

## Introduction

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 twentieth century. In North America, 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 (WTO) 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*.

At the same time the lack of serious engagement with contemporary anarchist politics has meant that the actual practices and perspectives of this major, and widely influential, movement remain obscured, at least beyond activist circles. Lost in sensationalist media accounts are the creative and constructive initiatives undertaken daily by anarchist organizers seeking a world free from violence, oppression, and exploitation. An examination of some of these constructive anarchist projects, which offer a holistic approach to everyday resistance against the state and capitalism, provides an important opportunity for gaining insights into the possibilities and problems faced by real world attempts to develop non-exploitative or liberatory social relations in the here and now of everyday life, while also contributing to a broader social transformation.

Beyond the more dramatic manifestations of conflict, the actions on the streets of Seattle, Washington, Windsor, and Quebec City created what some anarchists call temporary autonomous zones in which, under often heavy police repression, large numbers of people were able to make complex decisions about organizing, strategy, and tactics. These were brief glimpses into participatory democracy in action. Even more these autonomous zones managed to carry out a multiplicity of rather complex tasks, including medical care, local and global communications, and childcare. Lost in most of the mainstream media coverage of the more dramatic aspects of the demonstrations, which focused on confrontations with police and government and business representatives was the very simple fact that under chaotic circumstances large numbers of people took care of one another. This was, for a good number of the people involved, a glimpse of anarchy, the idea that people can look out for each other and meet their needs without reliance on formal authorities, experts or institutions.

In order to understand the complex and evolving practices of anarchists engaged in ongoing social struggles I focus on a variety of organizational practices ranging from direct action tactics, such as black blocs, and shorter term actions, including street reclaiming, as well as more permanent institutions such as free schools and infoshops. My selection of case studies allows me to compare groups that are geared primarily toward anarchist and radical subcultures with anarchist involvement in more heterogeneous community-based coalitions that organize more broadly around issues such as poverty and housing.

My intention in this project is to focus on an aspect of anarchy that is present, to a greater or lesser extent, in most anarchist perspectives/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." Richard Day (2005) discusses this in relation to Giorgio Agamben's notions of "citizenship without citizens" and the "coming community." Within perspectives of "every-

day 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 constructive, anarchism. Along the way I also engage with the works of non-anarchist social theorists, such as 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 “auto-valorization” or “self-valorization” that emphasize 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 directly or in which I have participated.

What emerges through this work is an analytical memoir or autoethnography based in action oriented research. I pursue a novel form of sociological writing reflecting on my experiences in an autobiographical but analytical way. This approach is significant both for what it offers to students of social movements and for what it offers to anarchists themselves. For students of social movements the work offers a close reading of the everyday practices of anarchists “on the ground.” As such it allows for observations and insights that might not otherwise be available. I have already identified the lack of serious engagement with the diverse practices undertaken within anarchist movements and suggested that sociological analyses of social movements would be greatly enriched through an engagement with contemporary anarchist organizing. This is an issue that I address at length in the next chapter.

Perhaps even more important, the analytical memoir I provide within this text represents a form of do-it-yourself anarchist history, a record of events and lessons learned, provided from an anarchist perspective, which allows for a critical reflection on a decade of anarchist practice. It is important for anarchists to be able to tell our own histories. If we do not, then who will? Certainly authorities and political rivals (including those who have worked to crush anarchist movements, as in the Soviet Union and China) have filled history books with misrepresentations and caricatures of previous anarchist movements.

Anarchists are often careless about documenting our own histories. This is, on some level, understandable given that there is only so much time in the day and limited energies are often better spent in action rather than in reminiscence. Unfortunately the result has been that many useful lessons have been lost and we find ourselves continually reinventing the wheel, or bogging down in the

same tiring debates and controversies without benefit of the insights which might have been gained from examinations of previous errors and missteps.

The present work illustrates clearly that the ways in which we constitute ourselves in action is a significant form of politics. Seemingly minor practices are not so minor at all. These practices have major stakes in contributing to broader social change.

