

# Perspectives

*on Anarchist Theory*



Volume 8, Number 2 – Fall 2004    Price \$5.00



*Act Like Nothing's Wrong*—Nicolas Lampert

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Institute for Anarchist Studies  
73 Canterbury, D.D.O, Québec, Canada H9B 2G5

1 (514) 421-0470; [info@anarchist-studies.org](mailto:info@anarchist-studies.org);  
[www.anarchist-studies.org](http://www.anarchist-studies.org)

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# Welcome

This issue of *Perspectives* goes to press to the relentless sounds of empire encroaching. It is the sound of US fighter planes bombing cities across occupied Iraq, and the drone of the helicopters that shadow our borders to prevent people from crossing them. By the time you read this, the helicopters policing the skies of New York City will have dispersed, along with the hundreds of thousands who came to protest the Republican National Convention, but the deepening struggle between popular movements and the executives of empire and exploitation will persist.

Those of us involved in the Institute for Anarchist Studies (IAS) understand our support for the development of anti-authoritarian visions as a modest but indispensable contribution to these movements, and I offer this account of our recent efforts in a spirit of solidarity.

The IAS underwent an internal change in July, when the board voted to make me co-director with Michael Caplan. I look forward to collaborating with Michael and the rest of the board in order to support the IAS and its various programs and projects.

The IAS's granting program is central to our mission, and with that in mind, I am happy to announce that we are making significant progress toward meeting our 2004 fundraising goal. This year we need to raise \$24,000 to sustain our granting program and other projects. At the back of this issue of *Perspectives*, you will find more information about how to donate to the IAS and about the great books that donors will receive thanks to the good people at Raven Books. Please donate to the IAS today if you have not already done so.

It is with pleasure that I report that the IAS awarded \$4,875 in our summer round of granting, in support of three important and exciting projects. Congratulations to Melissa Forbis and Cale Layton, who were awarded a grant for their project, *Anarchist Trade Unions in Bolivia: 1920-1950*; to Trevor Paglen for his project, *Recoding Carceral Landscapes*; and to Stephen Shukaitis who received an IAS grant for his project, *Between Sisyphus and Self-Management*. Please see page 56 for more information about these projects.

The fourth annual Renewing the Anarchist Tradition conference, co-sponsored by the IAS, will take place on the last weekend in September, at Goddard College in Plainfield, Vermont. RAT organizers (and IAS board members) Cindy Milstein and John Petrovato, have put together a rich program of panels and presentations, and this year RAT will double in size, welcoming up to two hundred participants. We hope to see you there for an

invigorating weekend of discussion and debate.

Our newsletter, *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, has also grown, as you may already have noticed. This issue is a special experiment; it is a merger of *Perspectives* with *The New Formulation: An Anti-Authoritarian Review of Books*, which the IAS adopted as a project last winter. The merger was partly driven by practical concerns, but it also reflects the developing aspirations of the IAS, and of the movement(s) it serves.

When it was first published eight years ago, *Perspectives* sought to make a case that theoretical inquiry could be related in relevant and even vital ways to anarchist practice, and to encourage the development of forums and institutions in which such theorizing could take place.

Sixteen issues of *Perspectives* later, it seems unnecessary to continue arguing this point; there is clear interest and participation in theoretical debates and projects from a range of anti-authoritarian tendencies. We're faced instead with the question of what sort of publication would best contribute to nurturing those debates, and best support the interventions of a range of voices reflecting on the theoretical questions at hand. The provisional merger is one step in that direction.

In this issue, you'll find the usual IAS updates incorporated into a more substantive publication that includes IAS grantee Marina Sitrin's interview with John Holloway, author of *Change the World Without Taking Power*, an excerpt from Ramon Ryan's forthcoming book *Clandestine Voyages Through the Global Rebel Underground* (for which he was awarded an IAS grant in July 2002); María Ester Tello's first person account of participation in *Resistencia Libertaria*, the clandestine Argentinean anarchist group; as well as book reviews and debates sparked in past issues of the *New Formulation*.

We would very much appreciate your feedback on this merger. Should it be permanent? Are there features that you would like to see in a future IAS publication? Or particular themes you would like dealt with? Please email your comments to [andrea@anarchist-studies.org](mailto:andrea@anarchist-studies.org).

Above all, we hope you enjoy this experimental issue of *Perspectives*, and that you will consider supporting the IAS as we continue to develop forums in which to build radical visions of free and just societies.



# What's Happening Books & Events

by Chuck Morse

**T**HE WINNER of the next US presidential election will ascend to the heights of power in an empire beset by deep crisis. Internationally it is entrenched in conflicts that it can neither win nor lose and domestically it has only a tenuous grip on the legitimacy necessary to secure its rule. It is at war, which is the eternal companion of revolution.

Anarchists can help turn the former in the direction of the latter by radicalizing the growing discontent with the established order and by deepening the integrity of the alternatives we advance.



## THE BATTLE OVER BAGHDAD

**I**raq remains a flash point for global capital and its mercenaries and thus should be studied with urgency by anti-authoritarians. In *Oil, Power and Empire: Iraq and the U.S. Global Agenda* Larry Everest explores the history of US intervention in Iraq and its devastating consequences for the people and the region. He shows how the present war is continuous with that history, but also a radical leap toward more direct military control in Iraq and around the world. He argues that the “Bush Doctrine” is built on the US’s imperial history and yet also new and uniquely dangerous (Common Courage, 2003, 224 pages). Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed’s *Behind The War On Terror: Western Secret Strategy and the Struggle for Iraq* shows that the true goals of US-British policy in the Middle East are camouflaged by spin and can only be comprehended with knowledge of the history of Western intervention in the region. He demonstrates that such intervention has been ruthlessly dictated

by economic and political interests, with little regard for human rights. He traces the events of the past decades, beginning with the West’s support for the highly repressive Shah of Iran, his subsequent usurpation by the Ayatollah’s Islamist regime, and the West’s consequent support for Saddam Hussein and his regime. Sponsoring Saddam’s tyranny—a self-serving tactic intended to provide a strategic counterbalance to Iran—included supplying him with technology to build weapons of mass destruction as well as tacit complicity with his government’s use of them against Iranians and Kurds (New Society, 2003, 368 Pages). Christian Parenti’s forthcoming *The Freedom: Shadows and Hallucinations in Occupied Iraq* should also be worth consulting (New Press, December 2004, 160 pages).

## LOCAL CONSEQUENCES

**T**wo new books treat dimensions of the war at home. *America’s Disappeared: Secret Imprisonment, Detainees, and the “War on Terror”* by Rachel

Meeropol (et al) focuses on the wave of racial profiling, detentions, and deportations unleashed by the government after the terror attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>. It brings together detainees’ own testimonies with a comprehensive framework for understanding the issues outlined by constitutional scholars working for their release. Going beyond the prevailing accounts to a detailed exploration of detention—the forms currently in use, and the conditions of each—the authors authoritatively refute its alleged justifications, while pointing to its human costs (*Seven Stories*, 2004, 120 pages). *Superpatriotism* by Michael Parenti provides context by examining how hype, fear, and mindless flag-waving supplant informed debate and commitment to democracy and social justice. Parenti explores questions such as: What does it mean to love one’s country? Why is it so important to be “Number One”? What determines America’s “greatness”? What is the messianic message behind so much nationalism? He also examines how US leaders

and media fan the flames of fear to win support for huge arms budgets, military interventions, and global aggrandizement, as well as to insure political orthodoxy at home and abroad. Challenging the nationalistic hype propagated by officialdom, the media, the sports world, and the military, Parenti argues for policies at home and abroad that genuinely serve the needs of humanity (*City Lights*, 2004, 168 pages).

### TOWARDS A NEW VISION

The renewal of anarchism that has occurred in recent decades needs to be appreciated in its fullness. *Only a Beginning: An Anarchist Anthology*, compiled and edited by IAS grant recipient Allan Antliff, is the first comprehensive overview of anarchist theory and practice in North America from 1976 to the present (Consortium, November 2004, 352 pages). Lavishly illustrated with original artwork and photographs, it documents over a quarter-century of grassroots activism, including protests and gatherings, art exhibitions, street theater, Internet sites, and squats, as well as specific movements such as environmentalism, anti-globalization, feminism, queer rights, indigenous struggles, and prisoners' rights. Included are the histories of major anarchist journals as well as essays on specific anarchist practices relevant to ac-

tivist movements across North America. Antliff was awarded a grant by the IAS in January 1997 in support of his *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics and the First American Avant-Garde* (University of Chicago Press, 2001, 292 pages). Similar aspects of the North American anarchist movement will likely be covered in the soon to be released *Anarchism in America: 2004*, an updated version of the 1982 documentary by Pacific Street Film's Steven Fischler and Joel Sucher (see <http://www.psf.com/> for more info). A more exclusively theoretical treatment of the new movement can be found in *Changing Anarchism*, an anthology edited by Jonathan Purkis and James Bowen. This collection attempts to reposition anarchist theory and practice by documenting contemporary anarchist practice and by providing a viable analytical framework for understanding it. The essays it contains, written by academics and activists, raise challenging questions about the complex nature of power and resistance to it. Areas covered include: sexuality and identity; psychological dependency on technology; libertarian education; religion and spirituality; protest tactics; mental health and artistic expression; and the ongoing "metaphorical wars" against drugs and terror (Manchester University Press, December 2004, 256 pages). For a short and very general introduction to

the tradition as a whole, Spanish readers will want to check out *Anarquismo Para Principiantes (Anarchism for Beginners)* by Marcos Mayer with drawings by Sanyu (Longseller, 2003, 176 pages).

Two small new books attempt to broaden anarchism's theoretical sweep. David Graeber's *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology* explores the links between anarchism and anthropology and tries to imagine what a truly anarchist anthropology might look like (Prickly Paradigm Press, 2004, 100 pages). *I Am Not A Man, I Am Dynamite! Friedrich Nietzsche and the Anarchist Tradition*, edited by John Moore, contains eleven essays that claim to find an anarchist perspective implicit in Nietzsche's work and/or the Nietzschean impulse in historical and contemporary anarchism (Autonomedia, October 2004, 192 pages).

### THE LIVING TRADITION

IAS grant recipient Murray Bookchin has released the third volume of his *Third Revolution: Popular Movements in the Revolutionary Era*. This major four-volume project is a comprehensive account of the great revolutions that swept Europe and America during the past three centuries. Throughout the work, he places emphasis on the popular movements that propelled the great revolutions to radical peaks, the little-



A poetic barricade proclaiming "Existence Resistance" thwarts a line of riot cops during protests against the Free Trade Area of the Americas. Québec City, Canada, 2001. Photo from *We Are Everywhere* by John Jordan

known leaders who spoke for the people, and the liberatory social forms to which the revolutions gave rise. This volume begins with the Russian Revolution of 1905, moves to the crisis faced by international socialism at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, and then to the Russian Revolution of February 1917, the Bolshevik Red October, and the crucial German Revolution of 1918–19 (Continuum, 2004, 416 pages). The final volume will explore of the Spanish Revolution of 1936–1939. In 1997 Bookchin was awarded a grant by the IAS to support his research for this work.

Two major figures in the anarchist tradition will now be easier to study thanks to the appearance of a pair of new releases. The second volume of *Emma Goldman: A Documentary History of the American Years*, edited by Barry Pateman, Candace Falk, and others, will appear in November (University of California Press, 2004, 430 pages). This volume, *Making Speech Free, 1902–1909*, chronicles Goldman's pivotal role in the early battle for free expression. It highlights the relationship between the development of the right of free speech and turn-of-the-century anarchist ideas. The enactment of anti-anarchist laws and the organization of groups in protest occupy center stage among the primary documents. The volume also presents Goldman's evolving attitudes toward violence in both its European and American contexts, the emergent revolution in Russia, and the beginnings of the Modern School educational movement in America, the social significance of European modern drama, and the right of labor to organize against unfair working conditions in the United States. In addition, the volume features the early evolution of Goldman's magazine, *Mother Earth*, which promoted the blending of modern literary and cultural ideas with her radical and social political agenda and became a platform for the articulation of her feminist critique, an expression of her international reach, and a marker of her desire to spread anarchist ideas beyond the immigrant left. *Making Speech Free* also tracks Goldman's emergence as a writer

and orator whose scathing critique of hypocrisy in all realms of life and politics would eventually capture the attention and imagination of America. Likewise, *The Voltairine de Cleyre Reader*, which is the first collection of de Cleyre's work published since 1914, brings together the best of de Cleyre's writings, including never before published material. From acclaimed essays like "Anarchism and American Traditions" and "The Dominant Idea" to lesser known pieces on feminism, marriage, direct action, education, and other topics, this fully annotated collection captures the breadth and intensity of de Cleyre's literary output. It is edited by A J Brigati, with an introduction from Barry Pateman of the Emma Goldman Papers Project (AK Press, 2004, 256 pages).

Matthew Thomas's *Anarchist Ideas and Counter-Cultures in Britain, 1880–1914: Revolutions in Everyday Life* should offer a valuable corrective to often superficial treatment of anarchist cultural achievements (Ashgate, January 2005, 256 pages). This book examines how British anarchists effected change through the creation of counter-cultures and networks of co-operation and self-organization. It looks at their construction of alternative institutions and cultures: free schools, which encouraged learning by desire and responsiveness to individual needs; factories based on the principles of self-management and workers' control; communes, which pooled resources and shared skills; and revolutionized personal and sexual relations. Thomas argues that while the anarchists did not realize their long-term aims, they did go some way towards revolutionizing the everyday life of individuals, through the diverse strategies they mobilized to expand human freedom in the here and now. By analyzing the various anarchist counter-cultures, Thomas demonstrates that anarchists were at the forefront of campaigns that challenged the existing social, economic, and cultural values of British society.

## FROM THE SOUTH: THEN AND NOW

Latin America is rich in struggles against capitalist globalization. At 634 pages, *Ya Basta! Ten Years of the Zapatista Uprising*, will provide the most comprehensive collection of English translations of texts by Subcomandante Marcos and the EZLN. It is edited by Ziga Vodovnik, and includes Forwards by Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky (Consortium, 2004). *Cochabamba! Water Rebellion in Bolivia* by Oscar Olivera relates the selling of the city of Cochabamba's water supply to Aguas del Tunari, a subsidiary of US-based transnational Bechtel, the subsequent astronomical rise in water prices, and the refusal of poverty-strapped Bolivians to pay them. It explains how the people organized an opposition and recounts the dramatic struggles that eventually defeated the privatizers. Olivera also reflects on the themes that emerged as a result of the war over water, such as the fear and isolation the Cochabambinos overcame through a spirit of solidarity and mutual aid and the challenges of democratically administering the city's water (South End Press, November 2004, 160 pages).

