement strength in the face of a much stronger opponent. To maintain this strength requires developing new approaches. Many anarchists are beginning to focus on other types of efforts, such as rent strikes or alternative unions, that in the long run may prove to be more militant and effective than the black bloc.

As Highleyman (2001) suggests: "They recognize that to be effective, they must rely on the element of surprise. Breaking windows and throwing rocks at cops no longer cut it, they fear, and the bloc has become a culture or an identity rather than a tactic." Because the black bloc has had such a powerfully symbolic place in the emergence of anarchist politics within anti-globalization struggles, and because of its enduring mythic value, there is a danger that the bloc will cease to be viewed and evaluated primarily as one tactic among many. Instead it may be treated as a fetish object, a key part of the activist imaginary.

The black bloc succeeds when it takes the cops by surprise. If the black bloc does nothing but property destruction or cop-confrontation, then the police will develop a strategy to deal with it. If we fight as army versus army, then we will lose. But if we fight like a chaotic ocean always lapping against an immovable rock, then we will win, just as the ocean always wins (Robin Banks quoted in Highleyman, 2001).

Most anarchists recognize that other actions, especially workplace strikes and economic disruptions, are more effective and have greater long-term potential in terms of community

mobilization than do black blocs. If one looks at the most durable and successful examples of community-based anarchist organizing since 1999, such as the efforts of the North Eastern Federation of Anarchist-Communists (NEFAC), one finds many black bloc participants who have turned from summit protests as a major strategy towards less dramatic day-to-day efforts in workplace, anti-poverty and immigration struggles (see Shantz, 2005). At the same time there remains widespread agreement that in the context of political protests, where actions such as strikes are absent, property damage will impact corporations more than the avoidance of property damage will.

## CONCLUSION

The global power of private organizations such as multinational corporations and institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, as well as the secret negotiations over trade deals such as NAFTA, reveal a sharp discrepancy between the rhetoric of democracy and the non-democratic policies and practices of governance bodies both globally and nationally. Anarchists can point to the global demonstrations against the invasion of Iraq, which brought millions of people into the streets around the world, and their utter dismissal by the governments of George W. Bush and Tony Blair as a powerful examples of the futility of protest politics that seek to influence politicians through shaming rituals or appeals to conscience.

For black bloc anarchists, there are no terms for debate, compromise or negotiation with such undemocratic and self-interested organizations. "However you choose to trace their origins, these new tactics are perfectly in accord with the general anarchistic inspiration of the movement, which is less about seizing state power than about exposing, delegitimizing and dismantling mechanisms of rule while winning ever-larger spaces of autonomy from it" (Graeber, 2002: 68). One aspect of that autonomy, forcefully displayed in black bloc actions, is the determination to express one's



needs, desires and commitments in the face of overwhelming power rather than to seek negotiation or compromise with that power. This remains a lengthy and difficult process.

This is very much a work in progress, and creating a culture of democracy among people who have little experience of such things is necessarily a painful and uneven business, full of all sorts of stumblings and false starts, but – as almost any police chief who has faced us on the streets can attest – direct democracy of this sort can be astoundingly effective. And it is difficult to find anyone who has fully participated in such an action whose sense of human possibilities has not been profoundly transformed as a result (Graeber, 2002: 72).

Unlike traditional social movements that organize and mobilize to air grievances or appeal to the conscience of rulers, the black bloc is not looking for a seat at the table or an access point from which state or corporate leaders might be lobbied. Instead, the black bloc asserts that, faced with rulers who are have no conscience in institutions that are largely closed to the public, subordinates must affirm their own identities and values and prepare to defend them. This is a fundamental shift in how social movements have been understood for the past forty or so years.

Indeed this partly accounts for the confusion and misapprehension surrounding the black bloc, even from among fellow activists. The black bloc provides a visible shorthand for a new type of social movement, one that does not seek integration within existing institutions of civil society through pre-established and socially acceptable mechanisms such as civil disobedience or protest (understood as registering dissent).

Following Engin Isin and colleagues one might view the black bloc as an "act of citizenship" in which people develop autonomous forms of solidarity and social relations on terms that are relevant to their communities rather than according to the preferences of sanctioned authorities. This is not a citizenship based on state membership or legal entitlement but is rather an example of citizenship for what Giorgio Agamben calls "coming communities."

## NOTES

1. Originally the title of Alexander Berkman's newspaper of the nineteen-teens it has been adopted by contemporary anarchists in Minnesota for their own paper.

2. This was the code name assumed by the assassin and terrorist Sergei Nechaev, a colleague of Bakunin's and author of the notorious Catechism of a Revolutionary. Nechaev was the source for Dostoevsky's character Peter Verkhovensky in *The Possessed*.

3. This characterization comes famously from Lenin (1965), 'Left-Wing' Communism, An Infantile Disorder.

4. See Plekhanov's (1912) confused polemic in *Anarchism and Socialism*.

# CONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHY: THEORIZING DIY POLITICS AND ANARCHIST TRANSFER CULTURES

Anarchists are not satisfied with simply protesting against capitalist society and centralized, hierarchical power. Neither are they content to wait for a post-revolutionary utopian future. The “new world” must come now, from within the “old world.” Contemporary anarchists are not satisfied to live in the shadows of the government or State; they seek its complete dissolution. To develop the skills and resources that might contribute to this, anarchists create counter-organizations, which foreshadow the structures of the future society.