## **Putting Anarchy Back in the Picture**

For many North American commentators on anti-globalization, or more appropriately alternative 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 toward seeking state-centered 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.” Even more, in a quite prominent article, Barbara Epstein (2001) makes the claim that anarchism has come to occupy a place similar to that enjoyed by Marxism within the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

Anarchist or anarchist-inspired movements are growing everywhere; traditional anarchist principles—autonomy, voluntary association, self-organization, mutual aid, direct democracy—have gone from the basis for organizing within the anti-globalization movement to playing the same role in radical movements of all kinds everywhere. Revolutionaries in Mexico, Argentina, India, and elsewhere have increasingly abandoned even talking about seizing power, and begun to formulate radically different ideas of what a revolution would even mean. Most, admittedly, fall shy of actually using the word “anarchist” (Graeber, 2004: 2).

Yet, there remains a certain contradiction between the reality of anarchist influence “on the ground” and the lack of attention given to anarchist movements in contemporary political or social analysis. Despite the blossoming of anarchist thought and practice, David Graeber is perplexed that this flowering of anarchism has found little reflection in sociology, anthropology, and political science, for example. It is probably true that not academics have little or no idea what anarchism, as either movement or social theory, is all about. The stereotypes and misconceptions that cast anarchy as chaos or anarchism as the domain of black cloak-wearing terrorists have shown to be quite durable. Even those who have some idea of anarchism’s existence as a political theory with some history behind it are likely to view it as an expression of rampant individualism thor-

oughly opposed to any notions of organization or or collectivity. Jokes about “anarchist organization” being a contradiction in terms were encountered on more than one occasion by this author when the subject of this project was broached in a variety of academic contexts. While I’m sure few anarchists are losing any sleep over this perceived snub from the academy, it is clear that there is an intellectual gap in terms of movement practice and formal analyses of social movements or political philosophy.

There has been a tendency among those commentators who have shown an interest in anarchism recently to subsume discussions of contemporary anarchism within broader analyses of alternative globalization movements. Such an approach often presents the two, or more, movements as though they are, to a certain extent, interchangeable. Such is often the case with such prominent recent discussions as those offered by Barbara Epstein, David Graeber, and Richard Day.

The specifics of anarchist politics are glossed over or focused upon only as they relate to manifestations of alternative globalization movements. Thus, for example, there is an analysis of affinity groups and relatively short-term and flexible politics, such as one might see in a street demonstration. An alternative approach is to use anarchism primarily as a jumping off point for a discussion of contemporary theory, which is the actual subject of the author’s interest.

This subsuming of anarchism presents a two-fold dilemma. The first is that alternative globalization movements are associated with an anarchist politics that many of them would or do actually oppose. If one looks beyond a few organizational affinities one finds great differences within alternative globalization politics. Most are not anarchists, and many, whether revolutionary Marxists, social democratic party members or non-governmental organization (NGO) workers, are rather hostile to anarchism, though for different reasons.

The second problem is that the specificity of anarchist movement politics, as well as their diversity and richness, becomes muted. Thus Day (2005), in his otherwise wonderful work *Gramsci is Dead*, devotes around 20 pages in a 400 page book about anarchism to the actual practices and projects undertaken within anarchist movements. And even then, such practices are reduced to archetypes for practices of broader alternative globalization movements. Anarchism is seen from a few narrow perspectives, usually related to issues of affinity, networks or supposed “rhizomatic politics.” Key debates around organizing and strategies or issues like class struggle and revolution, are excluded from the discussion. Similarly, critical analysis of long-term anarchist projects, which go beyond the more ephemeral politics of affinity groups is lacking. *Gramsci is Dead* is, of course, a theoretical work, and a challenging and engaging one at that, but the absence remains.

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. In addition the forms of activity undertaken by anarchists are very much related to specific historic, social, and economic contexts. As only one example, it has

been remarked that forms of class struggle anarchism, especially, anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist communism, have been more common in areas of Latin America and Africa, while in North America, counter-cultural forms have tended to predominate.