The early history of anti-authoritarian movements in Latin American is slowly being documented. Cristina Guzzo's Spanish language *Las anarquistas rioplatenses, 1890–1990: Ensayo investigativo (Anarchist Women of Rio Plata, 1890–1990: Investigative Essay)* studies a century of anarchist women's activism in the River Plate area of Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay (Orbis Press, 2003, 104 pages). It explores the contributions of Virginia Bolten, Juana Rouco Buela, Salvador Onrubia, and Luce Fabbri. For an introduction to Latin American anarchism as a whole, Spanish readers will welcome the re-edition of David Viñas's long out of print *Anarquistas en América Latina (Anarchists in Latin America)*, which offers a very topical overview of anarchism in the region (Paradiso Ediciones, 2004, 242 pages). ✨

# “Walking We Ask Questions”

## An Interview with John Holloway

by Marina Sitrin

**J**OHAN HOLLOWAY and Marina Sitrin exchanged questions, answers, and more questions during the month of August. John Holloway is the author of *Change the World Without Taking Power* (Pluto Press, 2002) and co-author of *Zapatista! Rethinking Revolution in Mexico* (Pluto Press, 1998). Marina Sitrin is completing an oral history (in Spanish and English) of the autonomous social movements in Argentina, a project for which she received a grant from the Institute for Anarchist Studies.

The following interview is an appetizer to various theories, experiences, and questions as well as an invitation to further exploration of our theories and practices.

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*Could you explain what events or activities in your life brought you to the point where you are now doing considerable theoretical as well as practical work on the question of power and, specifically, to challenge the concept of taking power?*

I think the most obvious starting point is a theoretical one. Trying to think about the state from the perspective of Marxist theory, I got into the so-called “state derivation debate,” a mainly German theoretical debate that took place in the early 1970s. The main emphasis in the debate was on trying to understand the state as a specifically capitalist form of social relations. Although the actual participants in the debate developed this notion in different directions politically, to me it always seemed clear that the implication of the debate was that we could not think of revolution as taking place through the state, or in other words, that we had to try and develop an anti-state

Marxism. Of course, this idea was very much bound up with the experience of 1968, of the struggles in the 1970s and of the anti-Poll Tax movement in Britain in the later 1980s.

I came to live in Mexico at the beginning of the 1990s and so was lucky enough to be here when the Zapatista uprising took place. That transformed everything, of course. It put previous theoretical reflections and fragmented experiences in a new context. Here was a major movement saying clearly “we want to make the world anew, but we do not want to take power.”

Like millions of others, I felt and feel that that is absolutely right. But how do we make sense of it? What does it mean in terms of the way we think about the world, and about power in particular? How can we change the world without taking power?

*Exactly. Your questions are mine, and I imagine those of countless others around the world, especially now. Over the last ten years, and the last few in particular there are more and more people in communities and movements who are saying: “no, we do not want state power.” For me Zapatista communities in Chiapas, and the autonomous movements in Argentina are reflecting this not only in their ideology, but also in their practice, or are showing it in their practice and the ideology is following. What do you make of all sorts of people all over rejecting the idea of taking power and particularly the Argentines and the Zapatistas challenging it concretely? Why now?*

**W**hy are more and more people turning their back on the state now? Partly I think it is a question of accumulated experience. All the at-

tempts to change the world through the state have failed. The collapse of the Soviet Union made that very clear. But it is not just the so-called “communist” countries—it’s also the experience of the reformist or social-democratic governments all over the world. Lula in Brazil is just the latest in a long line of disappointments.

But it’s more than that. It’s not just that all the “Left” governments have failed to realize the expectations of their supporters. It is also the experience of activists that building for taking state power involves us in a bureaucratic, hierarchical, alienating sort of politics that is a long way from the sort of society that we want to create. Directing our anti-capitalist anger towards winning influence or power within the state means channeling our activity into the logic of power, and the logic of power is the logic of reconciliation with capital.

There is another reason too for people turning away from the state. And that is that the state itself is changing. The growing aggressiveness of capital means that there is less and less possibility of achieving any sort of meaningful reform through the state. The welfare state was a way of integrating people into the system, but there is now very little room for that. I don’t think we should try to re-create a welfare state, but rather build upon the anti-state space that is opened by the narrowing of the state itself.

*Your response makes me smile, a reminiscent, though not so happy one. (Were you never a Guevarist or a Trot?) I was once among the ranks of those who think that the only way to rid ourselves of capitalism and its horrors is to overthrow the state and replace it with something else, something better of*

course. I no longer think that we need to, or in fact should, take power. As a friend in the movements in Argentina reminds me, what would we do with it even if we had it? “The concept of taking power is an archaic one, and not something we want. We are going back to the neighborhoods.” I have so many questions, and am not sure where to begin. At the most fundamental level, what do we want? What do we create as we are struggling against centrism and the state? What do we do when the state comes into our communities? I believe in prefigurative politics, but then what do we do when the state comes in and tries to shut us down? This is not so much an abstract question, as one based unfortunately more and more in the realities of the Argentine MTDs (Movimiento Trabajadores Desocupados—Unemployed Workers Movement) and the Zapatistas.

I think we have to start by admitting that we don’t have the answers. The fact that we think that taking state power is the wrong way to go does not mean that we know the right way. Probably we have to think of advancing through experiments and questions: “preguntando caminamos” [“walking we ask questions”], as the Zapatistas put it. To think of moving forward through questions rather than answers means a different sort of politics, a different sort of organization. If nobody has the answers, then we have to think not of hierarchical structures of leadership, but horizontal structures that involve everyone as much as possible.

What do we want? I think we want self-determination—the possibility of creating our own lives, the assumption of our own humanity. This means collective self-determination, just because



For more than a year Zapatista women in Amador Hernández have demanded daily that the Mexican military leave the communal village landholdings. Photo from *We Are Everywhere* by Tim Russo.

what we do is so tightly integrated with what others do. The drive to collective self-determination should be the guiding principle, the utopian star that lights up our questions and our experiments. That means, of course, an anti-state politics, not in the sense of having nothing at all to do with the state (which would be very difficult for most of us), but in the sense of recognizing that the state is a form of social organization which negates self-determination.

What do we do when the state tries to shut us down? I think violence is one of the central problems. How do we confront state violence? Not by trying to gain control of the state—simply because control of the state always turns out to be control by the state; and not by confronting violence with violence, both because we would lose and because that involves us in a sort of politics that reproduces what we are struggling against. But then what? Self-defense is important in many cases, not so much to “defeat” the state forces as to make it unattractive for them to intervene. But the most effective form of self-defense is the density of the social relations that the struggle weaves. What has protected the Zapatistas is not so much their organization as an army (though I don’t dismiss that) but rather

the depth of the social relations of support that they have woven both in their own communities and beyond. The same can be said of the *piqueteros*, or of some of the Social Centers in Italy, or lots of other struggles.

*I believe each day more and more people around the world agree with the vision you are reflecting with your words. I believe as well that this is part of a new politic, based in new experiences. Do you see this articulation as new? While new, I do not believe anything is absolutely new, and that everything is related in some way to previous experiences, thoughts and feelings. What do you think? What sort of influences does the current movement(s) draw upon? I ask both about articulated ideas as well as feelings and experiences.*

One thing that is new and exciting about the re-articulation of ideas is that the old divisions between anarchism and Marxism are being eroded. The fall of the Soviet Union and of the communist parties has given a new momentum to the long and distinguished tradition of heterodox Marxism. I am thinking of people like Bloch, the young Lukács, Pashukanis, Adorno, Marcuse, Pannekoek and the whole tradition of council com-

munism, the Italian autonomists. These for me are the most exciting influences, but clearly Hardt and Negri, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari are also important voices in the current development of the movement.

*Your response, while I agree with it, also makes me wonder about the various ways theory is articulated. For example, in many MTDs in Argentina people are talking about the importance of organizing first from a base of affection, “política afectiva.” As well, many in the autonomous movements speak of “horizontalidad” (horizontalism) as a tool and a goal for their relations as well as vision. To me, these are not only styles of organizing, but are theories as well. Do you think there are different and new ways of articulating theory?*

Yes, Raúl Zibechi puts a lot of emphasis on “política afectiva” in his book on the Argentinean revolt, *Genealogía de la Revuelta* [Genealogy of the Revolt]. I think that’s very important. For our struggles to be strong, I think that they must be anti-political, in the sense of aiming to overcome the separation of politics from everyday life (that is, anti-political if one understands the political to be constituted by the separation of the

state from society). That means understanding struggle as being rooted in everyday experience, and that includes affective relations. That implies a different understanding of the meaning of theory, and of the relation between theory and experience. It means too, of course, a radical critique of Leninism.

One of the most important things that the Zapatistas say is “we are ordinary people, that is to say, rebels.” I think that is, theoretically and politically, the most challenging statement of the whole Zapatista uprising.

How do we understand rebellion to be an everyday feature of ordinary people’s lives? How do we give expression to that rebellion?

*Yes, anti-political. My friend Cándido is part of an occupied printing press in Buenos Aires. He is quite explicit in stating that he is not political, and yet is part of a horizontally run factory and spends his spare time speaking to workers all over about how they too can take over their work place. Anti-political. This feels much more clear to me when discussing movements that are at a high level of creation, such as the Zapatistas, the Argentines, South African autonomous groups, the Sem Terra Movement in Brazil and others. What does anti-political*

*mean to folks that are in different stages of creation? How do we speak of being anti-political, while a lot of our work is in the realm of talk? How do we give expression to rebellion in our every day experiences? And, how do we not get impatient?*

But I think we should get impatient. I think we have to be impatient. The state means patience, in both senses: patience in the sense of waiting, waiting for the next election, waiting until we build the party or organization that can win, influence, or take state power; patience too in the sense of passivity, in the sense of accepting to be the objects and not the subjects of social change. We cannot wait: the process of human self-destruction is too rapid. Also we cannot wait because waiting is in fact active complicity: we make capitalism every day and we have to stop making it. Refusal. The first question is how are we refusing and how do we strengthen those refusals? And refusal means impatience, breaking time, breaking history.

But the obvious problem with refusal is that, if we refuse to serve capital, we are threatened with starvation. Subordination to capital is our access to the means of survival. If we refuse to subordinate ourselves, how can we survive? Here I think refusal has to be complemented with developing an alternative doing, a doing through alternative social relations. And yes, here it is a question of patience. This is the difficult part. But the patience has to be understood as reinforcing the impatience, not as suppressing it. Traditional revolutionary theory is the other way around: we must wait till the time is ripe, wait for the next major crisis of capitalism, wait until the party is built, and so on: impatience is subordinated to patience. I think that’s the wrong way around. Patience has to be subordinated to anti-capitalist impatience, the wisdom of experience must serve the impatience of youth.

This double temporality is very clear in some of the major movements today.

The Zapatistas say *¡Ya Basta!*, but also “*caminamos, no corremos, porque vamos muy lejos*” [“we walk, not run, because



Zapatista insurgent stands guard at the first InterGalactic Encounter For Humanity and Against Neoliberalism in rebel territory in Chiapas, Mexico. Photo by Tim Russo.

we are going very far”]. In Argentina too there is the impatience of the ¡*Que se vayan todos!*, but also (at least some groups) a very strong sense of the importance of doing things at their own rhythm—that part of constructing an alternative community is constructing an alternative temporality.

I’m not sure if that answers your questions about smaller movements, but I feel that a similar logic applies—first refusal, then grounding that refusal in alternative creation. To resist is to create, as our Argentinean friends say.

*It does answer much of the question, while not prescribing. It brings one back to “walking we ask questions”.*

*I have been thinking more about the earlier discussion we were having on the different expressions of theory in our movements, and still, well, wonder. I wonder why the articulation of these theories is not being written, almost at all, by those in the movements. I also wonder, then, if this reflects a difference in approaches to theory. Historically there have been many social protagonists reflecting upon their struggles, ranging from Ricardo Flores Magón, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, and Fredrick Douglass, to Louise Michel or Steve Biko. Does this question make sense? I guess I am wondering why so few folks in the movements are writing about their experiences, and if this represents a different approach to written ideas. Are Negri and the Zapatistas really talking about the same things? Is it a question merely of articulation?*

I’m not sure that I understand the question. I think people are writing about their experiences. Marcos, for example. Or in Argentina the Colectivo Situaciones together with the MTD Solano. Probably a lot of what is being written is just on the internet.

Are Negri and the Zapatistas really talking about the same things? That’s another question. Perhaps they’re talking about the same things from quite different angles.

*I realize I may not be clearly articulating the question, but feel it nonetheless. I am trying*

*to address the gap I feel when reading theory about autonomous movements and how people in these movements speak of their experiences. It is not an academic reflection versus an experiential one, but different languages that are sometimes used to address similar situations. . . . I will think on it more.*

*Another question. Many hundreds, if not thousands, of people have been organizing in New York over the past months against the Republican National Convention, focusing particularly on Bush and the Iraq war. While many are saying “No” to Empire etc., there is also energy being placed in trying to vision what we want, what our “yeses” are. What do you think of organizing around Party conventions and the electoral process more generally? Is it worth any time or energy? Can one organize against the electoral system without somehow engaging the state? Does Bush, et al, make any difference in this conversation?*

I think there are bad states and worse states, bad governments and worse governments. And clearly the Bush government is one of the worst and yes, it is important to defeat it. In general I think it is important for us to set our own agenda, to have our own sense of time, but there are occasions on which we have to try to turn the spectacle against the spectacle, to do everything possible to show our disgust and refusal and to present an alternative vision of a possible world. It is inevitable that we engage with the state: the important thing is not to reproduce the logic and the forms of organization of the state in this engagement.

*What sorts of things in the world give you hope?*

Any hope today has to be hope against hope: hope that, in spite of all that points in the direction of human self-destruction, we will be capable of creating a better world, a world worthy of humanity. Hope against hope but yes, definitely hope: being human means that we constantly drive towards the creation of our own humanity.

Hope lies in everyday life, in all the

things that point against-and-beyond capitalist social relations: love, friendship, solidarity, mutual recognition, dignity—all these fundamental aspects of humanity that exist in spite of and, increasingly, in open opposition to capitalism. We cannot think just of “life after capitalism” (as the conference in New York this weekend proposes), nor just in terms of “life in spite of capitalism” (as the alternative European Social Forum in London proposes). We have to think in terms of life against-and-beyond capitalism. For more and more people, the most basic things in life (love, playing with children, spending time with friends) are becoming more and more difficult to reconcile with capitalism.