As we have seen, anarchists do disagree over the tactics which they view as necessary to realize a free society. Anarchists also vary greatly in their visions of the libertarian future. Unlike utopian thinkers, anarchists exercise extreme caution when discussing “blueprints” of future social relations since they believe that it is always up to those seeking freedom to decide how they desire to live. Still, there are a few features common to anarchist visions of a free society

While anarchists are not in agreement about the means to bring about the future libertarian society, they are clear that means and ends cannot be separated. Anarchists argue that for most of human history people have organized themselves to satisfy their own needs. Social organization is conceived as a network of local voluntary groupings. Anarchists propose a decentralized society, without a central political body, in which people manage their own affairs free from any coercion or external authority. These self-governed communes could federate freely at regional (or larger) levels to ensure co-ordination or mutual defence. Their autonomy and specificity must be maintained, however. Each locality will decide freely which social, cultural and economic arrangements,

to pursue. Rather than a pyramid, anarchist associations would form a web

Anarchists sometimes point to post offices and railway networks as examples of the way in which local groups and associations can combine to provide complex networks of functions without any central authority (Ward, 2004). Postal services work as a result of voluntary agreements between different post offices, in different countries, without any central world postal authority (Ward, 2004). As Ward suggests: “Coordination requires neither uniformity nor bureaucracy” (2004: 89).

Anarchist future presents express “elements of refusal” or non-co-operation with authority. Anarchists thereby attempt to undermine the State by refusing to obey its demands. This is more than simple civil disobedience since it also contains a positive character along with a defensive one. Rather than a violent overthrow of the State in a destructive Revolution, contemporary anarchists are more likely to pursue constructive paths to social transformation through the creation of free zones and libertarian social relations. This involves a vast range of different tactics ranging from conventional means such as demonstrations, boycotts, occupations or strikes to less familiar means such as poetic terrorism or electronic civil disobedience. Each tactic involves “propaganda of the deed”; an educational practice which shows that things can be done differently.

While their long-term goal is to replace the State by a federation of self-managing communes, contemporary anarchists are not content to dream of a mythic future. They try and change their lives here and now (Marshall, 1993: 638).

Conceptualized as an event with specific temporality, as something for a future time, revolution appears distant.

Todd Gitlin writing about SDS and the new left of the sixties said at the time that if we failed it would be a “failure of nerve.” Perhaps he was right, then. But today I would say that if we fail it will have been a failure of imagination. Most people have no sense of how to move outside the present – even in their imagination (Ehrlich, 1996b: 341).

Rather than violent confrontation with the State, which in the North American context would amount mass suicide, contemporary anarchists follow Gustav Landauer's invocation to make the State obsolete by forming alternative arrangements and organizations.

Despite the dominant authoritarian trend in existing society, most contemporary anarchists therefore try and extend spheres of free action in the hope that they will one day become the mainstream of social life. In difficult times, they are, like Paul Goodman, revolutionary conservatives, maintaining older traditions of mutual aid and free enquiry when under threat. In more auspicious moments, they move out from free zones until by their example and wisdom they begin to convert the majority of people to their libertarian vision (Marshall, 1993: 659).

Large-scale civil non-co-operation and or militant confrontation with the State and Capital obviously require previous successes in organization and experience. Thus, as Ehrlich (1996b) notes, these are necessarily "later stages" in overcoming archaic society. First, anarchists must develop alternative institutions. These are the building blocks of what he refers to as the anarchist transfer culture, an approximation of the new society within the context of the old (Ehrlich, 1996a). Within them anarchists try to meet the basic demands of building sustainable communities.

## **ROOTS AND BRANCHES: LINEAGES OF CONSTRUCTIVE ANARCHY**

While some commentators question the pedigree of contemporary anarchism, I would suggest that there are clear precedents in the works of classical anarchist writers. Proudhon, for example, sought social transformation through co-operative experiments such as workers' associations and the People's Bank, urging workers to emancipate themselves by constructing their own alternative economic institutions. Bakunin, for his part, viewed trade unions not merely as

economic institutions but as the “embryo of the administration of the future” and argued that workers should pursue co-operatives rather than strikes (Marshall 627). Recognizing the impossibility of competing with capitalist enterprises he called for the pooling of all private property as the collective property of freely federated workers’ associations. These ideas would serve as the intellectual impetus for anarcho-syndicalism and its vision of the industrial syndicate as the seed of the future society.

The primary historical influences on everyday anarchy are Kropotkin’s anarcho-communism and the libertarian socialism of Gustav Landauer. In *Mutual Aid* Kropotkin documents the centrality of co-operation within animal and human groups and links anarchist theory with everyday experience. Kropotkin’s definition suggests that anarchism, in part, “would represent an interwoven network, composed of an infinite variety of groups and federations of all sizes and degrees... temporary or more or less permanent...for all possible purposes” (quoted in Ward and Goodway, 2003: 94). As Ward (2004: 29) reminds us: “A century ago Kropotkin noted the endless variety of ‘friendly societies, the unities of oddfellows, the village and town clubs organised for meeting the doctors’ bills’ built up by working-class self-help.”

Of great, if often overlooked, significance for a rethinking of contemporary anarchy are the under-appreciated and largely misunderstood writings of Max Stirner and Gustav Landauer. One detects a uniquely Stirnerite presence in Bey’s work in particular. Like Stirner’s “egoist” the anarchist of the *TAZ* awaits no salvation by abstractions such as “the future.” It waits for no Idea (whether anarchism, socialism or some other) to free it. The immediatist strategy of creating alternative futures in the present or autonomous zones is reminiscent of Stirner’s appeal to “insurrection” rather than Revolution.

The Revolution aimed at new arrangements; insurrection leads us no longer to let ourselves be arranged, but to arrange ourselves, and sets no glittering hopes on ‘institutions’. It is not a fight against the established, since, if it prospers, the established collapses of itself; it is only

the working forth of men [sic] out of the established<sup>15</sup> (Marshall 638).

Anarchist styles of sociation and organization express the persistence of archaic forms within the (post-) modern context. They reveal the return of the repressed in sociological types exemplary of “mechanical solidarity” and *Gemeinschaft*.