Contemporary anarchism is partly a response to the seemingly ubiquitous enclosures of consumer capitalism, which gather and constrain needs and desires within the permitted realm of market circuits. As a creative response anarchists defend pluralism and diversity in social relations, encouraging experimentation in living and disdaining censorship. Not believing in the possibility of one “correct” response to questions of authority and power, anarchists encourage people to develop multiple alternatives through consideration of the specific conditions with which they are confronted. Thus, today’s North American anarchists identify themselves variously as punks, animal rights activists, syndicalists, social ecologists, “platformists” or neo-primitives “arming their desires” through collage, veganism, “noise music,” polysexuality, and “electronic civil disobedience.” As always anarchists provide an alternative to authoritarian forms of social organization, both capitalist as well as socialist.

Anarchism, in its diversity of perspectives, whether individualist, anarcho-syndicalist or anarcho-communist, emphasizes a critique of existing social relations and a practical approach to social transformation. At the same time there is great diversity in the revolutionary strategies and forms of socio-economic organizations put forward by proponents of specific tendencies within anarchism. Anarchist organization takes a multiplicity of forms, including community associations, networks, social experiments, and cooperatives. These projects range from small-scale local projects around a specific issue or type of labor to projects that are global in scope. Strategies might vary between insurrectionary approaches or the gradualism of alternative institutions, they might be community based more broadly, along the lines of alternative trade or they might focus on radical union building and workplace control. In the most bare bones formulation, Graeber (2004: 40) suggests that the only thing different strands of anarchy might have in common “is that none would involve anyone showing up with weapons and telling everyone else to shut up and do what they were told.”

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.

Anarchists tend to distinguish their approaches from one another in terms of their practice or organizational approach, all the while identifying, despite their differences, as anarchists (Graeber, 2004). The emphasis tends to be on preferences and priorities related to how people should organize as anarchists to contribute to social transformation. Questions arise about such issues as: the scale and scope of change that anarchists should focus on in the short term; the rela-

tionship with other, non-revolutionary social movements; questions of the appropriateness of various direct actions; or the types of projects that can advance anarchist visions while developing social relations to sustain people in the here and now. These are some of the issues and ideas that are addressed in this work. In a sense I attempt to bring the anarchy back to the forefront of discussions of contemporary anarchist movements.

Anarchism has become, perhaps more than at any time in its history, a global movement. Important developments, whether in terms of movement practice or in anarchist thought, have emerged over the last decade in diverse contexts ranging from Oaxaca, Mexico to Argentina, Greece, Turkey, South Korea, and South Africa. In what follows I have chosen to provide an intensive study of anarchist movements that I have had an opportunity to participate in or observe first hand, rather than discuss activities at an arm's length. Thus my discussion involves anarchist practices as they have emerged and developed primarily within a North American context, especially within the Canadian state. The priorities, projects and influences around which anarchists mobilize vary with social, economic and political situations. It is generally accepted, certainly within anarchist circles, that anarchist movements in Europe, for example, emphasize class struggle and working class organizing, both at work and in working class communities, more than anarchists in North America. In North America, anarchist organizing emphasizes "counter-cultural" projects. Workplace organizing has barely registered. At the same time, ideas and experiences circulate across contexts and people in distant areas with distinct organizing histories do learn from each other. North American anarchists have been greatly inspired by squatting movements in Italy, Germany, and Britain, for example. Likewise, anarchist infoshops and free spaces in North America draw upon the much longer lived social centers in Italy and Germany for inspiration and lessons learned. The experiences of the Zapatistas in Mexico and the factory reclamations and anti-poverty struggles in Argentina have also provided important sources of inspiration and insight for North American anarchists. Beyond this, of course, projects like A-Infos, ecn.org, inventati.org, flag.blackened.net, TAO Communications, Resist! ca, Riseup.net, sindominio.net, and many other radical networks are based largely online with participants from around the world, creating new communication flows which reveal anarchism as a global movement.