Beyond that, clearly the upsurge of struggle over the last ten years (especially since the Zapatista uprising of 1<sup>st</sup> January 1994) is an enormous source of hope, in part because it is so deeply rooted in everyday practice.

*And what do you dream?*

There’s a lovely answer to a similar question given by Marcos when being interviewed in connection with some film festival. He says he dreams that one day we can all live in a cinema programme (*cartelera*—how do you say that?) where we could choose to live a different film each day—the Zapatistas rebelled because they have been forced to watch the same film for the last five hundred years.

I think that’s a lovely answer because it points towards absolute self-determination. Self-determination (that is, social self-determination, because there can be no other) means liberation from the past, liberation from history, the capacity to re-create ourselves completely each day. (It also means assumption of our own humanity with all the responsibility that that implies.) It’s hard to imagine a completely self-determining society, because it would imply living with a fullness and intensity that is hard for us even to imagine. That’s my dream. ✨

# Testimonio

by María Esther Tello

**I**N THE SPRING of 2003 *The New Formulation* published an interview with Fernando López about Resistencia Libertaria, a clandestine anarchist organization founded shortly before the Argentinean military seized power in 1976.<sup>1</sup> This organization engaged in militant opposition in the labor, student, and neighborhood arenas, and also had a military wing with which it financed and defended itself. The group was crushed in 1978 and 80 percent of its more than 100 members perished in the dictatorship's concentration camps and torture chambers. López had been an active member of Resistencia Libertaria (RL) and our interview with him was the first published account of RL's history in any language.

Shortly after that issue appeared *The New Formulation* received a letter from María Esther Tello. Writing from France, she informed us that she had been a member of RL and was the mother of three activists mentioned by Lopez: the beloved Tello brothers, who were among RL's most active militants and now, like so many others, "disappeared."

Her letter was forwarded to Argentinean comrades, our interview was made available in Spanish, and Tello visited Argentina in the fall of 2003. Long overdue discussions about RL occurred there and old bonds between comrades who had not seen one another in years began to be renewed. It was an honor to know that *The New Formulation* had contributed to that process.

The history of RL, and all the losses associated with it, must never be forgotten. We publish the following testimony from Tello as a small attempt to help ensure that it is not.

Chuck Morse

## MY FIRST CONTACTS WITH LIBERTARIAN ACTIVISM

**I** was born in La Plata and the greater part of my professional life transpired there. I worked in public education, as a teacher in rural schools as well as in schools in working class and middle class neighborhoods. I was also a school inspector in rural and urban areas and a social worker of the Department of University Extension. This is to say that I was always linked to the disadvantaged or proletarian sectors of my country.

I was very young when I entered into anarchist activism. At fifteen years old, I began to link myself with an anarchist group called *Voluntad* (Will), together with someone who later became my husband and the father of my three disappeared sons. This group was made up of a dozen comrades who, for the most part, were university students or profession-

als. It was dedicated to the distribution of propaganda coming from the FORA,<sup>2</sup> or what survived of it, to [the creation of] illegal murals (*pintadas murales*), and to theoretical discussions based in the classical literature. Our material came from the Editorial Reconstruir and from *La Protesta* and *Acción Directa* or *La Antorcha*. Our most respected figure was Rodolfo González Pacheco, in whose vacation house I met Emilio Uriondo, an anarchist expropriator who had formed part of Ascaso and Rosigna's group.<sup>3</sup>

At that time, and much later as well, marked opposition to Peronism and its depiction as a fascist movement was characteristic of the anarchist movement. It is for this reason that our practice remained remote from the working class—which was largely Peronist—except for the relations we maintained with the naval construction workers and the plumbers' union,

who were supporters of anarcho-syndicalism or the anarcho-communism of the FORA of the Fifth Congress.<sup>4</sup>

Although the *Voluntad* group dissolved, my husband, myself, and other comrades continued our activity in La Plata in a very similar vein. Our group was clandestine and did not have a name. Its methods of action were, in my opinion, more individualist and intellectual than rooted in the working class. Nevertheless, our diverse ties—which had more of a friendship than organizational character—permitted me to meet and in some cases maintain friendships with outstanding figures of Argentine anarchism, such as the aforementioned González Pacheco and Uriondo, the anarcho-syndicalists Umberto Corrales and Carlos Kristof, and the veteran of the Spanish Revolution, Manuel Palanca, and his admirable companion Carmen.

This was during the final period of Perón's rule. Perón was deposed in 1955 by a military coup that brought general Lombardi—a fervent Catholic—to power, who in turn was later replaced by Aramburu and the admiral Rojas. This was a powerful time for me. My comrades, who were primarily from the University of La Plata, discussed the possibility of joining the armed commandos—led by the center-left and above all by the Radical Party—who were to come out in opposition to a possible working class uprising in support of Perón. I knew the reality of these workers, through my students and from own family, whose lives had been objectively improved by the social laws introduced by Perón—the Christmas bonus, the loans for housing, the paid vacations, the support for health care—and I also knew that the improvements in their conditions were not due to the struggles of their unions but rather were concessions made by Perón to his supporters, in order to better manage them later. But, still, they were authentic benefits that had

never been obtained—trying to suppress them was to oppose the working class that defended, in Perón, conditions of life to which they doubtlessly had a right. A little later that military government executed loads of workers, intervened in unions, censured the press...

I was the only woman in that group for a long time, although we were joined by Elsa Martínez, Amalia Peralta—Argentina's first woman guerrilla, as a member of the Peronist Uturunco group, which she joined after leaving ours on friendly terms—and other young women on a temporary basis. This group eventually became inactive and disappeared.

#### BIRTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF RESISTANCIA LIBERTARIA

Pablo Daniel, my oldest son, entered the Department of Engineering in 1967 and studied there for a year or two before going into architecture. He was active in the student movement of La Plata and twice arrested by the police during student demonstrations.

He and two other comrades began the nucleus of what later became *Resistencia Libertaria*. At the beginning it was a student group of three comrades—Pablo, Tino, and el Tano—but little by little others were incorporated. In the middle of 1969, my other two sons, Marcelo and Rafael, and their partners joined. Marcelo studied theater and Rafael studied philosophy in the Humanities Department. There was also myself, Perinola, Cristina, la Turca, Yogurt, Hernán and Elsa (who had been part of the group from the 1950s), and others, many of whom I did not meet directly (I note here that half of us were women).<sup>5</sup>

Almost all had finished or abandoned their university studies, joined the work force, and entered into labor struggles. In the beginning, the organization was structured around two areas of engagement (*fronteras*)—neighborhood and labor—and the group grew with the integration of other militants from Buenos Aires and especially Córdoba, who enriched it in every sense.

Our home and library was the center of operations and study. The events of Córdoba in 1969, the references to the

French May, as well as the more or less close links with the old anarchist comrades, were the breeding ground of ideas and debates. The Department of Architecture of La Plata was also a hotbed of groups and Left tendencies, and the place from where many militants emerged who joined the labor movement in some cases or the armed struggle in others. This is how the initial group expanded, incorporating young men and women that came from other tendencies or who were beginning, more often than not, their activist lives. Couples, who soon had children, also emerged, which created strong links and a sense of solidarity among all of these youths.

Given the organization's cellular structure that we were obliged to maintain during various military governments, I never joined the same cell as my sons. We also did not discuss what occurred in RL within the family, although sometimes we shared responsibilities and resources.

The particular composition of our group, with an equal proportion of women and tasks not differentiated by sex, offered little ground for feminist objections. Macho attitudes seemed out of place and totally untenable. I remember our dear Perinola and Elsa Martínez confronting the police during the repression of a demonstration in La Plata with the same ardor and efficiency as their male comrades. These two died tragically and their memory always fills us with emotion, as well as that of Yogurt and Cristina.

Inside the organization, self-management was an essential and undisputed practice. It functioned as a style of life and as a solution to everything we embarked upon. I think that we all shared a strong sense of fullness, of living thoroughly, of loving ourselves, and of loving the struggle and all that it embodied.

#### ACTIVISM IN EXILE

Some weeks before the military dictatorship took power in March 1976, my son Marcelo disappeared. We were persecuted and I had to stay in France where I went in exile, on the decision of my RL group. There I joined in the activities of the Support Committee [for victims of

the dictatorship], which a group of Argentines had created in Paris. Later I was a member of and contributed to founding other solidarity groups that fought for the disappeared as well as Argentine and French prisoners. In 1978 my other two sons, Pablo Daniel and Rafael, were disappeared, together with Hernán and Elsa Ramírez and other RL comrades. La Turk was executed in 1976.

I returned to Argentina in 1984 and joined the Madres de Plaza de Mayo of La Plata. That same year, I initiated a trial against those responsible for the genocide. I first did this in Argentina and, when then-president Menem announced the pardon of the military and police criminals, I returned to France, where I now live. I have again taken legal action against those responsible for the genocide, this time in the French courts. I am presently a member of the CNT, to which I make a modest contribution. ✨

*Translated from Spanish by Chuck Morse.*

1. Chuck Morse, "Resistencia Libertaria: Anarchist Opposition to the Last Argentine Dictatorship", *The New Formulation* Vol. 2, No. 1 (February 2003): 75-88.

2. The FORA is the Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, an anarchist-led labor federation that played a leading role in social struggles at the beginning of the 20th century.

3. See review by Astrid Wessels in this issue for comments on Miguel Rosigna. Francisco Ascaso was a Spanish anarchist, best known for his close association with Buenaventura Durruti.

4. Tello refers here to the specifically anarchist wing of the FORA, which emerged as the result of a split in the organization.

5. In a private letter, Tello explained that "Yogurt" received his nickname "because he was very young when he joined our organization, almost a boy "that would have to drink milk." As for "Perolina," this name was an "allusion to her strong inclination to ingest all types of liquids, alcoholic or not, and without order or preference."

# The Resurrection of Vampiro

by Ramor Ryan  
Caracas, Venezuela, 1992

In July 2002, Ramor Ryan was awarded an LAS grant to complete his forthcoming book, *Clandestine Voyages Through the Global Rebel Underground*. He has generously allowed us to preview a sample of that work here.

PEOPLE SPOKE of him in quiet revered tones. "Wait until you meet Vampiro", they said, or, "things will become clearer when you speak to Vampiro..."

Caracas

University radicals seemed united in their high regard for this legendary anarchist. And there he is now, on stage, the lead singer of a ska band *Autonomía*. He is tall, skinny and dark-skinned, wearing a red and black striped t-shirt and black drainpipes, de-rigueur punky-mod style—topped with short spiked hair. He fills the stage with his mischievous swagger and the audience sings along every song like an unruly choir.

"*Viva Anarquía!*" he screams, "*Viva!*"



respond hundreds of young voices in return.

It is an afternoon memorial concert for a student leader shot down a

few days ago during campus protests. She was popular, and needless to say, her death totally unwarranted. The mood of the assembled students is sad. But that grief is transformed into rebel resilience and renewal prompted by the passionate, infectious performance by *Autonomía* and their fiery cheer-leading singer. The obligatory chant *El pueblo unido jamás será vencido* is transformed into a ska-ed up bop. And the show is closed with the people chanting and clapping and dancing as if they had just won all their demands and a holiday to Cuba to boot.

Venezuela in 1992 was in a state of turmoil. The Pérez

government was acting as handmaiden to IMF policies that were devastating the economy. The cost of basic foods doubled overnight and riots broke out.

The military was sent in and hundreds of citizens were shot down in the streets. Now the Pérez regime was hanging on by tender hooks and revolt was palpable. The students were in the thick of it, and the campus was virtually a revolutionary autonomous zone. The police were violating the traditional institutional autonomy of the university by entering and engaging in pitched battles with rebel students determined to drive them out. Casualties were rising. A dozen students had been killed since the uprising began. Military tanks were stationed permanently outside the front gates.

Inside the sprawling campus, all concrete and steel—that depressing modernist architecture—it was clear the students were in control. Every wall was draped with graffiti and banners proclaiming allegiance to this or that revolutionary organization. Tables were thrown up everywhere as the rainbow of movements and political parties hawked their line. Students of various faculties met in assemblies and thrashed out issues and strategy. There was a perceivable energy of revolt, as if everyone was onside and down with the program. Music played everywhere in the university, and it didn't seem like much studying was going on. Students milled about and the cacophony of voices filled the air with clamor. Everyday life on the campus had become an ongoing rebellion.

Back at the auditorium, the crowd is chanting and demanding an encore. *Autonomía* return to the stage to much applause. Vampiro takes the mic and commands everybody to hush. Slowly and carefully, Vampiro picks his words. His eulogy for Claudia, the slain student,

is suitably staunch and heroic. That she was “a burning inspiration,” “an unfaltering militant fighting for justice,” these kinds of things.

Then strangely, Vampiro's voice breaks. He stops amidst the homology. His head sinks. His clenched fist moves to his nose. An uncommon silence grips the auditorium.

“And,” he says quietly, “...she was my lover, and I will never forget her...”

There is a strange rumble in the crowd. Claudia's boyfriend, surrounded by a group of consoling mates, looks quite aghast. And Vampiro launches into a slow song, like an Irish lament, a sorrow-filled, haunting ballad of love and desertion, most uncanny for a ska band.

Next day, I met him, the famous Vampiro, and he was back to his upbeat, charismatic self. He is delighted to meet a *compañero* from Ireland and immediately presents me with one of the bundle of books he is carrying—one on *campesino* struggle in the Venezuelan Highlands. I am bowled over by his warmth and openness, one of those people who make you feel spontaneously embraced by their rich character. But such are the likes of the popular Vampiro, that before we can really talk, he is besieged by a horde of friends, well-wishers and admirers. We had enough time to talk politics and he warned of the authoritarian tendencies within the current rebellion. “This people's insurrection runs a very real risk of been hijacked by a populist demagogue...” he said, “We need to encourage and support the *barrio* assemblies...”

And he was off, caught up in the urgency of the moment that was the 1992 rebellion of Caracas. Sometimes a figure personifies a moment, or a

movement. With Vampiro, it was his open spirit and sharp, immediate analysis of the situation. And he embodied all that was seductive about the rebel milieu—smart, vigorous and passionately committed to some great mysterious ideal.