Perhaps most interesting touchstone in the current re-envisioning of anarchy has been the largely forgotten work of Gustav Landauer, the most significant anarchist thinker in Germany after Max Stirner. Landauer’s views, where they are known at all today, beyond anarchist circles, come to people not through his own works but largely through a chapter in *Paths to Utopia* by the existentialist philosopher and sociologist Martin Buber who was Landauer’s friend and editor. Influenced by the works of the sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies, Landauer identified himself as an “anarchist socialist” to distinguish himself from popular currents of Stirnerist egoism. Drawing upon Tönnies distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (organic community) and *Gesellschaft* (atomized society), Landauer desired the rebirth of community from within the shell of statist and capitalist society. The forms within which the new society would gestate were to be the *bunde*, local, face-to-face associations. Like Proudhon and Bakunin before him, Landauer advocated the formation of producers’ and consumers’ cooperatives.

The anarchist-socialist community, for Landauer, is not something which awaits a future revolution. Rather it is the growing discovery of something already present: “This likeness, this equality in inequality, this peculiar quality that binds people together, this common spirit is an actual fact”<sup>16</sup> (Marshall 411). In as much as anarchism would involve revolution, this “revolution,” for Landauer, would consist of elements of refusal in which individuals withdraw co-operation with existing state institutions and create their own positive alternatives.

The state is a condition, a certain relationship among human beings, a mode of behaviour between them; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently toward one another...We are the state, and we shall continue to be the state until we have created the institu-

tions that form a real community and society of men<sup>17</sup> (Marshall 411).

Landauer thus advocated the development of self-directed communities which would permit a break from institutions of authority. Revolution, reconceptualized by Landauer as a gradual rejection of coercive social relations through the development of alternatives, was not a borderline between social conditions (marking temporalities of “pre-” and “post-”) but a continuous principle spanning vast expanses of time (Marshall 412).

This view of revolution as a process of constructing alternative forms of sociation as models of a new society is largely shared by contemporary anarchists.

Revolution is a process, and even the eradication of coercive institutions will not automatically create a liberatory society. We create that society by building new institutions, by changing the character of our social relationships, by changing ourselves – and throughout that process by changing the distribution of power in society....

If we cannot begin this revolutionary project here and now, then we cannot make a revolution (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, DeLeon and Morris 5).

For Paul Goodman, an American anarchist whose writings influenced the 1960s New Left and counterculture, anarchist futures-present serve as necessary acts of “drawing the line” against the authoritarian and oppressive forces in society. Anarchism, in Goodman’s view, was never oriented only towards some glorious future; it involved also the preservation of past freedoms and previous libertarian traditions of social interaction. “A free society cannot be the substitution of a ‘new order’ for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of the social life”<sup>18</sup> (Marshall 598). Utopian thinking will always be important, Goodman argued, in order to open the imagination to new social possibilities, but the contemporary anarchist would also need to be a conservator of society’s benevolent tendencies.

In many of his writings the anarcho-syndicalist Sam Dolgoff stresses the importance of constructive anarchism, rich in positive and practical ideas rather than instinctual acts and nega-



tive or reactive stances. Still, constructive anarchy does not rely on ready-made plans or “scientific” calculation. The basis for constructive anarchism is already available in currently existing social relations, even if these relations are dominated and obscured by the authoritarian society around them.

The anarchist theoreticians limited themselves to suggest the utilization of all the useful organisms in the old society in order to reconstruct the new. They envisioned the generalization of practices and tendencies which are already in effect. The very fact that autonomy, decentralization and federalism are more practical alternatives to centralism and statism already presupposes that these vast organizational networks now performing the functions of society are prepared to replace the old bankrupt hyper-centralized administrations. That the “elements of the new society are already developing in the collapsing bourgeois society” (Marx) is a fundamental principle shared by all tendencies in the socialist movement (5).

If society is “a vast interlocking network of cooperative labour” (5) then those networks of cooperation will provide a good starting point, if only a starting point, towards throwing off the bonds of coercion, authoritarianism and exploitation. It is in the relations of cooperative labour, which encompasses millions of daily acts, that one can find the real basis for social life. Without these networks, often unrecognized and unpaid, society would collapse.

What is needed is emancipation from authoritarian institutions OVER society and authoritarianism WITHIN the organizations themselves. Above all, they must be infused revolutionary spirit and confidence in the creative capacities of the people. Kropotkin in working out the sociology of anarchism, has opened an avenue of fruitful research which has been largely neglected by social scientists busily engaged in mapping out new areas for state control (5).

A beginning step in these processes of emancipation is the abolition of the wage system and the distribution of goods and services according to the old communist principle, “from each according to ability, to each according to need.”

Libertarian Communism is the organization of society without the State and without capitalist property relations. To establish Libertarian Communism it will not be necessary to invent artificial forms of organization. The new society will emerge from the “shell of the old”. The elements of the future society are already planted in the existing order. They are the syndicate (union) and the Free Commune (sometimes called the ‘free municipality’) which are old, deeply rooted, non-Statist popular institutions spontaneously organized and embracing all towns and villages in urban and in rural areas. The Free Commune is ideally suited to cope successfully with the problems of social and economic life in libertarian communities. Within the Free Commune there is also room for cooperative groups and other associations, as well as individuals to meet their own needs (providing, of course, that they do not employ hired labor for wages). The terms ‘Libertarian’ and ‘Communism’ denote the fusion of two inseparable concepts, the individual prerequisites for the Free Society: COLLECTIVE AND INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY (6).

Of course, experiences of both the syndicate and the free commune have been greatly eroded, if not entirely eliminated, over centuries of statist imposition. This situation has been addressed by the anarchist Paul Goodman in rather poignant terms: “The pathos of oppressed people, however, is that, if they break free, they don’t know what to do. Not having been autonomous, they don’t know what it’s like, and before they learn, they have new managers who are not in a hurry to abdicate” (Goodman quoted in Ward, 2004: 69). That means that people have to construct approximations in which the social relations of a future society can be learned, experienced and nurtured.

This is part of the impetus behind the creation of “free schools,” “infoshops,” industrial unions and squats. These are places in which the life of the free commune, buried beneath the debris of authoritarian systems, can be glimpsed again, if only in a limited form.