The reader who is interested in other contexts might consult a number of useful works that discuss non-Western anarchist movements. Longer historical studies include Arif Dirlik's (1991) work on anarchism in China, and Mbah and Igiriwey's (2001) discussion of anarchism in Africa. For quick but insightful surveys of non-Western anarchism the reader might look at Jason Adams' pamphlet *Non-Western Anarchism* (2003) or Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible* (1993).

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.

The reader should not be surprised, however, to find in what follows that, while opposing statist or authoritarian forms of communism, as in Leninist-styled Communist Parties, or socialism, as in social democratic parties such as Canada's New Democratic Party, contemporary anarchism simultaneously promotes an alternative vision of communism. Indeed, contemporary anarchism has encouraged a rethinking of what is meant by communism. This is not a communism of state power but rather a communism of social power based on mutual aid and solidarity built from the ground up within poor and working class communities. This anarchist communism emphasizes egalitarian and non-oppressive relations and the community sharing of resources rather than state control of the economy or means of production. Perhaps ironically, anarchist opposition to statist variants of communism and socialism has served as a reminder of those currents of communism, including libertarian socialism, syndicalism, and council communism which have been largely erased from the history of communism following the ascendancy of Communist Parties following the Russian Revolution. Contemporary anarchism has also led to a reevaluation of earlier forms of utopian socialism, which predated, and were so much reviled by, Marx (see Day, 2005). Perhaps most ironically, as I illustrate below, anarchism has even served to renew interest in marginalized libertarian tendencies within Marxism itself, notably the works of autonomist Marxists and the heterodox Trotskyism of people like C.L.R James and my much missed friend Marty Glaberman. In the end this is perhaps not so surprising if one remembers that prior to the Russian Revolution anarchism represented the largest current within international communism.

## **Anarchy is Order**

Anarchism is an organized social and political movement of movements seeking the radical transformation of social relations. Anarchists were actively involved in European revolutions of the nineteenth century and played important parts in the early stages of major revolutions of the twentieth century, including the Mexican, Russian, Chinese, German, and Spanish revolutions, before being devoured in the maw of totalitarianism and reaction. It is often forgotten that anarchists, prior to the twentieth century, represented the largest tendency within the international workers' movement and were key in the formation of labor organizations during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Anarchism has also given expression to strands of social and political philosophy. While the origins of anarchist philosophies are generally identified as emerging in the works of William Godwin, many recent commentators suggest that strains of what might be understood as anarchism can be found throughout human societies, wherever instituted authorities and inegalitarian relations are opposed, from Oaxaca to West Cape to Tokyo to Toronto.

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 the Active Resistance anarchist 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,” the symbol of which appears on countless graffitied spaces as a simple “circle-A.”

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, first because they reduce human experiences to a general measure, and second 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. Indeed Proudhon refers to authority as “the curse of society” (1969: 94). 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 labor and exchange, through cooperatives and “People’s Banks,” as means toward that end. 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. Proudhon emphatically rejected communism, which he understood as statism: “[I]f society moves closer and closer toward communism instead of toward anarchy or the government of man [sic] by himself (in English: *self-government*)—then the social organization itself will be an abuse of man’s [sic] faculties” (1969: 94).

Mikhail 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 labor 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 labor 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 labor (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.

Twentieth 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 decentered and situationally enacted. Landauer conceptualized the state not as a fixed entity outside of or 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 twentieth century power is exercised less through displays of naked force and more through nurturing 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 judgments 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. For Marshall (1993: 24): “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.” 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 argued 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, an 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).

Anarchists propose what the philosopher and sociologist Martin Buber calls “the community of communes” in which social order is based, not on imposed authority but upon cooperation. Buber makes the distinction between the social principle and the political principle. For him, the social principle is expressed in informal organizations, cooperative groups, unions, and, often, families. The political principle finds expression in domination, authority or, in a word, the state. Anarchist forms of organization, however, do not look anything like state forms or even the types of formal organization that are typically the preferred subjects of sociology.