### OF A FRIDAY NIGHT IN BLACKOUT BOOKS

Some years later, three Venezuelans walked into Blackout Books, the New York Anarchist bookstore. It was my Friday night shift and I was arranging the Latin America section. A conversation began and it appeared they were earnest anarchists who seemed to know everything regarding South American revolutionary struggle. I think it was something of their aura of total assuredness of the righteousness of their cause that reminded me of someone I had met in the past, someone who also generated this complete sense of no-inner-conflict.

“*Compañeros*” I asked, a shot in the dark, “do you remember a *compa* called Vampiro who was active in Caracas in the early 90s?”

“Hmmm.” A pause. The three looked pensive.

“A fine comrade,” said one.

“He had a lot of guts and balls,” said another.

“Almost a local legend, no?” said the third.

“What happened to him?” I asked, hoping not to hear the worst.

They conferred amongst themselves.

“*Calle Insurgente*?”

“Maybe *Calle Bolívar*?”

“But they removed all the bodies, nobody was sure....”

One turned to me. “We believe he

fell during the 1993 uprising. Was he a friend of yours?”

I felt a horrible chill, and my heart dropped.

“No, not really. I met him that was all....”

### CHÁVEZ AND THE PUNK ROCKERS

Hugo Chávez was elected President of Venezuela in 1999. He was one of the conspiring military officers in the 1993 uprising. Chávez was imprisoned, and subsequently released. He seemed a strange bedfellow on the streets that summer of insurrection in Caracas with the likes of Vampiro and the anarchists. But such is revolt; it takes all sorts and all forms. Chávez led a populist government, associating with Cuba, while at the same time accommodating the IMF and global capital. Anarchists like Vampiro were once again out in the streets protesting Chávez, but not with the bourgeois counter-revolution.

Caracas had also become an increasingly dangerous capital, the streets wrought by criminals and muggers. I returned in late 1999, traveling from Brazil. Our hosts, a bunch of strung out anarchists, put us up in their fortified apartment. Fortified because the area they lived in, near the city centre, was plagued with anti-social problems. With its steel door and inner security bars, the place resembled a jail. Inside there was nothing to rob, there was little by way of furniture, just a record player from which Crass and other dirge emanated, extremely loud. The anarchists were atrociously drunk, falling around the place, but also falling over themselves to make us feel welcome and at ease. They were sound people, but clearly the



struggle was at a low ebb. A remarkable looking punk, dressed up in some quasi-Siouxie and the Banshees Nazi look, spoke to me in a quite incoherent Caracas street vernacular. “*Echando vaina*” punctuated her every sentence, street talk for something—what, I had no idea. She passed over some inflammatory liquid and I felt its heat boil my insides. These anarchists, although activists, were clearly, at this time, not.

The drink overwhelmed my sense of returning to Caracas and made me sentimental. “Is this what the rebellion of 1993 was fought for?” I asked, referring to the Chávez Populist regime and our drunken revelry.

“No, no, no!” they said most definitively, stumbling around.

“And talking of 1993, do any of you remember a *compañero* called Vampiro?” A pause. “Hmmm,” they said.

“The singer from *Autonomía*!” said one.

“A good street fighter,” said another.

“Disappeared, a long time ago, *echando vaina* ?” said the Banshee

### GRACIAS A LA VIDA

And I thought of Vampiro, and his spirit of resistance, his legend. *Compañeros* whom we cherish and whom we miss. Why do all the best people perish? Sometimes Latin America overwhelms you, because it is a long history of courage cut down, valiant aspirations destroyed by brutish repression. Like a long opera falling inexorably towards a fatal finale, replenished with sufficient passion to sustain a sense of horror. We embrace the tragedy, because there is nothing else left, just horror.

“He must be dying of boredom up there in the mountains,” said one.

“Years and years, doing nothing,” said another.

“Fucking school teacher,” said the third.

“*Echando Vaina*,” said the Banshee, “all these years, Vampiro, a rural teacher.”

I smiled. Vampiro’s resurrection. Not all Latin American resistance stories have a tragic ending. ✨

# Days of Crime and Nights of Horror

by Ramor Ryan

## A STORMY NIGHT....

**T**HE WILD Pacific Ocean pounds the shore of the tiny Guatemalan port town of Champerico. Overrun by gangs and drugs, Champerico gets one line in the guidebook: *sweltering, dilapidated, dangerous—best avoided*. My kinda town. Here, among the ghosts of Guatemala's terrible recent history and the tumultuous daily life of a lawless, *desperado* town as far removed from shopping mall America as can be imagined, is a good location to begin considering the two books in question.

Galeano's book is a journal and historical memory of two decades of struggle and perseverance in Latin America, revolving around the pivotal moment of the military coup in Argentina in 1976. CrimethInc's book is a "cosmology" of radical criticism of contemporary US (and Western European) society that articulates a position of total rebellion toward everyday life. "Are there ways of thinking, acting, and living that may be more satisfying and exciting than the ways we think, act, and live today?"<sup>1</sup> is the question they pose by way of introducing their provocative tract. While Galeano's book emerges from the New Left, 1968 revolutionary wave, and CrimethInc from the anarchist resurgence of the 1990s, they are linked by their cut and paste aphoristic style, and filled with vignettes, tales and nuggets of revolutionary or radical wisdom. Both embrace philosophy and morality as weapons within a political superstructure.

Champerico evokes the spirit of both books. The fear and terror described in Galeano's book lingers interminably everywhere in a Guatemala struggling to deal with the aftermath of 30 years of brutal internecine war. And in terms of

A review of:

*Days of War, Nights of Love: CrimethInc for Beginners* (CrimethInc Workers' Collective, 2001).

*Days and Nights of Love and War* by Eduardo Galeano (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983).

CrimethInc, here is a place off the global map, a *dérive* from the usual, a place full of adventures and stories where books could write themselves and one could, in the Situationist sense, take their dreams for reality and *really live*.

Days and nights of love and war indeed. Strolling along the beach at dusk one evening, I came upon a middle-aged couple in the midst of some appalling drunken melee. The man slapped the woman's face, dramatically ripped off his clothes and stumbled into the turbulent sea in what appeared to be a quite pathetic attempt to drown himself. The woman screamed and turned to me, hapless bystander, pleading that I rescue the flailing man from the dangerous surf. Somewhat reluctantly, I entered the sea and dragged the inebriated fool to safety. We dragged the naked man by his heels up to a beachside bar; his head left a comical trail in the sand. The woman, who turned out to be the owner of the bar, was apoplectic with gratitude, and furnished me with endless sea food and rum and a bevy of tales about her eclectic life, while Mr Suicide slept off his disgrace.

I remembered the incident as I applied myself to writing this review. CrimethInc implore us to live our lives

on the edge, to roam, to discover life by engaging the subterranean springs and discover in the immediate present the revolution of everyday life. In this sense, today's little adventure—with its component parts of love, conflict, rescue, and resolution—was a moment of engaging life critically, a *CrimethInc*-esque situation of sorts. This from the section entitled "H is for History:" "If we dare to throw ourselves into the unknown and unpredictable, to continually seek out situations that force us to be *in* the present moment, we can break free of the feelings of inevitability and inertia that constrain our lives—and in those instants, step *outside* of history."<sup>2</sup> I didn't feel myself lifted outside of history, but I understand what they are getting at.

But as a prescription for rebellion, is it enough to merely "shake off the dead weight of the past" and "place our selves and our present day existence where they rightfully belong, in the centre of our universe?"<sup>3</sup>

Here Galeano's wisdom, born of real struggle, of real days and nights of love and war, is instructive: "Will we be capable of learning humility and patience? I am the world, but very small. A man's time is not history's time, although admittedly, we would like it to be."<sup>4</sup>

## STEALING BEAUTY AS RECYCLED SHIT

**O**f course, it is unfair to compare CrimethInc's rag-tag collection of plagiarized ideas with Galeano's rich testimony to struggle and survival—but they brought it on themselves by inappropriately ripping off his title for their book.

Why do CrimethInc call their book *Days of War and Nights of Love*? There is no war and scant love (maybe a little

teenage infatuation) in this tract. Instead there is boredom with the world they live in, and a quest for something else, an impatient desire to live in a completely different world. Galeano's beautiful title, which captures well the theme and content of his work and evokes the fine poetic sensibility of his prose, is typically inappropriate for the CrimethInc book. They should have called it something like *The ABC of CrimethInc (Anti-) Ideology*, a more fitting title for such a pedestrian, navel-gazing tract as this.

The misrepresentation continues with the images adorning the covers—a masked Zapatista and a grenade—suggesting some kind of handbook of guerrilla insurgency. But *CrimethInc for Beginners* is no guerrilla manifesto. And Galeano's book is full of tales of masked guerrillas with grenades, but this book is not a handbook of insurgency either. If anything, it is the opposite—a grim chronicle of the follies of armed struggle.

Those who resist are not portrayed in the heroic mode, *à la* Che, but as very ordinary men and women, flawed and weighed down by their inevitable tragic destiny. He spends a few days with some guerrillas in Guatemala: "They were very young...the army was on their tail and they told dirty jokes and roared with laughter... We slept on the ground, hugging one another, bodies glued together for warmth and to keep the early morning freeze from killing us.... Are any of the boys I met back then in the mountains still alive?"<sup>5</sup>

Galeano talks about real life, real people, real situations, and the psycho-geography of the battlefield of war and love. In the end, it seems like almost all of Galeano's friends, comrades, acquaintances, and lovers had been disappeared, tortured, exiled, or damaged beyond recognition. Galeano's achievement is to rescue from this carnage a sense of the dignity and gentle humanity of those who fell, or those who somehow survived. See how he remembers Raúl Sendic, the legendary *Tupamaros* guerrilla commander—not as a deified heroic

martyr, nor cloaked in the sublime mystic of a clandestine revolutionary, but as a kind, humble man: "I close my eyes and again see Raúl in front of the campfire, on the banks of the Río Uruguay. He lifts a live coal to my lips because, bungler that I am, I have let my corn husk cigarette go out again."<sup>6</sup>

CrimethInc employ the symbols of armed struggle—guns, bullets, grenades, petrol bombs—for no reason other than their spectacular effect, something like the way advertising appropriates sex to sell products: "This book is composed of ideas and images we've remorselessly stolen and adjusted for our purposes...."<sup>7</sup> And what *purpose* would this be? German RAF urban guerrilla Ulrike Mienhof, murdered in Stanheimn prison, is



portrayed with these incoherent words pasted over her image: "You will find your only safety is in danger—CrimethInc."<sup>8</sup> The mindless desecration of her memory to make a fatuous point reminds me of a joke. What do you get if you cross a situationist with a mafioso? A guy who makes you an offer you can't understand. And what do you get if cross a CrimethIncer with a situationist? A bad photocopy of a good book.

Text, ideas, and graphics are borrowed and pilfered from the Stoke-Newington fanzine *Vague*, British graphic artist Clifford Harper, French situationist Raoul Vaneigem and indeed, the whole of the Situationist pantheon. They sack the archives of radical sub-culture to compound a falsehood, the basic premise of this book, that it is an instrument for "total liberation." In reality, CrimethInc's vision seldom rises above that of a suburban kid rebelling against authority. Mired in the punk rock and crusty sub-culture, the practical application of all this revolutionary theory is apparently realized by forming a band, fucking in a park, going vegan or—*oh my God now*

*we're really fucking doing it!*—giving out phony free tickets to the local cinema.<sup>9</sup> It soon becomes clear that the real *crime* here is the way they plunder some of the finest and most invigorating ideas from the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and render them dull and inchoate.

#### LOVE AND WAR IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

Possibly the most creative and probably the only original idea in CrimethInc's book is a blurb on the back cover written by JD Salinger: "*If Henry Miller had gone to fight with the anarchists in Spain while Orwell sought the caresses of beautiful women in France, and they had collaborated to write a manifesto on war and love, this is the sort of book they might have produced...*" However I think that it is Galeano, not CrimethInc, who has produced that sort of book, and it is *Days and Nights of Love and War*.

Like Orwell, Galeano has taken up arms against fascism, in this case, the Argentinean dictatorship. As he flees for his life, he finds solace in exile in the arms of a variety of extraordinary women from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn. For obvious reasons he doesn't spell out his direct involvement in the armed movements in Argentina and Uruguay, although he does write about a visit to a guerrilla camp in Guatemala and conversations with Cuban veterans in the Sierra Maestro. As he drinks fine wine on summer nights overlooking the River Plate, boozes in back street taverns, or barbecues in the countryside, all his cronies seem to be well known guerrillas on the run, *clandestinos* or *comandantes* with a tale or two to tell.

Galeano has been described as the finest Latin American non-fiction writer alive. He employs wonderful lyrical prose that mesmerized readers in his now legendary historical trilogy *Memory of Fire* with even greater passion here, for now he is chronicling the history not just of his continent, but of his own comrades, friends, family, and lovers. A scathing critique of the Latin American

dictatorships is interspersed with intimate vignettes relating the struggle and pain of his *compañeros* and *compañeras*. In quiet moments of introspection, his mind moves on philosophical themes—love, death, commitment, betrayal, good wine. The book is a testimony to surviving pain and violence with a capacity for love and tenderness still intact<sup>10</sup>—a manifesto of hope despite the times, or dreams undiminished despite the sorrow.

Galeano is at once Orwell in the Spanish trenches facing fascist bullets, and Miller, if not cavorting in lascivious depravity with Parisian whores, at least reveling in the pleasure of nocturnal embraces. Although even here, the shadow of war haunts the joy of sex: “...Morning comes and the aroma announces tasty, steamy, freshly made coffee. Your face radiates a clean light and your body smells of love juices.... We count the hours that separate us from the night to come. Then we will make love, the sorrowcide.”<sup>11</sup>

Salinger’s reference to Orwell and Miller in the CrimethInc blurb refers to Orwell’s famous essay, “Inside the Whale” (1940). Orwell reviews Miller’s work and is appalled that the American, although a radical, is concerned solely with the celebration of individual liberation. Miller, we learn, dismisses Orwell’s notion of going to fight fascism in Spain as “sheer stupidity...the act of an idiot.”<sup>12</sup> Miller chooses the vagabond life of poverty and deprivation as a means of seeking personal salvation, cavorting in the streets and whorehouses of Paris in search of individual liberation while Europe burns. As the threat of Nazism and Fascism loomed over Europe, Miller had removed himself into the safety of the metaphorical belly of a whale, a comfortable space to escape from the storm outside. For Orwell, marching off to the trenches Spain from “a sense of obligation,” Miller’s stance is “the final unsurpassable stage of irresponsibility.” “He is fiddling while Rome is burning,” fumes Orwell, “and unlike the enormous majority of people who do this, fiddling with his face towards the flames.”<sup>13</sup>

While CrimethInc would probably consider themselves a mixture of Miller’s libertarianism and Orwell’s direct action, here they have written a book more akin to Miller’s escapism and individualistic nihilism. They too fiddle while Rome burns. There is no analysis of the macro-political situation; no capitalist globalization, or US hegemony, or imperialism. Even US domestic issues—social control,



militation, the drugs, and riza-war on the prison system—don’t merit a mention. CrimethInc’s anarchism “as a personal approach to life” reflects Miller’s quietism and mysticism. Their quest for individual freedom in the form of squatting, shoplifting, jumping trains, and eating out of garbage cans could be considered a way of living off the belly of the beast, if not inside the whale. As tactics and strategy, these don’t get us very far toward the goal of “total liberation.”