Anarchism envisions a flexible, pluralist society where all the needs of mankind would be supplied by an infinite variety of voluntary associations. The world is honeycombed with affinity

groups from chess clubs to anarchist propaganda groups. They are formed, dissolved and reconstituted according to the fluctuating whims and fancies of the individual adherents. It is precisely because they “reflect individual preferences” that such groups are the lifeblood of the free society (8).

In his discussion of the US labor movement, “The American Labor Movement: A New Beginning”(ALM), Dolgoff reminds readers that the labor movement once put a great deal of energy into building more permanent forms of alternative institutions. An expanding variety of mutual aid functions were provided through unions in the early days of labor.

They created a network of cooperative institutions of all kinds: schools, summer camps for children and adults, homes for the aged, health and cultural centers, insurance plans, technical education, housing, credit associations, et cetera. All these, and many other essential services were provided by the people themselves, long before the government monopolized social services wasting untold billions on a top-heavy bureaucratic parasitical apparatus; long before the labor movement was corrupted by “business unionism” (ALM: 31).

That Dolgoff learned these often forgotten or overlooked lesson from a critical engagement with the labor movement is telling. As a militant anarchist Dolgoff had little time for those who, seeking comfort or moral privilege in anarchist “purity,” refuse to engage in the real struggles in which people find themselves. Anarchy cannot be abstracted from day-to-day life situations and the difficult choices with which people are confronted.

There is no “pure” anarchism. There is only the application of anarchist principles to the realities of social living. The aim of anarchism is to stimulate forces that propel society in a libertarian direction. It is only from this standpoint that the relevance of anarchism to modern life can be properly assessed (8).

As Dolgoff concludes, anarchism is no “panacea that will miraculously cure all the ills of the social body” (10). Anarchism is simply a “guide to action based on a realistic conception of

social reconstruction” (10-11). Far from the economic determinism or workerism which syndicalists are so often accused of, Dolgoff’s vision shares many important insights with the views of recent “cultural” anarchists such as Paul Goodman and Colin Ward.

### **ANARCHY IN ACTION: COLIN WARD’S SOCIOLOGICAL ANARCHISM**

Perhaps the broadest and most sustained vision of constructive anarchy comes from Colin Ward. Ward is best known through his third book *Anarchy in Action* (1973) which was, until his 2004 contribution to the Oxford Press “Short Introduction” series, *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction*, his only book explicitly about anarchist theory. Longtime anarchist George Woodcock identified *Anarchy in Action* as one of the most important theoretical works on anarchism and I would have to agree. It is in the pages of that relatively short work that Ward makes explicit his highly distinctive version of anarchism, what I term an anarchy of everyday life.

Ward follows Kropotkin in identifying himself as an anarchist communist and has even suggested that *Anarchy in Action* is merely an extended contemporary footnote to *Mutual Aid* (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 14). Still, Ward goes beyond Kropotkin in the importance he places on co-operative groups in anarchist social transformation.

Ward is critical of anarchists’ preoccupation with anarchist history and in his own works prefers to emphasize the here-and-now and the immediate future (Ward and Goodway, 2003). Ward describes his approach to anarchism as one that is based on actual experiences or practical examples rather than theories or hypotheses. Through the responses of readers to articles published in *Anarchy* Ward found that for many people anarchy aptly described the “organized chaos” that people experienced during their daily lives, even at their workplaces. Incredibly, this perspective on anarchism was so outside of the parameters of mainstream anarchism that in

1940, when Ward tried to convince his Freedom Press Group colleagues to print a pamphlet on the squatters' movement "it wasn't thought that this is somehow relevant to anarchism" (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 15).

While having no formal background in sociology Ward argues for the importance of taking a sociological approach to the world. In developing a sociological anarchism Ward takes up the call of fellow anarchist and popular sex educator Alex Comfort who was one of the first to argue that anarchists had much to learn from sociologists. In his work *Delinquency* (1951) Comfort called for anarchism to become a libertarian action sociology.

Ward draws some of his inspiration from the sociology of autonomous groups. His readings of the now out of print sociology bulletin *Autonomous Groups* contributed to understandings of capacities for influencing social change within informal networks such as the Batignolles Group, founders of Impressionism and the Fabian Society. Notably these groups were incredibly effective, exercising an influence well beyond their numbers. As Ward (2003: 48) notes because anarchists traditionally "have conceived of the whole of social organisation as a series of interlocking networks of autonomous groups." Thus it is important that anarchists pay serious attention to the lessons to be learned from successful ones.

Autonomous groups that he has studied or participated in are characterized by "having a secure internal network based on friendship and shared skills, and a series of external networks of contacts in a variety of fields" (Ward, 2003: 44). Among these groups Ward includes the Freedom Press Group, A.S. Neill's Summerhill School of alternative education, Burgess Hill School and South London's Peckham Health Centre which offered approaches to social medicine. Autonomous groups are distinguished from other forms of organization characterized by "hierarchies of relationships, fixed divisions of labour, and explicit rules and practices" (Ward, 2003: 48). Autonomous groups are marked by a high degree of individual autonomy within the group, reliance on direct reciprocities in decision-making, for decisions affecting all group members, and the

temporary and fluctuating character of leadership.

When people have no control over, or responsibility for, crucial decisions over important aspects of life, whether regarding housing, education or work, these areas of social life become obstacles to personal fulfillment and collective development. Yet when people are free to make major decisions and contribute to the planning and implementation of decisions involving key areas of daily life there are improvements in individual and social well-being (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 76). Ward finds resonance in the findings of industrial psychologists who suggest that satisfaction in work is very strongly related to the “span of autonomy,” or the proportion of work time in which workers are free to make and act on their own decisions.