## **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 cooperatives rather than strikes (Marshall 1993: 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 phrase from the Industrial Workers of the World (Wobblies), they are “forming the structure of the new world in the shell of the old.” 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 counter-forces, 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, nineteenth 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, 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 centers 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 reskilling. 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 "Trumbullplex" in Detroit is an interesting example. Housed, ironically, in the abandoned home of an early-century industrialist, the Trumbull Theater serves as a co-operative living space, temporary shelter, food kitchen, and lending library. The carriage house has been converted into a theater site for touring anarchist and punk bands and performance troops like the "Bindlestiff Circus."

Because of their concern with transcending cultural barriers, residents of A-zones try to build linkages with residents of the neighborhoods in which they are 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, video cameras, 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. Harassment of anarchists and racist practices by police in home communities have led to the formation of Copwatch which util-

izes video cameras to watch police and to discourage the use of force by police. The aggression displayed toward 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 has been the Spunk Press archive, 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. Other important online resources include the news and theory websites infoshop.org and anarkismo.net. Work is largely done by volunteers, in their spare time, often with borrowed equipment.

The major means for distributing information remains the lively anarchist press. Longstanding 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. The violation of boundaries is literal, not simply metaphoric. Contemporary anarchist networks extend, significantly, through the walls of prisons. Most anarchist publications are made available to prisoners through free subscriptions. Tireless work has been done in support of prisoners by organizations such as Anarchist Black Cross (ABC), a prisoners' aid group. 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, 1996a: 329).

In their efforts to build anarchist transfer cultures activists often come to occupy positions of marginality. This situation arises, in part, from anarchists' determin-

ation to sustain themselves outside of the capitalist labor market. Support comes through such activities as performances, food or craft sales, and freelance journalism. In addition, there are those who support themselves clandestinely through squats or “dumpster-diving.”

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, 1996a: 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, 1996a: 349).

In this sense, anarchist transfer cultures or autonomous zones are liminal sites, spaces of transformation and passage. As such they are important sites of reskilling, 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 toward 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: 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.

## **A Cry of Pain for the Future**

Any social or political theory that suggests possibilities for social transformation is almost certain to be set upon quickly with claims that it is merely an expression of idealism or naivete. Partly this charge relates to the extreme difficulty the modern mind, ensconced in statist social structures and ideologies, has in envisioning a society held together without the “cement” of government in the form of the state (Hartung, 1983). The accumulated experiences, histories, and mythologies of centuries of nation-state hegemony make it difficult to even imagine anything that suggests alternative means of arranging society. So ingrained is the worldview of nation states that many conflate the notion of society with the notions of state or nation-state.

There is a tendency, even within some theories of the Left, to assume a correspondence between the state and society. The idea that the state is the means to social order, even to the extent that it can be equated with social order, has made it very difficult for non-statist visions of social order to be heard. Indeed such visions are most likely to be branded as utopian and dismissed out of hand. Significantly this is true even from the perspective of many on the political Left, most notably Leninists and their various sectarian offspring.

When pondering the possibilities for an emergent radical politics that might contest capitalist globalization, at the approach of the new millennium, it is unlikely that much thought was being devoted to the place of anarchism as a harbinger of the future world. As Marshall (1993: 661) relates: “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.” 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, 1993: 661). Such unfavourable depictions have served to reinforce anarchism’s reputation as a case of arrested development, 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, 1971: 1). In this case, anarchism is presented, mis-

takenly, 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, 1971: 1). Anarchism, it is said, is a movement of the past, out of touch with the realities of twenty-first-century hyper-capitalism—certainly not a movement *of the future* or *for the future*.

To a certain extent such depictions are an important part of authority’s attempt to dismiss or repress those manifestations that are seen to be threatening. As Harry Cleaver suggests, that which capital cannot digest it must either purge or be poisoned by:

Therefore in mainstream bourgeois social theory there have been many terms to characterise unintegrated, unmanageable working-class autonomy: deviant, delinquent, deficient, uneducated, primitive, backward, underdeveloped, criminal, subversive, schizophrenic, infantile, paranoid, sick and so on (Cleaver, 1992a: 124).