Anticipating this criticism, a CrimethIncer writes: “we have limited ourselves for the most part here to criticism of the established order, because we trust you to do the rest. This book is supposed to help you analyze and disassemble this world—what you build

for yourself in its place is in your hands, although we have offered some general ideas of where to start...”<sup>14</sup>

And so what does CrimethInc offer? “F is for Freedom... In the summer of 1999, CrimethInc special agent Tristan Tzarathustra...had eaten only garbage all year as a consequence of his oath not to participate in, add fuel to, or encourage in any way the economy of world capitalism...”<sup>15</sup> Oh dear. This guy would make a great naga sadhu, Hindu holy man, stand naked on one leg up a pole for 20 years, tow a freight train with his penis, that kind of thing. Tristan Tzarathustra, crusty holy man.

“H is for Hygiene.” The right to be dirty, etc. “Try violating a few of the ‘common sense’ rules of Western sanitation some time; you’ll find that eating out of garbage cans and going a few weeks without a shower aren’t really as dangerous or difficult as we were taught.”<sup>16</sup> Try this for fun?! To make a statement? Or as an experiment to feel *empathy* with the downtrodden? Eating out of garbage cans is not the answer to any thing except spectacular depravity and in terms of CrimethInc’s general strategy, making feral love in a graveyard under the stars is no fun with really smelly people.

“S is for space.... Try exploring in your own neighborhood, looking on rooftops and around corners you never noticed before—you’ll be amazed how much adventure is hidden there waiting for you.”<sup>17</sup> Endless days of war and nights of love awaiting all you intrepid neighborhood CrimethIncers out there! Don’t get caught!

Having disassembled the world, CrimethInc leaves the rebel outside the system, isolated and alone in personal revolt, further from the general population without the social formation or tools to start building collective projects or the ability to organize concretely. In plagiarizing the Situationist pantheon, they have ignored the most relevant part towards for really changing the world and aspiring towards “total liberation”: “Radical Criticism has merely analysed the Old World and its negation. It must

now either realize itself in the practical activity of the revolutionary masses or betray itself by becoming a barrier to that activity.”<sup>18</sup>

#### DETOURNING ANARCHY

“A is for Anarchy... *You* don’t want to be at the mercy of governments, bureaucracies, police, or other outside forces, do you? Surely you don’t let them dictate your entire life.”<sup>19</sup> *Surely?* Firstly, this kind of self-righteous sermonizing sounds a lot better in its original French, and secondly, how can we be, like, *anarchists*, if you keep telling us how we should be, Reverend CrimethInc?

CrimethInc feel the need to resurrect anarchism “as a personal approach to life.” Here they are borrowing more than an idea, but a historical tendency that they are “adjusting for their own purposes.” “Anarchism is the revolutionary idea that no one is more qualified than you are to decide what your life will be.”<sup>20</sup> There are many definitions of anarchism, but to reduce the definition to such a purely personal sense is to do it a grave injustice. Anarchism as a historical tendency, as a form of anti-authoritarian community or workers’ self-organization is a concept that CrimethInc throws out the window. Work is the problem for them, not how workers organize. (Maybe *workers* are the problem for these freewheeling non-workers.)

Movements too are a problem for CrimethInc. This from CrimethInc heavy-hitter Nadia C: “Total revolution will not come merely as a result of proper planning and hard work but out of a leap of faith.... Each of us must be faithful to the yearnings of her heart for things too extravagant to ever fit in this world, and pursue them to such lengths that others are inspired to their own pursuits. It is this alchemy we need, not another movement.”<sup>21</sup> Apart from the quaint mysticism expressed here, the more perplexing thing is the idea that we don’t need to organize together, or struggle together. It’s enough that we inspire others to their *own pursuits*. CrimethInc challenge the truism that every anarchist is a socialist, but not every socialist is an anarchist.

CrimethInc are not socialists and the question that remains is whether they are indeed anarchists, or merely libertines.

And then there is their irresolute class analysis, stuck in at the end of the C is for Capitalism section entitled “Post script: A Class War everyone can fit in.”<sup>22</sup> The author argues that there is no class distinction before the misery of modern life, and that rich and poor share the same suffering: “It does not matter if a woman is buried alive in a prison, in a sweat-shop... in a prestigious university, or in a mansion with a private swimming pool, so long as she is buried alive....”<sup>23</sup> This criminal assertion defies comment. The writer concludes: “So we must all, rich and poor, band together to transform our situation....”<sup>24</sup> Is this something Bono said to Bill Gates at the recent World Economic Forum? H is for History and a long-standing problem of human history is that the rich have been unwilling to give up their wealth, privilege, or power to the poor. It is a situation that the rich, even if they are miserable in their mansions, have not been willing to change, which has given rise to class struggle. “A class war everyone can fit in” is OK if you remember that the rich and poor are on opposing sides.

Here I can’t use Galeano’s book as a stick with which to beat CrimethInc. Galeano is not an anarchist and I search *Days and Nights of Love and War* for some indication of his politics but none reveals itself, apart from the broadest possible anti-dictatorship, human rights agenda. This is a serious problem with the book. One of the reasons the state went into overdrive was the fact that the resistance was really threatening their power. The resistance, armed and widespread, in the form of the Argentinean *Montoneros*, the largest guerrilla army in Latin American, or the smaller Uruguayan *Tupamaros*, inspired by the Cuban Revolution and the Guevarista insurrectionary model, were capable of destabilizing the state and even aspired to seize power. Kid gloves were off, and all kinds of atrocities were tolerated in the name of the saving the “homeland” from communism. Galeano’s testimony, without spelling it out,

indicates that armed struggle achieved nothing except getting everyone killed.

But this is not the lesson the book intends to teach. Indeed, Galeano offers no critique of the failures of the resistance movement, or of its tactics and strategy. He focuses solely on the carnage wrought by the dictatorship. This is understandable considering the massacres and atrocities perpetrated against anyone who didn’t support the regime, but a little dishonest. For example, he lists contributors to his magazine *Crisis* who were killed or disappeared.<sup>25</sup> One is Rodolfo Walsh. Walsh was a well-known writer, but the probable reason the state assassinated him was that he was an officer in the *Montoneros*. A number of successful guerrilla operations have been attributed to Walsh, including the masterminding of a canteen bombing that killed 42 cops. Galeano excludes this part of the story, no doubt to protect his comrades, living and dead—but the book suffers from an incomplete account of the events. It shies away from examining the armed struggle and its consequences. We would be all the wiser if we were presented with the full picture.

#### CHAMPERICO REVISITED

**B**ack by the Champerico sea, the plot thickened. I returned to breakfast “on the house,” and an offer from the gracious woman to come live with them. Mr Suicide appears, hung-over, and somewhat sheepishly apologizes for yesterday’s incident. As we share breakfast, the woman explains that her husband was formerly a colonel in the Guatemalan army. Now forced to live as a humble fisherman, nobody treats him with the respect he feels he deserves. She herself is from El Salvador, and I notice she is wearing a T-shirt supporting the *Arena* party—basically, the fascist death-squad party during Salvador’s long anti-insurgency war.

So must we really, as CrimethInc urge, “shake off the dead weight of the past”?

My spontaneous adventure on the Champerico sea front becomes complicated by the weight of contextual infor-

mation. These people are not simply part of my rich engagement with the present moment, but people with heavy pasts, pasts that are intractably connected to the killing fields of these places, and suddenly I regret becoming involved. Maybe I should have let the fucking drunken Colonel drown.

Galeano again, this time a soliloquy on the state's solution to eliminate resistance, that is as relevant to the Argentinean and Uruguayan situations in the 1970s as to Guatemala and El Salvador in the 1980s: "Extermination plan: destroy the grass, pull up every last living thing by the roots, sprinkle the earth with salt. To colonize consciences, suppress them; to suppress them, *empty them of the past*. Wipe out all testimony to the fact in this land there ever existed anything other than silence, jails, and tombs. It is forbidden to remember."<sup>26</sup>

The problem with CrimethInc is not their spirit of unfettered romanticism and irreverent passion—we can't get enough of that—but the unbearable lightness and depthlessness of their philosophy and praxis.

In their haste to embrace wild abandon and "live as the subject rather than the object of history"<sup>27</sup> they beat their wings frantically like Icarus toward the sun, hopelessly flawed. Their wings of desire, born of a rich tapestry of radical Situationist and anarchist discourses, are employed inappropriately for their individualist and egotistical project.

#### POSTSCRIPT:

##### PASSIONATE ACTS OF REFUSAL

At heart, CrimethInc's *Days of War and Nights of Love* is a manifesto against complacency, passivity, and pessimism. They exhibit a great capacity to produce large amounts of high quality propaganda (including their free broadsheet *Harbinger*, and the popular *Fighting For Our Lives* pamphlet, with a reputed print run of 250,000 copies). One can't begrudge their productivity, or their fervent desire to spread their plagiarized word, but to what end do they do it and for what purpose?

CrimethInc begins with the brand

name, and ends with the relentless merchandizing of "radical" products on their website. In between there is, as exhibited by this book, an individualist, selfish, and inchoate rebel ideology that eschews work, political organizing, and class struggle. In a world at war and facing terminal crisis, CrimethInc's transcendental philosophy and ahistorical lightness is a form of intellectual masturbation. Like rootless ex-pats unconnected to the daily life around them, CrimethInc's lifestyle is a form of self-imposed exile within their own society. Without a base, without a movement to critique, they speak with a corpse in their mouth. It's not enough to merely identify with the dispossessed; the task is to find common voice and organize with them. Without a relevant discourse on the daily life of the potentially insurrectionary multitudes of here and now, CrimethInc remain mere historical archivists, trainspotters of radical discourse, a superannuated hobby with no practical application.

*Wherever passionate acts of refusal and a passionate consciousness of the necessity of resistance trigger stoppages in the factories of collective illusion, there the revolution of everyday life is underway.*<sup>28</sup>

Vaneigem gave examples of this revolution underway: Watts, Prague, Stockholm, Stanleyville, Turin, Mieres, the Dominican Republic, Amsterdam, flash points in that era of violent insurrection, wildcat strike action, the resurgence of workers' councils, and general self-management. Not the apolitical hedonism of individuals saying, "Fuck this, I'm hitting the road," or "I'm going to make love in the park," or "I'm forming a punk rock band." CrimethInc don't think collectively, just individually, and this forms the whole deceptive nature of the book. The work of revolutionary insurgency must be done by the revolutionary insurgents—that is, the workers and non-workers in mass revolt.

*One more push nihilists, if you want to be revolutionaries. ✨*

#### ENDNOTES

1. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love: CrimethInc for Beginners* (CrimethInc Workers' Collective, 2001), 8.
2. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love*, 113.
3. *Ibid.*, 114.
4. Eduardo Galeano, *Days and Nights of Love and War* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000), 172.
5. Galeano, *Days and Nights of Love and War*, 23.
6. *Ibid.*, 43.
7. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love*, 11.
8. *Ibid.*, 259.
9. *Ibid.*, 193.
10. Galeano, *Days and Nights of Love and War*, 42.
11. *Ibid.*, 175.
12. George Orwell, "Inside the Whale," <http://www.orwell.ru/library/essays/whale/>.
13. *Ibid.*
14. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love*, 11.
15. *Ibid.*, 103.
16. *Ibid.*, 125.
17. *Ibid.*, 210.
18. Raoul Vaneigem, "Postscript: A toast to revolutionary workers" in *The Revolution of Everyday Life* (London: Rebel Press, 2003), 275.
19. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love*, 35.
20. *Ibid.*, 41.
21. *Ibid.*, 172.
22. *Ibid.*, 81.
23. *Ibid.*, 81.
24. *Ibid.*, 81.
25. Galeano, *Days and Nights of Love and War*, 174.
26. *Ibid.*, 178.
27. CrimethInc, *Days of War, Nights of Love*, 14.
28. Raoul Vaneigem, *The Revolution of Everyday Life*, 271.

# From Theater Groups to Bank Robberies The Diverse Experience of Uruguayan Anarchists

by Astrid Wessels

WHILE I was walking down the street in Buenos Aires, thinking about the Uruguayan Anarchist Federation's defense and use of violent direct action, a large explosion suddenly shook me out of my reverie. Because I had just passed a small *piquetero* demonstration blocking traffic at a major intersection, I briefly attributed the explosion to the small, handheld fireworks often used to get people's attention during these events, something now so common that most people, including myself, barely notice it any more. But, when I returned to the same corner an hour and a half later, I saw that the place was crawling with police and a special explosives brigade. I also saw that the Repsol-YPF (oil company) building across the street had big black burn marks on it, and that a lantern on the building hung twisted and useless.

Later that evening I heard an interview with Raúl Castells, a *piquetero* leader, on the news. When asked about the events at the Repsol-YPF building, he accused government agents of attempting to discredit the movement, which was protesting, among other things, a massive increase in petroleum gas prices from 10 to 30 pesos. The increase affects all those not connected to the gas network, that is, the poor and lower middle class. The same program later reported that some people, unable to purchase gas, had begun using charcoal.

Castells' indignant reaction to the suggestion that they might have set off the explosion reveals popular limits to acceptable and unacceptable tactics of direct action: people may be living in conditions that ceased to be tolerable one hundred years ago, but that doesn't justify the destruction of property. Interestingly,

A review of:

*Historias robadas: Beto y Débora, dos anarquistas uruguayos (Stolen Histories: Beto and Débora, Two Uruguayan Anarchists)* by Hugo Fontana (Montevideo: Cal y Canto, 2003).

*Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de FAU (Anarchist Direct Action: A History of the FAU)* by Juan C. Mechoso (Montevideo: Editorial Recortes, 2002).

another focus of the day's 124 roadblocks (*piquetes*) was opposition to the law that recently declared *piquetes* illegal. The protesters were actively breaking the law by blocking traffic, and even by uprooting street signs to feed the fires that traditionally burn at the *piquetes*, but explosives are another matter.

The two books reviewed here are largely composed of the first-hand testimony of Uruguayan anarchists who have played active roles in the Uruguayan anarchist movement for over fifty years. Their rich and varied experience covers a wide spectrum of anarchist practice, from union-building, to theater groups, to cooperatives, to publications, and yes, to the destruction of the property of those considered responsible for the miserable living conditions of large sectors of the population. In fact, at one point in its history, the *Federación Anarquista Uruguaya* (Uruguayan Anarchist Federation, FAU), would have considered the controversial explosion described above as little more than a practice drill used to train its members in the complexities of armed struggle.

Ángel Cappelletti notes in his book on Latin American anarchism that the Uruguayan movement, despite its long history of continuous activity, has yet to attract the attention of historians.<sup>1</sup> Aspects have been studied (primarily its early years), as have the lives of some participants, but the literature is far from abundant. In this sense, though we must continue to lament the lack of a more general work, any book on the movement will contribute something new. Those reviewed here are important attempts to put at least a few more pieces of the puzzle of Uruguayan anarchism into place.

Hugo Fontana's book *Historias robadas: Beto y Débora, dos anarquistas uruguayos (Stolen Histories: Beto and Débora, Two Uruguayan Anarchists)* deals primarily, as the title suggests, with the lives of Luis Alberto "Beto" Gallegos and Débora Céspedes, born in 1920 and 1921 respectively, and active anarchists since their teens. Through extensive interviews with Beto and Débora, shorter interviews with other Uruguayan anarchists, and his own research and reflection, Fontana constructs a somewhat nostalgic vision of life in Uruguay and the anarchist movement as seen through the lives of two participants from the 1920s to the present. The book seems to be aimed at a non-anarchist reader, and the first half mixes material on the history of Uruguay and its capital city, Montevideo, with Beto and Débora's personal memories, and also attempts to provide general information on Uruguayan and world anarchism. The second half focuses more specifically on the anarchist movement and its concerns from the 1950s onwards, and expands outwards from Beto and Débora's personal visions to include others.

*Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de FAU (Anarchist Direct Action: A History of FAU)* is also a partial view, by FAU member Juan Carlos Mechoso, who was born in 1935 and, like Beto and Débora, has been active in the anarchist movement since his teens. This book recounts the story of one group, the FAU, and its activity during one period: 1965-1973. In the future, the FAU intends to publish three further volumes covering 1870-1949, 1950-1964<sup>2</sup>, and 1974-1976.

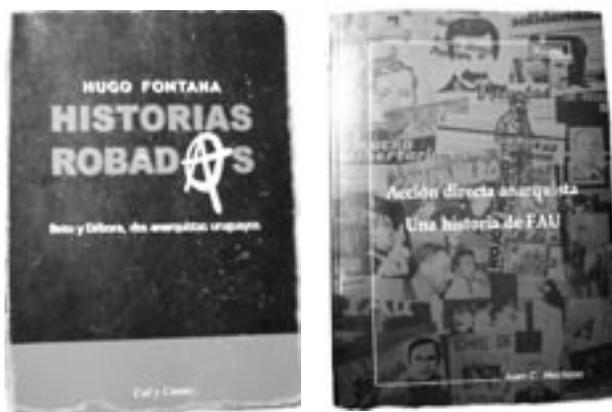
Both books begin by briefly outlining the early history of anarchism. Much of this commentary will probably not interest, and may even exasperate, a reader looking for more than a very superficial introduction. In *Historias robadas*, for instance, Hugo Fontana summarizes the origins of anarchist thought from the 6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. to 1920 A.D. in ten pages, and later the Spanish Revolution in another ten. Mechoso, in *Acción directa anarquista*, dedicates about twenty-five pages to the history of anarchism and workers' movements in the Río de la Plata<sup>3</sup> up to the 1960s in an attempt to provide some background for the eight years that are the main focus of this volume of the FAU's history.

Both books also trace the presence of anarchist ideas in Uruguay back to the mid-nineteenth century, beginning with the influence of Proudhon's mutualism and later Bakunin and Malatesta's views. A regional workers' federation was founded in the 1870s and joined the Bakuninist International Workingman's Association in 1877. The anarchist *Federación Obrera Regional del Uruguay* (FORU) was founded in 1905, and had ninety thousand members by 1911.<sup>4</sup> In the first half of the century there was an enormous amount of union activity, centering on issues such as the right to organize, the 8-hour work-day, health issues, and the abolition of child labor.

Within the anarchist movement, two tendencies emerged as a result of the Russian Revolution of 1917: one supported the idea of a temporary dictator-

ship of the proletariat and allied itself with the Communist Party despite its reformist activities and attempt to control the labor movement. The other rejected the idea of a revolutionary party, of holding power for even a limited period, and opposed the Communist Party.<sup>5</sup> A similar division again split the anarchist movement after the Cuban Revolution.

By 1936 there were three national labor organizations: the anarchist FORU, the communist-led *Unión Sindical Uruguaya* (founded in 1923) which included some anarchists,<sup>6</sup> and the communist *Confederación Central de*



*Trabajadores del Uruguay* (founded in 1929), the precursor of the communist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (founded in 1942).<sup>7</sup>

Both *Historias robadas* and *Acción directa anarquista* refer to the labor movement and its struggles, to the campaign to free Sacco and Vanzetti, to the Spanish Revolution, to the anarchist periodical *Voluntad*, and to admiration of and collaboration with the Argentine anarchist Miguel Rosigna<sup>8</sup> and his companions in Uruguay. Rosigna's most famous act in Montevideo was the construction of a tunnel from a charcoal shop to the Punta Carretas prison to allow anarchists held there to escape.<sup>9</sup> The escape in 1931 was successful, but its engineers were captured and jailed, ironically, in the same prison.

Débora Céspedes' experiences of anarchism have been both through its cultural activities, like theater and periodicals, and through union and student

organizing. Both she and Beto Gallegos were active members of *Juventudes Libertarias* (Libertarian Youth), and sold and distributed the anarchist periodical *Voluntad*,<sup>10</sup> affiliated with the International Workingman's Association. *Juventudes Libertarias* actively supported the unions' direct actions through public meetings, posterings, pamphlets, and sometimes "scab catching" and sabotage.<sup>11</sup>

Beto was one of the founders of the Plumber's Union, and describes its principles and methods, saying they were generally representative of the anarchist unions. The main goal was to get the employers to recognize the union and its right to distribute work among its members through a work pool, where work was distributed in strictly chronological order.<sup>12</sup> Cultural activities played an important part in the union, and all anarchist unions had both theater groups and libraries. All conflicts were resolved through the union, which made its decisions in weekly general assemblies. There was a strong rejection of union bureaucracy and any attempt at govern-

ment interference. When management hired scabs during strikes, strikers approached them and tried to convince them that the strike was in their interests. If dialogue failed, more energetic means were used, and the scabs were physically prevented from breaking the strike.<sup>13</sup>

The original FAU was founded in 1956, and dissolved in 1963. Beto and Débora were in Argentina at the time, and returned just after the dissolution. The creation and dissolution and the reasons for them are only mentioned in passing in *Acción directa anarquista*, since the book does not discuss events prior to 1965 in detail. *Historias robadas*, however, devotes a great deal of space to the matter in what is, in my opinion, one of the richest sections of the book. Fontana interviews anarchists from different tendencies and generations, and their perspectives on the reason for the break up provide a fascinating picture of

the different conceptions of anarchism at the time of the division.<sup>14</sup>

What emerges is a portrait of the brief confluence of different approaches to the practice and dissemination of libertarian ideas. The founding groups were involved in disseminating the practice and theory of autonomy: work and consumers' cooperatives, community organizing, the attempt to meet needs outside the capitalist system, grassroots education, seminars on the role of anarchism, strike support, and publications. The newly federated groups included *Voluntad, Juventudes Libertarias, Comité Popular del Barrio Sur, Ateneo Libre Cerro-La Teja, Comunidad del Sur*, and various unions, and apparently many other groups not specified. The book does not, unfortunately, discuss what the FAU actually did in the few years that it really functioned as a federation.<sup>15</sup>

In mid-1961, according to Fontana, the short honeymoon ended and the fundamental differences in focus and methods came to a head in the debates surrounding the Cuban Revolution and its implications. The basic split might be described as Kropotkin and Proudhon versus Bakunin, Malatesta, and Che Guevara; between a focus on building new forms of horizontal association and transforming society through culture, and a focus on confrontations with and the destruction of the existing order through strict organizing and armed struggle, with the corollary need for secrecy and temporary sacrifice of consensus procedures.

Cuba became a permanent topic of debate, and FAU member Alfredo Errandonea even traveled there to bring back a first hand report of what was going on.<sup>16</sup> In an attempt to clarify the FAU's position on Cuba after Fidel Castro publicly declared himself a Marxist-Leninist, the FAU published a bulletin with four different points of view. Fontana cites only Luce Fabbri.<sup>17</sup> She calls for support for the struggle against the Batista dictatorship and for the workers and peasants who occupied fields and factories, but condemns the reign of terror installed by the single

party and supported by the state militias.<sup>18</sup> The other viewpoint, summarized by Juan Carlos Mechoso, among others, basically celebrates the revolution as an example of the possibility of an immediate rupture with the capitalist system and stresses the need to defend the Cuban people's right to self-determination in the face of US imperialism.<sup>19</sup> To this group, the rupture was more important than the internal structure which resulted from it. To the former group, the internal structure that had resulted from the rupture demonstrated that rupture in and of itself was no guarantee of revolution.

The question was not one of revolution versus reform, but of which road led to revolution, and the FAU, despite its federal structure, found that it could not take both roads at once, and decided to dissolve. What happened next is not altogether clear: according to Rubén Prieto and to Beto and Débora, the pro Cuba, pro armed struggle, pro revolutionary anarchist party faction agreed to dissolve the FAU and then simply took over its name, meeting space, and library.<sup>20</sup> The other side speaks of the division as an "internal division," and does not mention the decision to dissolve or the struggle over the library. In any case, the result of the division/dissolution was that some, including Juan Carlos Mechoso and Gerardo Gatti, continued to use the FAU's name, space, and library, but radically changed the organization's focus, while Rubén Prieto, Alfredo Errandonea, Luce Fabbri, and Beto and Débora continued their activities and started other groups, including one called *Asociación Libertaria Uruguaya (ALU)*.<sup>21</sup>

The "new" FAU rapidly got to work on increasing its presence in the labor movement, and established working relationships with the revolutionary left. A new structure emerged, with a public wing for labor activities called *Resistencia Obrero Estudiantil (ROE)*, and a secret wing dedicated to armed activities, eventually called *Organización Popular Revolucionaria 33 (OPR 33)*.

Mechoso uses a mixed approach to reconstruct the history of the FAU, be-

ginning with chapters for each year; then moving to thematic chapters: security, FAI-ist violence, armed struggle, ideology and structure, expropriations, support services (forgery, auto body shop, clinic, spaces for hiding secret and illegal goods and kidnapped people), kidnappings; and then skipping between years and themes towards the end. This structure is confusing, as it leads to both repetition and omissions: some things become clear only after reading the thematic chapter, others are mentioned in much the same terms twice. All chapters rely on a combination of Mechoso's own explanations, internal FAU documents,<sup>22</sup> public fliers and articles, and interviews with participants in an attempt to provide context, do homage to dead activists, describe the FAU's activities, and justify these activities. The focus is unquestionably on armed struggle, probably due to the fact that the writer was one of the people most involved in this area of the organization's activities.

The Organization, as the FAU refers to itself, actively recruited members for both its public and armed campaigns, and assigned members to tasks that the *junta*, or leadership, deemed they were best suited for. At first the reader feels impatient with the haphazard accumulation of information and the scant attention paid to spelling, punctuation, the explanation of acronyms, and general clarity. Some things are never explained, others are repeated ad nauseam. As the book advances and more and more space is devoted to armed robbery and kidnappings, the experience becomes more disconcerting due to the plethora of code names used for everything: people, cars, recruitment, security. At one point it seems that the entire leadership has changed, and then suddenly it dawns on the reader that the same people are simply being referred to by their code names. Mechoso includes a list of code names and the actual people they refer to and a glossary of other code words, but both are incomplete.<sup>23</sup> By the time I reached page 502, my head was reeling.

Uruguayan social and political life in the 1965-1973 period are described as

a seemingly endless series of strikes, repressive legislation, economic deterioration, and popular struggles: the FAU describes it as “constitutional dictatorship.” In 1973 the dictatorship would cease to be constitutional.

The FAU attempted to keep the *Convención Nacional de Trabajadores* (CNT), which was founded in 1965 and grouped the majority of labor unions, focused on direct action and revolution rather than government mediation and reform. Although their non-armed activities are only mentioned in passing, they appear to be the justification for all the armed actions; either to obtain finances, to force factory owners to agree to workers’ demands, to get journalists to publish their version of the armed actions that had been carried out, or to obtain wigs, watches, weapons, and clothes needed to carry out more armed actions. None of the armed actions attacked government, police, or military targets, though they were seen as practice for future actions of that nature. They robbed banks, stores, and factories on pay-day, and kidnapped factory owners, executives, and journalists, obtaining, except in the case of the journalists, large sums of money and sometimes goods for the poor or promises of improved conditions for workers. FAU members also carried out actions that were intended to demonstrate popular power: they destroyed the mainframe of a bank whose workers were on strike, and stole a flag that was the oldest symbol of the Uruguayan independence movement.