The provisions of the welfare state are, of course, contradictory and most anarchists do not take a cavalier approach to what have been important, and often necessary, services for many people, including many anarchists. In discussing the welfare state, Colin Ward sums up its positive and negative aspects in short: “The positive feature of welfare legislation is that, contrary to the capitalist ethic, it is a testament to human solidarity. The negative feature is precisely that it is an arm of the state” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 79). Ward points out that the provision of social welfare did not originate from government through the “welfare state.” Rather, it emerged in practice “from the vast network of friendly societies and mutual aid organizations that had sprung up through working-class self-help in the 19th century” (Ward, 2004: 27). This is the same point made by Sam Dolgoff with reference to the importance of mutual aid groups for the provision of education to elder care within the labour movement in the US.

In numerous works Ward has illustrated how, since the late nineteenth century, “‘the tradition of fraternal and autonomous associations springing up from below’ has been successively displaced by one of ‘authoritarian institutions directed from above’” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 17). As Ward suggests, this displacement was actively pursued, with often disastrous results, in the development of the social citizenship state: “The great tradition of working-class self-help and

mutual aid was written off not just as irrelevant, but as an actual impediment, by the political and professional architects of the welfare state...The contribution that the recipients had to make...was ignored as a mere embarrassment” (quoted in Ward and Goodway, 2003: 18). From his research on housing movements Ward comments on “the initially working-class self-help building societies stripping themselves of the final vestiges of mutuality; and this degeneration has existed alongside a tradition of municipal housing that was adamantly opposed to the principle of dweller control” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 18).

Ward’s work is directed towards providing useful “pointers to the way ahead if we are to stand any chance of reinstating the self-organisation and mutual aid that have been lost” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 18). Ward focuses on recent examples, such as holiday camps in Britain, “in which a key role was played by the major organisations of working-class self-help and mutual aid, the co-operative movement and trade unions” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 17). A significant theme in the perspectives of everyday anarchy is “the historic importance of such institutions in the provision of welfare and the maintenance of social solidarity” (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 17).

## **ORGANIZING POSTMODERNISM?: HAKIM BEY**

The publication, in 1985, of T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism signaled the arrival of Peter Lamborn Wilson’s mystic alter ego Hakim Bey as an important voice in the recent renewal of anarchist theory. In the years since the publication of T.A.Z., Bey’s work proved both immensely influential and controversial. Indeed, the debates it inspired in the pages of Anarchy magazine and various “do-it-yourself” publications within the anarchist milieu were among the most lively in decades. Young anarchists took Bey’s call for “poetic terrorism” as inspiration for the waves of “@-zones” (anarchist community centres) which emerged

in inner-city neighbourhoods across North America in the 1990s. Others (most notably Murray Bookchin) condemned Bey for supposedly offering up apolitical “post-modern” bohemianism in the guise of anarchism. Wherever one stands vis à vis Bey’s vision of anarchy, however, there is no question that he continues to pose a creative and intelligent challenge to traditional notions of what constitutes critical theory and radical politics in the new millenium.

For Bey, the future of radical politics (and the future, or non-future, of what used to be called the “Left”) remains at the forefront of concerns. In a number of publications that have been widely read and influential within anarchist circles Bey discusses the prospects for resistance to what he terms “too-late capitalism,” the mono-culture of global capital. Among his consistent preoccupations is “the revolutionary potential of everyday life” (1996: 7). His primary concern rests with the possibilities for multiplying the secret or clandestine spaces in which commodification might be avoided and the creative powers of everyday life (re)affirmed.

Much of Bey’s writings, especially his book *Millenium*, revolves around his view that capitalism, with the collapse and discrediting of socialism, has finally conquered the world. “Capitalism is now at liberty to declare war & deal directly as enemies with all former ‘alternatives’ (including ‘democracy’)” (1996: 52). There is no longer a “third path,” (or third way or Third World) since the second (Communism) has disappeared. According to Bey the newly enthroned “one-world” (of money and finance capital) obliterates space and presence reducing complexity to sameness. Almost everything enters into representation in the “empire of the image” (of which money is the exemplar). This leaves us with a simple choice: “either we accept ourselves as the ‘last humans’, or else we accept ourselves as the opposition. (Either automonotony – or autonomy)” (1996: 30). Neutrality is no option and for Bey the only way out is anarchy.

While, on the surface, seeming to echo neoliberal “end of history theorists” such as Francis Fukuyama and Daniel Bell, Bey is not yet ready to yield to their hubris. The one world’s claims are, after all, spurious. Every enclosure has an outside, “not to mention a liminality around



every border, an area of ambiguity" (1996: 35). It is here that the uprising, the opposition, finds its "heartland."

In a short essay in *Millennium*, "For and Against Interpretation," Bey decries Capital's monopoly of interpretation in the one world. This monopoly results in a "scarcity of interpretation" (60) for the rest of us which renders us as objects within the interpretations of (Capital's) authority. Not only does it mediate our material transactions, Capital stands between us and awareness. Everything must be mediated by money; nothing ("not even air, water, or dirt") is to be experienced outside of this mediation ("the exacerbated mediation of a power that can only grow by creating scarcity and separation," 64). Against Capital's monopoly, Bey renews classical anarchist calls for self-creativity, and convivial meaning production. No interpreters (revolutionary or otherwise), only companions in networks of reciprocity.

For Bey, and this is a point taken up by later writers such as Graeber and Day, only lived experience (desire) can present another world beyond the enclosures of money. "The 'spirituality of pleasure' lies precisely in a presence that cannot be represented without disappearing...." (1996: 32). (Bey rejects the claims of advertisers that capital can satisfy desire. Instead he follows Walter Benjamin in arguing that capital, rather than liberating desire, only exacerbates longing. "Capital liberates itself by enslaving desire" (1996: 32).) Against the hermetism of the one-world "risk society," its management of desire and imagination, its dread of carnality, Bey advocates "a reenchantment of the forbidden" and a return to the senses (taste, touch and smell against odourless civilization). Eros must escape the enclosures, or we must rescue it!