Of course, as I have illustrated, the use of such terms against anarchists has not been restricted to mainstream bourgeois social theory. It has been a regularly recurring ploy of authoritarian radicals as well.

Struggling against such widespread repression, coming from Left and Right, from instituted authorities and opposition groups alike, requires that one give close attention to, and that one takes seriously, the relation of seemingly denigrated autonomous activity with processes of capitalist valorization, power, and governance. For anarchists, rather than being similes, of course, society and state are counter-posed or even oppositional notions.

## **Anarchy Now (and Again)**

Unfortunately, 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.

The presence of several hundred people participating in an anarchist conference, then, 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 in its early years of institutionalization in Russia, and the resultant hegemony of Leninism among Leftist movements worldwide, the brutal defeat of the anarcho-syndicalists during the Spanish Revolution, along with the rise of mass (and legal) labor movements and social democratic parties supposedly spelled the end for poor old “pre-political,” prefigurative anarchism.

The 1940s found anarchism at its nadir. Long-running non-English language anarchist papers (such as *Freie Arbeiter Stimme* 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 (1998) notes the emergence at this time of a growing division between “counter-culturalist” and “class struggle/ syndicalist” anarchists which has characterized the movement up to the present. This split was exemplified in major new publications including *Resistance* and *Retort!* (counter-culturalist) 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 counter-culturalist anarchist activities of the 1950s included the Living Theatre 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 the 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 the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committees (SNCC) and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). While those groups have received a relatively large amount 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 is the Wobbly shift to “student syndicalism” (based on an analysis of the university as knowledge 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 University of Toronto. Unfortunately little is known about their activities.

Soon explicitly anarchist movements began to emerge again. The Situationist International (SI) in France offered a compelling mix of council communism and anarchy. Developing a more nuanced analysis of power beyond the state and capital they demanded a “revolution of everyday life” in order to resist the passifying tendencies which rendered people mere consumers of “spectacular society.” Situationist-inspired rebellions in the summer of 1968 almost brought down the ruling government of France. While the (SI) itself dissolved in the early 1970s, its message and tactics were taken up by others 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 Diggers 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 signaled 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 to articulate class struggle politics through counter-cultural anarchist practices. The Kabouters, an anarchist group 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” (kabouter)—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. 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 reemerge with any force until the mid-1980s. This reemergence was largely driven by the explicitly anarchist practices and ideas of radical environmentalism. Ecological crises and a rethinking 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 reemergence 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. 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. So successful was AR that a second gathering was organized in Toronto in August 1998. AR’98 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.

The events of Seattle, and beyond, and the emergence of the alternative globalization movements brought anarchism back to public consciousness most dramatically. Yet it is not only that anarchism is back. The current movements identifying as anarchist provide a new politics that, while incorporating aspects

of previous anarchist theories and practices, offer many novel approaches to politics that stake out a new terrain for anarchism.

## Methodological Notes

Anarchist anthropologist David Graeber (2004) suggests that one project for sociologists, political scientists, anthropologists or activists alike might be working toward an ecology of voluntary associations. What types exist? How do they thrive? He also (Graeber, 2004: 76) offers his view of what such an undertaking might look like: “We could start with a kind of sociology of micro-utopias, the counter-part of a parallel typology of forms of alienation, alienated and non-alienated forms of action” (Graeber, 2004: 76).

The present work is intended as a beginning to such a project, answering an even earlier call (Shantz, 1998) for social movement activists and academics to understand anarchist projects, their strategies, and practices. This project offers a glimpse into what is actually involved in anarchist organizing. It allows the reader to see what anarchists are actually doing, beyond both the hype of mainstream media reports and the abstraction of much recent academic anarchist theorizing.