In order to undertake armed activity and protect its members, the FAU had to develop a complicated structure that was based on a series of teams whose members did not know one another and whose activities were coordinated by other teams made up of delegates from the first in a kind of pyramid. At its summit was a group called *Fomento*, responsible for making decisions and trying to incorporate the opinions and suggestions of the rest. Great pains were taken to limit people’s knowledge to the bare minimum necessary for a particular task, and to instill what was called the “conspirator’s

mentality” in all members. Those were difficult times, in which people were frequently arrested and tortured, but even so, it is hard to imagine anarchists submitting to the strict discipline the FAU imposed. There was a secret school to train members in security, explosives, weapons, psychology, and philosophy, at which students wore hoods so that they would not be able to identify one another.<sup>24</sup> Weekly, four-hour team meetings, and shorter individual meetings with the team leader, were mandatory, and included evaluations of each person’s performance on a series of points ranging from security to humility to theoretical knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

In spite of its extreme security measures, many of the FAU’s members were jailed and tortured, and increasing numbers of activists went into exile in Argentina, where many of them eventually disappeared during Argentina’s dictatorship. The FAU continued to be active in Argentina, and, with help from Argentine anarchists, carried out a kidnapping that, according to the organization, yielded ten million dollars in 1974. The kidnapped person, Manuel Hert,<sup>26</sup> refused to collaborate with his kidnapers for several months, and the FAU used complicated techniques to break his will. The episode, which closes the book, is troubling due to the cold pride with which participants narrate the success and “neatness” of the “operation” and the pleasure they felt when they found they had made “46 kilos of dollars.” In fact, the kidnapping is included despite the fact that it occurred after the period the book covers, as something they just could not bring themselves to omit.

*Acción directa anarquista* does not include information about the FAU’s activities after 1974, but some of the interviews in *Historias robadas* take up the subject. Apparently several FAU members founded a Marxist party called *Partido por la Victoria del Pueblo* in 1975 while in exile in Argentina, thus confirming the direction that many Uruguayan anarchists feared the FAU was headed in.<sup>27</sup> In 1985 the end of the dictatorship

in Uruguay led many people to return from exile, and in 1986 some of them came together in a new attempt to make the FAU function as a true anarchist federation. The federated groups soon clashed over matters such as the autonomy of each group and its freedom to pursue its own goals even if they were in a minority position, however, and the FAU eventually dropped the federal structure in favor of a more centralized one.<sup>28</sup>

Meanwhile, other anarchist groups, among them ALU, participated in the *Centro de Acción Popular* (CAP), which tried to bring together anarchists and non-anarchists working on issues of autonomous community organizing.<sup>29</sup> *Historias robadas* does not clarify what happened to the CAP, but in 1985 ALU became *Grupo de Estudio y Acción Libertaria* (GEAL), the group in which Beto and Débora, now in their 80’s, still participate.<sup>30</sup>

Uruguayan anarchism continues to attempt to find some common ground, as it has since its earliest days. Today’s anarchists span the full spectrum of ages and activities, and groups form and disband in a continual flurry of activity. Uruguay is a small country, and Montevideo a small city, and the close physical proximity of vastly distant visions makes the contrast between them even more striking. FAU and GEAL are just around the corner from each other, but so distant in their approach to anarchism that they often prefer working with non-anarchists to working with each other. Many other groups, including a fair number of insurrectionalists, are also active in Uruguay. The insurrectionalists take me back to the *piqueteros* and the desire for direct confrontation with the forces of repression and oppression. The insurrectionalists’ methods are not those of armed struggle that the FAU used in the sixties and seventies, but they do have a healthy disrespect for private property, which they publicize both by deeds and words (in a periodical called *Aullido para la guerra* and in their edition of *Ai Ferri Corti*, printed on “expropriated” paper and distributed free of charge, for instance).

**H**istorias robadas and *Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de FAU* attempt to tell at least a part of the rich history of Uruguayan anarchism, and, as such, are valuable documents. The conflicts within the movement and within individual groups that these two books describe will probably never be resolved, but they are productive conflicts, born of the desire to transform the world along libertarian lines. ✨

## ENDNOTES

1. Angel J. Cappelletti, *Hechos y figuras del Anarquismo Hispanoamericano* (Móstoles: Ediciones Madre Tierra, 1990), 46.
2. On page 29 Mechoso reports that work on the book corresponding to the period 1949-1965 (earlier reported, on the same page, as 1950-1964) is in progress, and that the group hoped to have it out by October 2002. When I visited the FAU in November 2003, however, it had not yet been released.
3. The parts of Argentina and Uruguay which lie on the shores of the River Plate, including the capital cities of both countries, Buenos Aires and Montevideo.
4. Hugo Fontana, *Historias robadas: Beto y Débora, dos anarquistas uruguayos* (Montevideo: Cal y Canto, 2003), 19.
5. *Ibid.*, 27.
6. Juan C. Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de FAU* (Montevideo: Editorial Recortes, 2002), 26. Fontana, *Historias robadas: Beto y Débora, dos anarquistas uruguayos*, 27.
7. Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 38.
8. Rosigna planned many of Durruti and Oliver's expropriations in Argentina.
9. Gonzalo D. Fernández published an entire book on this episode: *Historia de Bandidos: Del "Cambio Messina" a la Carbonería "El Buen Trato", crónica del asalto y la fuga*, 2nd ed. (Montevideo: Fundación de Cultura Universitaria, 1994).
10. This paper appeared from 1938 to at least 1965, though it seems to have changed hands in 1956.
11. Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 35.
12. Each member would sign up for work, receive it in the order in which he or she signed up, and upon completing it await his or her turn for another job.
13. Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 67-68.
14. Unfortunately, like Mechoso, Fontana fails to provide the reader with information such as the date and place of interviews. In fact, he does not even say the quotations he includes are interviews, and I only know this because I asked some Uruguayan anarchists. Apparently, except when he mentions a book, all quotations are from interviews.
15. Fontana cites Luce Fabbri in Margareth Rago's book *Entre a história e a liberdade. Luce Fabbri e o anarquismo contemporâneo* (São Paulo: UNESP, 2001), saying that in 1958 or 1959 differences of opinion about the structure of the FAU itself emerged, with some insisting on the need to expand the powers of the coordinating committee to increase efficiency, a change that Fabbri opposed, but which was made. Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 111.
16. *Ibid.*, 106.
17. Daughter of Luigi Fabbri, Italian anarchist and Malatesta's companion and biographer. Luce Fabbri was a key figure in Uruguayan anarchism from the 1930s to her death in 2000.
18. *Ibid.*, 111.
19. *Ibid.*, 108-109.
20. *Ibid.*, 106, 120, 123.
21. *Ibid.*, 107.
22. It is unusual for an organization of the FAU's character to publish materials such as secret documents and interviews describing secret activities. According to Pepe Carballo, who was a part of ROE, the public part of the FAU, most people in the FAU did not even have access to the newspaper *Lucha Libertaria*, let alone secret documents, in the early seventies (Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 131). In this sense the decision to publish this material represents a new phase of openness in the organization.
23. Mechoso, *Acción directa anarquista: Una historia de FAU*, 240.
24. *Ibid.*, 278.
25. *Ibid.*, 301.
26. I searched Google for information about this person, but found no results. It is possible that his name was changed, accidentally or on purpose.
27. Fontana, *Historias robadas*, 142.
28. *Ibid.*, 146.
29. *Ibid.*, 130.
30. *Ibid.*, 145.



*The New Feudalism*—Nicolas Lampert

# Remembering Frantz Fanon

by Kazembe Balagoon

SOME FORTY years after his death, Frantz Fanon remains one of the most influential revolutionary thinkers of our time. As a writer, his books *Black Skins, White Masks*; *The Wretched of the Earth*; *A Dying Colonialism* and *Towards An African Revolution*, provided a theoretical framework for understanding race, class, and gender oppression while foregrounding a uniquely Third World politic.

No mere armchair revolutionary, Fanon survived two assassination attempts as a member of the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN). As editor of its newspaper *El Moudjabid* and active gunrunner, Fanon created ties between Algeria and the burgeoning anti-colonial movements around the world. Fanon's influence could be seen in the decision of the Algerian government to allow the Black Panther Party to establish an international section in Algiers between 1969-1973.

While Fanon's legacy has not been as iconic as his contemporary Ernesto "Che" Guevara (as of yet there are no t-shirts blazed with Fanon's image), Fanon peeks through mass culture in other ways. Rage Against the Machine's single "Guerrilla Radio" is an ode to Fanon's essay on pirate radio "This is the Voice of Algeria." Cinematically, the films of Isaac Julien, Haile Germina, and Marlon Riggs all bear some debt to Fanon's writings.<sup>1</sup>

Relatively unknown in his own time, Fanon has been the subject of three biographies and countless critical essays, a fraction of which are under review here: David Macey's *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*; *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, edited by Lewis Gordon; and *Fanon: The*

A review of:

*Frantz Fanon: A Biography* by David Macey (New York: Picador Press, 2001).

*Fanon: A Critical Reader* edited by T. Denean-Sharpley, Lewis Gordon and Renée T. White (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

*Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* by Nigel C. Gibson (Cambridge, U.K.: Polity Press, 2003).

*Post-Colonial Imagination*, by Nigel C. Gibson.<sup>2</sup>

These works help unpack the myriad of contradictions and flesh out the significance of Fanon's body (both life and text) for anarchist and anti-authoritarian organizers. Fanon's primary texts and the subsequent secondary work serve as tools for understanding the interconnection between race, class, and gender within movements for national liberation. Although Fanon himself was not a self-identified anarchist, I maintain that he belongs within the anti-authoritarian tradition because of three major assertions in his work: (1) The primacy of national liberation movements and colonized/Third World people as agents of social revolution as opposed to Marx's concept of the proletariat in the metropolises; (2) The need for spontaneity within movements and that political organizations must lead by following; and that (3) Third World liberation movements (and movements of oppressed groups in the mother

countries) constitute new forms of resistance and could lead to a break between imperialism and authoritarian socialism.

## FANON: REVISITING HIS LEGACY

Frantz Fanon has been the subject of three biographies; the most recent is David Macey's tome *Frantz Fanon: A Biography*. Macey's study is admirable in its depth and research (close to 400 pages, including 100 pages of endnotes). The Fanon which emerges from these pages is a man created by the historical circumstances of colonialism. Macey goes through great pains to describe the conditions in Martinique (where Fanon was born) from slavery to the present. Perhaps the weakness of Macey's biography is that Fanon the man gets lost in his own history. This is not entirely Macey's fault. Fanon, never conducted an interview, always signed his articles anonymously, and never kept a journal.<sup>3</sup> His wife and closest comrade Josie Fanon was reluctant to discuss her husband's legacy, and later committed suicide. Given these research challenges, we can understand why Macey relies primarily on secondary sources.

What we do glean from Macey's text is a life filled with hope and contradiction. Frantz Fanon was born the fifth of eight children to middle class parents in the French colony of Martinique, on July 20<sup>th</sup> 1925. At an early age, Fanon was taught to distance himself from blacks and to consider himself akin to French colonialists. This was certainly reinforced by the French school system, which forced black-brown children to recite "Our ancestors the Gauls..." while only showing Tarzan movies at the cinemas.<sup>4</sup> Despite this

cultural malaise, there were attempts at resistance. Fanon's school teacher and writer Aimé Césaire began to edit the surrealist magazine *Tropiques* (along with his wife Suzanne). Filled with imagery and poetry inspired by African and indigenous art forms, *Tropiques* would be the opening salvo in the Negritude movement. Negritude asserted pride in black heritage, seen mostly clearly in Césaire's epic poem *Return to My Native Land*.<sup>5</sup> Though Fanon was relatively isolated from racism, the establishment of a pro-Vichy regime in Martinique would profoundly alter his political universe. Convinced of the need to defeat fascism, Fanon escaped to Guadeloupe to join the Free French Forces. However, placed in a segregated unit and forced to "liberate" collaborators, Fanon grew deeply bitter and radical. "If I don't come back," Fanon wrote to his mother, "[never] say 'he died for a good cause.' Say: 'God called him back to him.' This false ideology that shields the secularists and idiot politicians must not delude us any longer. *I was wrong!*"<sup>6</sup>

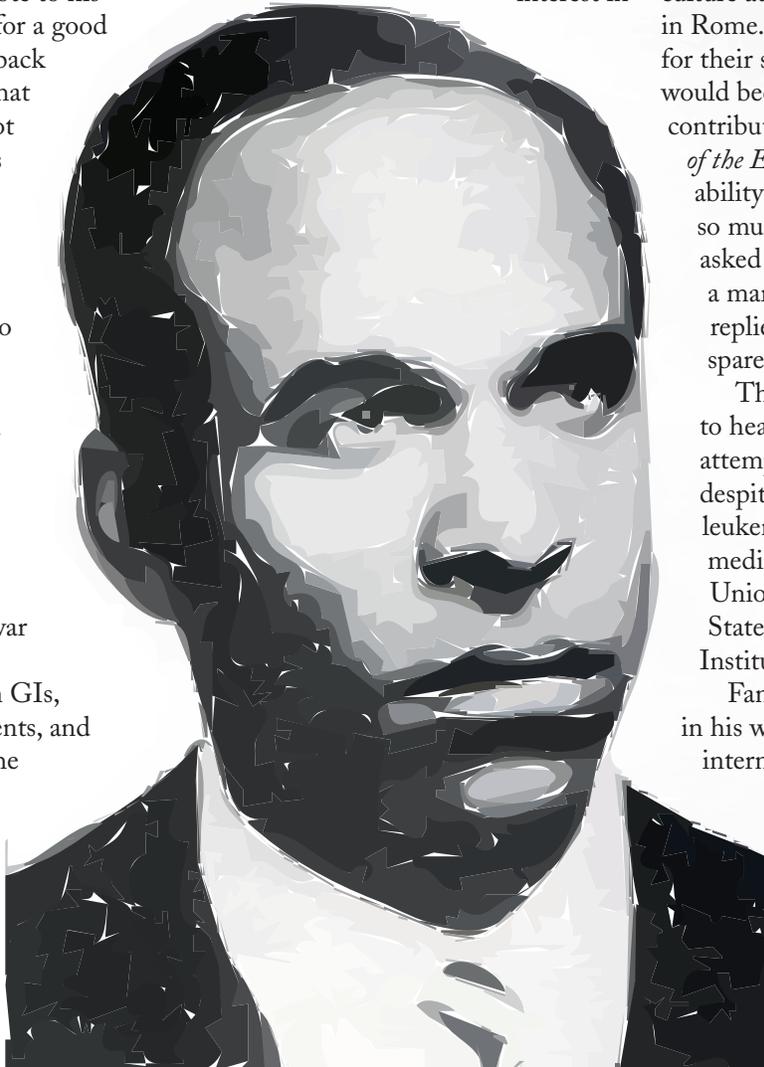
After World War II, Fanon stayed in France to study dentistry, a move encouraged by his parents who hoped Fanon would return to a safe middle class life in Martinique. However, Fanon was drawn to the vibrant Parisian culture that nurtured rebellion and avant-garde art.