Fortunately, resistance to "the Market" persists in gift economies of reciprocity, mutuality and redistribution (in do-it-yourself (DIY) cultures and underground economies). Drawing upon the economic work of Karl Polanyi and the anthropology of Pierre Clastres, the author highlights the resistance that has met every threat of "the Market's" emergence. In keeping with an anarchist perspective Bey looks to the "self-made aspect of the social" (DIY), a spontaneous ordering of

reciprocity, as expressing a “non-predatory expansiveness”, a “convivial connectivity,” an “eros of the social” (1996: 42-43). The one world is never alone; the archaic presence of revolution still stands as its Other.

The hegemonism of the one world leads Bey to retreat from his earlier post-modern enthusiasm for aesthetic withdrawal (“disappearance as will to power”) as a mode of resistance, however. In the new millenium there is only capitulation or opposition and Bey is now clear that flight, far from offering an instance of resistance, is now marked primarily as an instance of capitulation. (This does not diminish the tactical importance of clandestinity, however; the secret remains revolutionary in its escape from absorption into the totality).

He finds the most (indeed the only) interesting beginning of this rethinking, once more, in the EZLN in Chiapas. The EZLN is interesting both because it found its inspiration beyond the “Internationale” (because it appeared at the same moment the U.S.S.R. disappeared), and because it was the first revolutionary movement to define itself against “global neo-liberalism). Chiapas is, according to Bey, the first revolution of the new millenium.

The result is a provocative and challenging “neo-Proudhonian” rendering of the Zapatista rebellion; one which, unfortunately, is not sufficiently developed. (A note of hope is certainly struck: “The goal of ‘neo-Proudhonian federalism” would be the recognition of freedom at every point of organization in the rhizome, no matter how small – even to a single individual, or any tiny group of 'secessionists'" (1996: 101-102).) Several anarchist writers have since attempted to pursue Bey's lead in developing this Deleuzian reading of anarchy.

Despite the best intentions Bey's enthusiasm, as is the case for those who have followed his approach, for revolutionary potentialities (irrespective of sources) gets in the way of a searching analysis of the political conditions which make a non-hegemonized difference possible (or which encourage instead the transformation of difference into the atavistic or xenophobic particularisms of ethnic nationalism or religious fundamentalism). His primary response is to hold out the

possibility of federation and affinity. Likewise, he overstates the case that these approaches are clearly opposed to Capital.

Among anarchists Hakim Bey is at the forefront of efforts recently to develop the political implications of the writings of French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and to bring the insights of these analyses to bear on socio-political practice. Along with critics such as Ronaldo Perez and the Critical Art Ensemble, Bey has attempted a conjoining of Deleuzian analysis with anarchism. One exciting outcome of his adventurous forays into theory is to re-read Proudhonian federalism as Deleuzian rhizome. Here the "non-hegemonic particularities" of federalism express a "nomadological mutuality of synergistic solidarities", the revolutionary structure of opposition to the "one world" of capitalism (1996: 43). For Bey, and other anarchists who have drawn from postmodern theories, this is the structure of revolution and resistance in the contemporary context.

For too long, perhaps, political theorists and activists have been satisfied with dated and worn categories and definitions having as their sole recommendation familiarity. Certainly a critical and extensive re-thinking is overdue. Some (especially Marxists) will feel uneasy with Bey's invitation "to re-read Proudhon, Marx, Nietzsche, Landauer, Fourier, Benjamin, Bakhtin, the IWW, etc. – the way the EZLN re-reads Zapata!" (45).

While expressing a distaste for "hyper-intellectual, pyrotechnical writing" and the contemporary vogue of pessimism among cultural theorists, Bey decries what he sees as a reactionary "seduction into inactivity and political despair" (13). He seeks another way, preferring an "anti-pessimistic" (though not optimistic) politics which seeks the revolutionary potential of humour.

In the end, Bey's discussion itself, like much of the post-modern anarchism that has followed, remains esoteric, of greater interest (and significance) at this point to cultural theorists than to activists seeking strategic assistance in their daily battles against the one world. Such effusions have surely held greater appeal for academic anarchists than for community activists or revolutionaries. Hakim Bey has taken a worthwhile step in renewing socio-political thought by

bringing the insights of Deleuzian theory to social action. It appears the journey still has several more miles to go.

### **LISTEN ANARCHIST!: MURRAY BOOKCHIN'S WARNING**

Making matters even more interesting, that which currently passes for anarchism often materializes in strange, unrecognizable forms bearing little resemblance to what is traditionally known as anarchism, those historic movements against coercive authority, hierarchy and injustice in their many guises. It is precisely this novelty of contemporary anarchism which has prompted one of anarchism's major proponents to sound a warning.

Penned by perhaps the most significant and widely read anarchist thinker of the post-WW II era, *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism* exploded like a bomb amongst the anarchist communities of North America, becoming one of the most controversial books in a long line of controversial literature. That most of the responses have consisted of angry denunciations of Bookchin, going so far as to question his character and motive, suggests that the work has struck a very raw nerve indeed.

In the introductory chapter, "A Note to the Reader," Bookchin situates his book as a response to "the fact that anarchism stands at a turning point in its long and turbulent history" (1). For Bookchin, however, this turning point is not one which promises renewal as some have celebrated. Rather, anarchism now finds itself at a day of reckoning because contemporary anarchists have forsaken the revolutionary tradition of anarchism, preferring to become, in Bookchin's view, just another bohemian subculture with no interest in confronting the powers of State and Capital. Bookchin suggests that contemporary anarchism represents a fatal retreat from the social concerns (and communal politics) of classical anarchism into episodic adventurism and a decadent egoism.

This unfortunate transformation threatens to make anarchism irrelevant at precisely the moment when it is most needed as a counter-force to globalization and the social dislocations engendered by neoliberal policies. Through the book's two chapters, "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism" and "The Left That Was: A Personal Reflection," Bookchin offers his meditations on what has gone wrong with anarchism as he sees it and how anarchists might return to the social roots of their past glories.