The methodology for the present work consists primarily of in-depth and comparative analyses of several anarchist projects developed over the period between 1996 and the present day. This approach allows for a detailed examination of the varied organizational practices, strategies, and tactics produced by anarchists over an extended period of time. Because a key area of interest for the work relates to the construction and maintenance of anarchist organizations—against common notions that anarchism is about disorganization—the case study approach allows for a close and critical examination of the diverse attempts made by anarchists to bring their political ideas to life. By examining practices over the period of a decade the book will also provide an understanding of how specific tactics, strategies, and practices have been developed, transformed, revised or discarded, and under what contextual circumstances. Thus I am able to track the evolution of anarchist practices within specific projects or organizations rather than simply naming practices as is common in the recent writings on anarchist movements. In my view one of the interesting aspects of recent anarchist organizing, and one that has gone unnoticed or unreported, even by anarchist commentators, is the emergence of class struggle or communist perspectives from within projects that begin life as cultural or subcultural in character. Previous analyses, which only focus on the origins of such projects have not been able to recognize or comment upon such shifts.

Another critical aspect of the case study methodology is the use of comparative analyses that allow for an assessment of, often conflicting, practices adopted by different anarchist organizations and projects. The deployment of diverse, and not necessarily complementary, tactics by anarchist groups shows not only

the richness of anarchist politics but suggests that commentators need to be more precise when discussing contemporary anarchist movements. The use of comparative analysis allows for an understanding of which tactics and practices are effective under specific circumstances as well as providing insights into the social and political lessons that such practices might teach us. Because many recent academic commentators, especially David Graeber and Richard Day, have espoused what they identify as the “newness” of anarchism, a comparative and longitudinal study of anarchist movements allows for a more critical accounting of such claims.

Part of the problem for understanding contemporary anarchy is that anarchist practices within specific contexts and over specific periods of time are absent from the literature in any meaningful or detailed way. Recent accounts of anarchism by social scientists such as Graeber and Day seem more concerned with anarchism as a metaphor for anti-globalization politics more broadly, addressing actual anarchist movements only in general and abstract terms. Thus Day’s recent book, which is subtitled “Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements,” gives only a dozen pages in an introductory chapter to a discussion of real-world anarchist projects. In each case these projects are dealt with in only general terms such that a grassroots movement like the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty is reduced to one of its activities, direct action casework, as an archetypal movement tactic.

In order to understand the complex and evolving practices of anarchists engaged in ongoing social struggles I focus on a variety of organizational practices ranging from direct action tactics, such as black blocs, and shorter term actions, including street reclaiming, as well as more permanent institutions such as free schools and infoshops. I compare groups that use community centers as bases to organize within specific neighborhoods with organizations that do much of their work in cyberspace. My selection of case studies allows me to compare groups that are geared primarily toward anarchist and radical subcultures with anarchist involvement in more heterogeneous community-based coalitions that organize more broadly around issues such as poverty and housing.

In developing this research I make use of a rich variety of materials, including personal movement archives consisting of hundreds of pamphlets and articles produced by anarchists themselves. I also access other sources, such as blogs and websites, in which anarchist knowledge is produced and distributed. Again, it should be noted that, while reference is made to broader contexts and networks, the primary focus is an intensive examination of anarchist practices with which I have had direct contact, primarily in North America.

## **A Map**

The text is organized to illustrate the development of the diversity of anarchist strategies and tactics over time beginning with shorter term or temporary, and

often more dramatic, practices such as black blocs and street reclaiming before moving to a discussion of more durable projects such as alternative media projects and free spaces and infoshops (Who's Emma? and the Anarchist Free Space). Attention is then given to anarchist involvement in non-anarchist community-based movements, including anti-poverty (OCAP) and squatting (the Pope Squat) struggles. The case studies also include a look at do-it-yourself anarchist food preparation (Food Not Bombs) and publishing. Because the presence of the state and the possibility of repression is a constant threat facing anarchists a chapter is devoted to the criminalization of dissent. Finally attention is given to debates over organization within anarchist circles and theoretical attempts to understand anarchist practices as attempts to develop autonomy from authoritarian social relations via "transfer cultures" in which self-determined community values are opposed to processes of capitalist valorization.