The book's principal essay "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism" consists of an extended polemic against the main theoretical proponents of so-called "lifestyle anarchism." Bookchin identifies four main streams of lifestyle anarchism: "individualist anarchism," "mystical or irrationalist anarchism," "anti-technologism," and "neo-primitivism." Coming under particular scrutiny are the works of L. Susan Brown (1993) (individualism), Hakim Bey and his notion of Temporary Autonomous Zones (1991) (mysticism), and the now-infamous John Zerzan (1994) neo-primitivist anarchist and supposed guru to the black bloc anarchists who played such an important part in shutting down the 1999 WTO meetings in Seattle. Bookchin also manages to single out for condemnation the editors and writers of the *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy* magazines, two of the most influential anarchist periodicals in North America.

Bookchin recognizes that the history of anarchism has always expressed a tension between a personalistic commitment (emphasizing individual autonomy) and a collectivist commitment (emphasizing social freedoms). He explains that with the advent of anarcho-syndicalism (revolutionary unionism) and anarcho-communism at the turn of the twentieth century, individualist anarchism was largely marginalized amidst the emergence of mass workers' movements and the organized power of general strikes. Individualist anarchism came to be seen as little more than bohemian exotica, a distinctly petty bourgeois indulgence characteristic of liberalism rather than anarchism (7). Rather than reaching any reconciliation, however, these tendencies have coexisted in constant tension with either becoming more predominant according to context or era.

Indeed, this tension has been celebrated by some anarchists as evidence of anarchism's pluralism, ideological tolerance and creativity (4). For Bookchin, however, it is the very failure of anarchism to resolve this conflict over the relationship of the individual to the collective that has given rise to the worrisome condition in which he finds contemporary anarchism.

Bookchin derides the "polymorphous concepts of resistance" and "theoretical pluralism" of heterotopian anarchism. Instead he proposes a "democratic communalism" in which anarchism is conceived as "a majoritarian administration of the public sphere" (57). His vision of anarchy allows for the "rule" of the majority and non-consensual decisions. This seems a step backward for anarchist conceptions of democracy, however. It does not require much imagination to envision the possibly authoritarian implications of Bookchin's communalism.

Overall, Bookchin fails to understand (or to admit) the complexly nuanced relationship between prefigurative and "realist" tendencies in anarchism, seeing an "unbridgeable chasm" rather than an unavoidable byproduct of the innovation and experimentation of people seeking to question profoundly all established conventions. It is precisely this creative rethinking of accepted authority from which anarchism has drawn its strength and sustenance, and which has served as the source of its renown. A glance at most anarchist publications actually shows a lively and engaged mix of prefigurative and realist, "individualist" and "socialist" perspectives and practices. Likewise, Bookchin chooses to overlook the intermingling of lifestyle and social anarchists in action. For example, the members of the ultra-lifestylist Trumbull Theatre Complex in Detroit recently affiliated to the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. The discussions in this work of "Who's Emma?" and the "Anarchist Free Space" show clearly this intermingling of tendencies.

Bookchin identifies lifestylists as anti-theoretical, yet his book is entirely devoted to a dissection of lifestyle theories and theorists. For someone so concerned with impacts upon activists they are noticeably absent from his discussion. This suggests, if anything, that he is out of touch with what anarchists are actually doing. The intense, and theoretically sophisticated, commit-

ment of anarchist activists, including the “lifestylist” black bloc, in movements against capitalist globalization offers perhaps the clearest indication of how badly off the mark Bookchin was.

His characterization of lifestylists’ commitment to imagination, desire, ecstasy and everyday life as apolitical suggests that Bookchin is also out of touch with the insights of social movements which have long recognized that the personal is indeed political. Additionally, Bookchin’s claim that during the heyday of social anarchism individualists exercised hardly any influence, is undermined if one considers only the case of Emma Goldman whom Bookchin himself derides as an extreme individualist, “a Nietzschean” (8). For Bookchin the only approved forms of social action seem to be creating organizations and developing programs. Cultural activism is missing from his conception of politics. However, some of the most striking acts of lifestyle anarchism, including culture jamming, squats, micro-radio broadcasts and free spaces, are profoundly social, directed at disrupting the passifying effects of consumer society and the practices of social production and reproduction.

Furthermore, it is not even accurate to charge lifestylists with “allowing no room for social institutions, political organizations, and radical programs” (51). Rather, lifestylists are concerned with developing new forms which are appropriate to the needs and wishes of contemporary participants. Most anarchists are social anarchists who still believe in the possibility and necessity of social transformation. Bookchin’s deep nostalgia for past practices (even failed and discredited ones) again interferes with his understanding of what today’s anarchists are trying to accomplish.

That Bookchin is out of touch with anarchist practice is perhaps most clearly reflected in his assessment that “precisely at a time when mass disillusionment with the state has reached unprecedented proportions, anarchism is in retreat” (59). He even blames this “failure of anarchism” upon “the insularity of lifestyle anarchism” (59). Nothing could be further from the truth. Anarchism has enjoyed a tremendous comeback recently and the creativity and vibrancy of figurative projects has contributed much to this.

## VALUES OVER VALUE

Constructive anarchy is about developing ways in which people enable themselves to take control of their lives and participate meaningfully in the decision-making processes that affect them, whether education, housing, work or food. Anarchists note that changes in the structure of work, notably so-called lean production, flexibalization and the institutionalization of precarious labour, have stolen people's time away from the family along with the time that might otherwise be devoted to activities in the community (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 107). In response people must find ways to escape the capitalist law of value, to pursue their own values rather than to produce value for capital.

The notion of self-valorization, as used by contemporary anarchists and libertarian communists builds upon Marx's discussion of use value versus exchange value. While under communist social relations there will be no exchange value, what is produced will still retain use value. People produce things because they have some kind of use for them; they meet some need or desire. This is where the qualitative aspect of production comes in. Generally people prefer products that are well-made, function as planned, are not poisonous and so on. Under capitalism, exchange value, in which a coat can get two pairs of shoes, predominates use value. This is the quantitative aspect of value that doesn't care whether the product is durable, shoddy or toxic as long as it secures its (potential) value in sale or other exchange with something else.

And capitalism's driving focus on the quantitative at the expense of the qualitative also comes to dominate human labour. The quality (skill, pleasure, creativity) of the particular work that people do isn't primarily relevant for the capitalist (except that skilled labour costs more to produce and carries more exchange value). That's partly because exchange is based on the quantity of 'average-socially-necessary-labour-time' embodied in the product human labour produces. That simply means that if some firm takes a longer time to produce something on outdated machinery



they can't claim the extra labour time they take, due to inefficiencies, compared to a firm that produces more quickly using updated technology, and that's one reason why outmoded producers go under).

Capitalist production is geared towards exchange as the only way that surplus value is actually realized rather than being potential; the capitalist can't bank surplus as value until the product has been exchanged. Use value plays a part only to the extent that something has to have some use for people or else they would not buy it; well, if the thing seems totally useless the bosses still have advertising to convince people otherwise. Under other non-capitalist "modes of production", such as feudalism, most production is geared towards use value production rather than exchange value.

Surely if, under communism, people are producing to meet their needs, they will continue to produce use values (and even a surplus of them in case of emergency) without regard for exchange value (which would, certainly, be absent in a truly communist society anyway). Unless one is talking about a communism of uselessness perhaps. Certainly people would value their work (qualitatively) in ways that cannot be imagined now since they would be meeting their community's needs and would try to do so with some joy and pleasure in work, providing decent products without fouling up the environment.

## CONCLUSION

Colin Ward suggests that anarchism, "far from being a speculative vision of a future society... is a description of a mode of human organization, rooted in the experience of everyday life, which operates side by side with, and in spite of, the dominant authoritarian trends of our society" (Ward, 1973: 11) As many recent anarchist writings suggest, the potential for resistance might be found anywhere in everyday life.<sup>19</sup> If power is exercised everywhere, it might give rise to resis-

tance everywhere. Present-day anarchists like to suggest that a glance across the landscape of contemporary society reveals many groupings which are anarchist in practice if not in ideology.

Examples include the leaderless small groups developed by radical feminists, coops, clinics, learning networks, media collectives, direct action organizations; the spontaneous groupings that occur in response to disasters, strikes, revolutions and emergencies; community-controlled day-care centers; neighborhood groups; tenant and workplace organizing; and so on (Ehrlich, Ehrlich, DeLeon and Morris 18).

While these are obviously not strictly anarchist groups, they often operate to provide examples of mutual aid and non-hierarchical and non-authoritarian modes of living which carry the memory of anarchy within them.<sup>20</sup> Often the practices are essential for people's day-to-day survival under the crisis states of capitalism. Ward notes that "the only thing that makes life possible for millions in the United States are its non-capitalist elements....Huge areas of life in the United States, and everywhere else, are built around voluntary and mutual aid organisations" (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 105).

The anarchist future present must be based upon ongoing experiments in social arrangements, in attempting to address the usual dilemma of maintaining both individual freedoms and social equality (Ehrlich, 1996b). These projects make up what the anarchist sociologist Howard Ehrlich calls "anarchist transfer cultures."

A transfer culture is that agglomeration of ideas and practices that guide people in making the trip from the society here to the society there in the future....As part of the accepted wisdom of that transfer culture we understand that we may never achieve anything that goes beyond the culture itself. It may be, in fact, that it is the very nature of anarchy that we shall always be building the new society within whatever society we find ourselves (Ehrlich, 1996a: 329).

The perspectives and practices of constructive anarchy, in addressing immediate day-to-day concerns, provide an important reminder to revolutionary anarchists that anarchists must offer

examples that resonate with people's experiences and needs. Or as Herzen has remarked: "A goal which is infinitely remote is not a goal at all, it is a deception" (quoted in Ward, 2004: 32).

Rather than falling into the trap of excessive enthusiasm, Ward is also aware of Errico Malatesta's reminder that anarchists are only one of the forces acting in society and history will move according to the resultant of all the forces. Thus, it is necessary for anarchists to find ways of living among non-anarchists as anarchistically as possible. This, beyond being a reflection on the difficulties facing anarchist organizers in overcoming authoritarian social relations, is a warning against being satisfied only with subcultural or lifestyle approaches to carving out spaces of anarchy within archic society.

Ward has little time for artsy anarchists concerned with producing avant-garde works "intended to shock the bourgeoisie, without regard for the fact that artists of all sorts have been shocking the bourgeoisie for a century, and that the rest of us find it hard to suppress a yawn" (Ward and Goodway, 2003: 124).

Anarchism, like utopianism, is important because it shows the vitality of imagination necessary to envision other social relations different from the current situation. Anarchism presents concrete alternatives which call into question the practices and assumptions underpinning present social relations. As mobilizing social myth it provides the glimpse of the future which inspires action today, sustaining efforts under conditions of extreme duress.

As a movement, anarchism has only partially realized its aims on a large scale for brief periods at times of social upheaval, but it has gone a long way in creating alternative institutions and transforming the everyday life of many individuals. It has a whole range of strategies to expand human freedom right here and now. As a result, it has an immediate and considerable relevance to contemporary problems as well as to future well-being. It provides a third and largely untried path to personal and social freedom beyond the domain of the tired social models of State-orchestrated capitalism or socialism (Marshall, 1993: 639).

A problem for any visionary politics remains that the present imposes itself relentlessly upon the future.

While this work highlights anarchists applying their principles and practices to areas that they know best, such as housing, communications and welfare, it is clear that much remains to be done. Following Colin Ward one might well ask: “Where are the anarchist experts on medicine, health services, agriculture and economics?”

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