The second chapter looks at sociological theories of social movement organization. There has been a real disjuncture between sociological analyses of movement organization and the practices, strategies, and tactics that have marked various anti-statist movements that have emerged in the era of capitalist globalization. Most sociological approaches are better suited to the politics of demand that characterized reform movements of the Keynesian, or welfare state, era. Rather than a politics of demand, dissent or identity, geared largely toward the making of claims upon the state (or supra-state bodies like the United Nations), anarchy emphasizes other priorities such as autonomy and self-determination. Having highlighted some of the key concerns and mobilizing practices of anti-statist movements this chapter then sketches the contours of a non-statist analysis of social movements.

I then turn, in chapter 3, to the case studies of specific anarchist projects, beginning with an analysis of the anarchist tactic that has caught the greatest public attention and generated the most controversy in recent alternative globalization demonstrations, the black bloc. While the black bloc has worked to draw some broader attention to anarchist politics and played a part in encouraging a new cohort of anarchist activists, many have become critical of the black block as a tactic with long-term organizing potential. Chapter 4 looks at less confrontational forms of street protest that have inspired anarchist organizing such as the first Active Resistance gathering and Reclaim the Streets demonstrations. These street politics call into question the private control and regulation of public spaces.

Chapter 5 furthers discussions of anarchist gift economies through DIY practices of food sharing and self-publishing. Through projects like Food Not Bombs, which uses discarded food to provide healthy meals, and through self-publishing anarchist literature, anarchist work to feed head and belly.

Recognizing the limitations of shorter-term street actions and the need to build more durable organizations, many anarchists have shifted their energies toward attempts to build alternative "institutions" such as free schools and media centers. Chapter 6 examines longer-term anarchist projects through a discussion of the everyday work involved and the difficulties faced in maintaining anarchist

free spaces. This chapter focuses on the anarchist information centers *Who's Emma?* and the Anarchist Free Space and Free Skool. These explicitly anarchist spaces provide venues in which anarchists can come together on a regular basis to organize, as well as providing a place in which non-anarchists can meet anarchists, discuss politics, and learn more about anarchy in a friendly environment away from the intensities and pressures that mark street demonstrations.

The experiences of many anarchists involved in the construction of explicitly anarchist free spaces or autonomous zones, has convinced many of the need to break out of the social isolation that often exists within "counter-cultural" projects such as infoshops or free schools. Thus chapters 7 and 8 focus on the involvement of anarchists in broader community-based projects and coalitions. Chapter 7 examines anarchist participation in the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, a direct action anti-poverty organization that is, in many ways, organized along anarchist lines and which shares much in common with anarchist activism. Chapter 8 looks at the emerging political squatting movement, which, in Canada, has been mobilized largely by anarchists. The difficulties, including police violence, facing squatters' movements in a context in which there is little history of political squatting, and no "squatters' rights," are examined.

Anarchist practices do not occur in a bubble, of course. Any movement challenging statist and capitalist powers will find itself subjected to often severe practices of regulation and repression. The police and courts are regularly deployed against anarchists. Chapter 9 addresses the criminalization of dissent and suggests that anarchists need to form alliances in solidarity with other criminalized groups including homeless people, immigrants, and refugees.

Having explored the actual projects initiated by anarchists, and the everyday problems they encounter, the final section of the text develops some of the key themes, concerns, and debates within contemporary anarchy. The concluding Chapter 10 examines some of the pressing debates over organizing in which anarchists are engaged. While much recent anarchist activity has emphasized the organization of alternative spaces, such as autonomous zones, some anarchists have begun to argue for greater theoretical and tactical unity among anarchists geared toward organizing militant anarchist poles of attraction within existing social movements and struggles rooted in working class and poor communities. These are practices which sustain people in the present while working toward broader social transformation. Anarchist organizing draws upon and expands tendencies toward mutual aid and solidarity that are present in everyday life, in order to develop a real-world alternative both to capitalist and statist institutions and social relations, as well as to authoritarian forms of communism based on the exceptionalism of political vanguards.

## **Conclusion**

The non-authoritarian, non-hierarchical, and pluralistic movements 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). In what follows we will see how some of those seeds have blossomed, pushing themselves up through the blanket of repression.