At the time jazz, poetry, and surrealism were all part of the cultural milieu of postwar French life. The presence of thousands of black and brown GIs, former colonial soldiers, students, and revolutionaries transformed the French métropole into a hotbed of revolutionary activity. Fanon soaked up this atmosphere like a sponge. As early as 1949, Fanon gave lectures on black poetry and jazz and is believed to have penned an article,

"Le Surréalisme," that explores the development of surrealism and cubism through the poetry of Apollinaire and André Breton.<sup>7</sup>

Perhaps the greatest influence on Fanon during this period was the publication of Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, which popularized existential philosophy and phenomenology. As Macey notes, "The attraction of Sartre's philosophy was its immediacy and its concentration on the category of experience. It was also a philosophy of freedom, but it still had to be adapted to the experience of a black Martinican."<sup>8</sup>

Sartre's work led Fanon to write his first book, *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952), an analysis of the "lived experience" of black people in a colonial society. As his interest in



dentistry waned with further study of phenomenology and philosophy, Fanon would study and receive his doctorate in psychiatry. Committed to working with people of color, he directed the Bida-Joinville Mental Hospital in Algeria in 1953. There he created a community for both patients and staff, removing strait jackets and cells. Fanon also gave aid to the FLN, supplying medicine and treating those who suffered the torture of French armed forces. Indeed, Algeria was one of the crown jewels of the French empire, so much so that President De Gaulle granted independence to Morocco and Tunisia to concentrate forces on defeating the Algerian liberation movement.

Fanon's role in the FLN increased. His role as a public intellectual led him to give speeches on revolutionary culture at the Black Writers Congresses in Rome. Chastising the French left for their silence on Algeria, Fanon would become friends with Sartre, who contributed the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*. Fanon was known for his ability to engage in long discussions, so much so that Simone De Beauvoir asked Fanon to give Sartre a rest after a marathon conversation. Fanon replied, "I don't like people who spare themselves."<sup>9</sup>

These were words Fanon took to heart. After two assassination attempts, he continued to work, despite being diagnosed with leukemia. Failing to receive the medical care he needed in the Soviet Union, Fanon flew to the United States. Fanon died at the National Institute of Health at the age of 36.

Fanon left a rich legacy both in his writings and his example of internationalism. Yet, as Macey points out, Fanon is

problematic in terms of the cultural memory of the countries he called home. As Macey points out "Whether he should be regarded as 'Martinican', 'Algerian', 'French' or simply Black is a not a

question that can be easily decided.”<sup>10</sup> Indeed the problem of “remembering” Fanon is closely allied to the betrayal of the ideals that he held so steadfast. Soon after his death, Algeria would become a one party military state, rejecting its initial bent towards Third World revolution. In 1988, strikes and rebellions broke out in reaction to years of frustration with the FLN. These actions were met with violence and over 500 people died in the streets. As François Bondy wrote, “The men who run Algeria today would have little use for Fanon’s exhortations; and Algerian ‘masses’ would make a Martinican negro feel foreign in ways he would have never experienced in Paris. The prophet of Algeria’s national revolution would have found himself an exile from his chosen homeland, in search of another revolutionary war with which to identify himself.”<sup>11</sup>

Given the failure of the Algerian revolutionary project, it would be tempting to argue that Fanon was hopelessly naïve about politics. However, it is important to realize that Fanon’s concept of revolution was not limited to Martinique, France, or Algeria, but expressed a firm commitment to the liberation of all people under colonialism. As such, Fanon transcended the boundaries of nationality to embrace a Third World persona. Similar to Ernesto “Che” Guevara, Fanon’s identity and politics had no borders. Instead, he found a home in the struggles of all oppressed people.

#### “I DON’T KNOW HER”: INVISIBILITY, RACE AND GENDER TROUBLE

Frantz Fanon has certainly found a home in the emergent field of Africana/Post-colonial Studies. Scholars like Henry Louis Gates, bell hooks, and Stuart Hall have cited Fanon’s work in their analysis of film, literature, and gender politics. Whereas previously scholars would have focused on Fanon’s theories of Third World revolution, there has been an attempt to reinterpret Fanon to make him more inclusive of issues of gender and sexuality.

*Fanon: A Critical Reader* is an invaluable book that looks at how Fanon’s work can be accessed both by activists and intellectuals. The editors, Lewis Gordon, T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, and Renée T. White are scholars in the new field of black existentialism.<sup>12</sup> As such their major point of inquiry is Fanon’s seminal text, *Black Skin, White Masks* (BSWM).

When first published, BSWM received little or no attention from the French intellectual community. The reason, perhaps, lay in the radical nature of the book, both in terms of its form and content. BSWM owed heavily to Sartre’s idea of “lived experience” as the starting point of all knowledge. As such Fanon utilized poetry, dialogue, and personal anecdotes. In “Make Me a Man Who Questions” Fanon engaged in a radical Cartesian exercise—echoing Descartes famous declaration “I think, therefore I Am”—stripping colonialism from its economic roots, laying bare the relationship of whites and blacks. In particular Fanon used the term “Other” to describe how black people were over-determined by a white gaze that reduced black personality into tropes of inferiority. The gaze is imminent in this famous passage: “‘Dirty nigger!’ Or simply ‘Look A Negro!’ I came into the world with the will to find meaning in things, my spirit filled by the desire to attain the source of the world and then I found that I was an object in the midst of other objects.”<sup>13</sup>

The above passage is reminiscent of WEB Dubois’ *Souls of Black Folk* where he asks rhetorically “How does it feel to be a problem?” Issues of surveillance and gazing have been present since slavery. Currently, the prison industrial complex serves as another means of “gazing” upon the black body.

In BSWM, Fanon racialized the Hegelian dialectic of “Master versus Slave.” In Hegel’s scenario the Master demands recognition from the Slave. For Fanon, in the colonial experience, the Master demands recognition and work while the Slave demands recognition of his or her humanity. The battle for

recognition is to see one’s experiences mirrored in the world and creating a self-image is key to struggles for liberation.

While Fanon’s definitions of the other are radical in the development of that concept, he often fails to apply the concept in a progressive way when addressing issues of gender, in particular, with black women. Fanon’s construction of race deals primarily with men; that is, white men use black women as a means of projecting their sexual fantasies while black men sleep with white women for recognition. But what about women of color? Fanon responds “As for the woman of color, I know nothing about her.”<sup>14</sup>

The erasure of women of color within Fanon’s text mirrors the masculinist tendencies of early Third World liberation movements. Dominated by men, they often viewed women as subjects to be dominated and disciplined in the process of nation building. This contradiction is also linked, perhaps, to the fact that Fanon was married to a white woman.

Despite Fanon’s blatant sexism, the writers in the *Critical Fanon Reader* attempt to establish space for feminist discourse in Fanon’s work. In “Violent Women: Surging into Forbidden Quarters,” Nada Elia applies Fanon’s theories of decolonization outlined in *Wretched of the Earth* to feminist struggles. Elia outlines the need for women to engage in ruthless criticism of masculinist tropes, while being willing to engage in armed struggle for liberation. In “To Conquer the Veil: Woman as Critique of Liberalism,” Eddy Souffrant confronts Fanon’s controversial essay “Algeria Unveiled” in *A Dying Colonialism*. The veil represented cultural resistance to French hegemony in Algeria. When French authorities attempted to remove the veil, both Muslim and secular women wore it in a sign of revolutionary solidarity. The veil was also useful as a means of disguise and transporting guns and information. While Souffrant is correct to cast the veil as a means of resistance and de-veiling as an attempt by the French to

further subjugate the Algerian people, the veil also had its faults. Without a clear feminist politic within the Algerian liberation struggle, the veil also led to a sense of invisibility. For example, many women combatants were unable to collect army pensions because they could not prove they fought in the war. A majority of women were confined to the army in roles of cooks and tailors and after the war were often told to get married and start a family.<sup>15</sup>

The absence of women in Fanon's work is a tremendous weakness that mirrored itself in the black liberation movement stateside. The concept that the women's position in the movement was prone or in the home making revolutionary children was refuted by the work of Barbara Smith, Michelle Wallace, Audre Lorde and the Combahee River Women's Collective.<sup>16</sup>

**GUERRILLA RADIO:  
BROADCASTING DEMOCRACY  
AND IMAGINING NATION**

If *Black Skins, White Masks* dealt with the effects of racism on individuals, then *Wretched of the Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism* deals with collective action. *Wretched of the Earth* was Fanon's last book, written while he was undergoing treatment for leukemia. When first published, it caused an uproar throughout the Third World, so much so that the French authorities confiscated every copy after his death.

What made *Wretched* such a powerful book was Fanon's exhortation of violence by the oppressed as a "cleansing force." Taking the Hegelian dialectic

of Master versus Slave to its logical conclusion, Fanon held that the process of decolonization did not only imply a political liberation, but a mental liberation as well.

*A Dying Colonialism* is a collection of Fanon's writings on cultural resistance in Algeria. The formation of a fighting culture for Fanon was key to

*Postcolonial Imagination* takes its cue from both *Wretched of the Earth* and *A Dying Colonialism* in foregrounding Fanon's anti-authoritarian leanings.

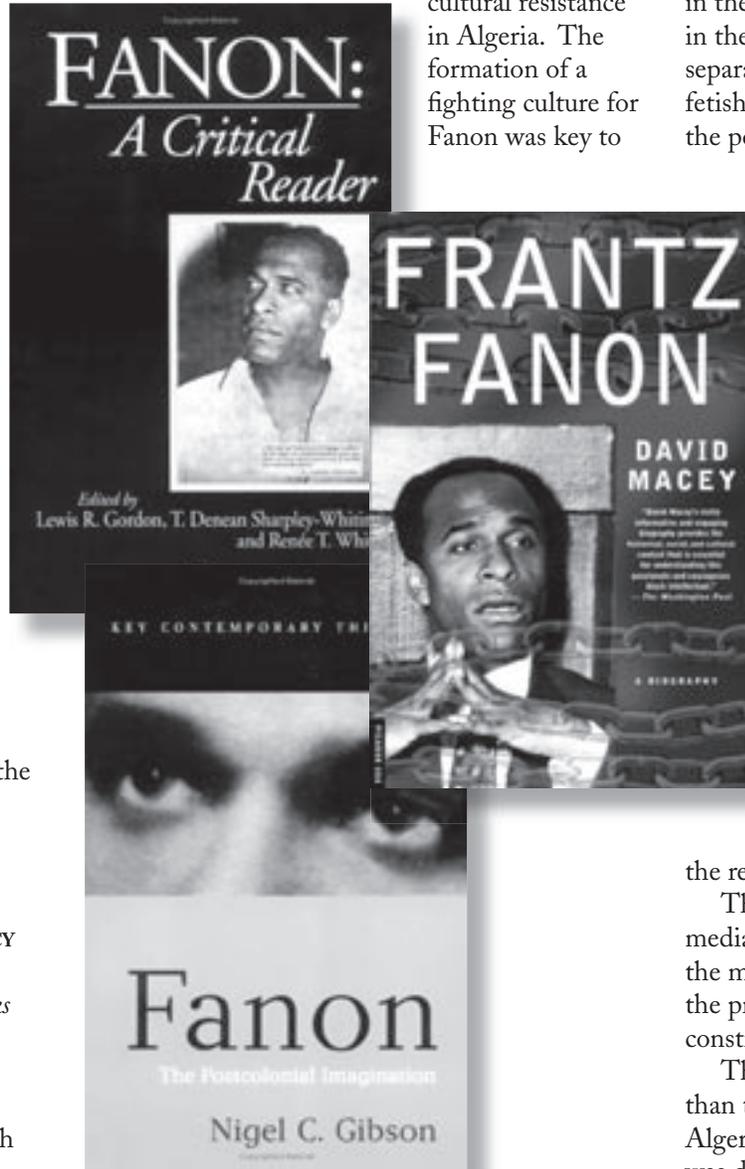
The threat to the vitality of anti-colonial movements was the separation of the native intellectual in the urban areas from the peasants in the countryside. What causes this separation is what Fanon called "the fetish of organization." The notion of the political party is "a notion imported from the mother country" which is often implemented without consideration of the conditions of a given country. Obviously Fanon in this instance is speaking of the traditional Marxist vanguard party, which seeks to organize "proletarians" over any other social strata. But what Fanon discovered, as did many other African revolutionaries, was that the power often lay in the hands of peasantry and the lumpen proletariat, those outside the system. In many cases, these forces were the ones creating supply routes, gathering information, and fighting in the cities. Once politicized, these forces became the backbone of

the revolutionary movement.

The role of culture is to act as mediation between organizations and the mass activity of the people. In the process a new consciousness is constructed.

There is perhaps no better example than the role of underground radio in the Algerian war. Popular radio in Algeria was dominated by French language and culture and, as such, the rejection of radio represented a conscious resistance to colonization. However since the masses of people could not read, and the purchasing of anti-colonial newspapers indicated a sympathy for the rebels, the FLN believed radio had the potential to broaden their propaganda network and also help create a collective "Algerian" identity.

The broadcast of "The Voice



the creation of a national consciousness. Thus nationhood not only denoted certain boundaries and borders but a way of being. Fanon's take on the imagined community expanded the concept of the nation in such a way that would open space for the discussion of anti-authoritarianism and spontaneity within liberation movements.

Nigel C. Gibson's *Fanon: The*

of Algeria” marked a new stage of consciousness. In less than twenty days the stocks of radios were sold out. The creation of “Voice” led not only to a new means of communication, but turned an entire population into participants in the process of revolution. “Algerian society made an autonomous decision to embrace the new technique and tune itself into the new signaling systems brought in by the Revolution.”<sup>17</sup>

In “Radical Mutations: Towards a Fighting Culture,” Gibson holds that the radio broadcasts also created the conditions for a participatory democracy. “The listeners’ invention involves a productive dialogue, imparting meaning both to the fragments of information and to the nascent national consciousness; this dialogue is an engagement that prefigures a possible democratic form for the new society.”<sup>18</sup>

One could see the connection between the act of listening in Algeria and what Black Panther Fred Hampton called “observation and participation.” The revolutionary organizer doesn’t tell the masses what they should do, but demonstrates through action. In the process, this activism erases the distinction between a community of spectators and active involvement.

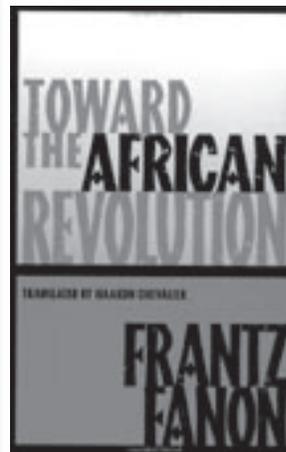
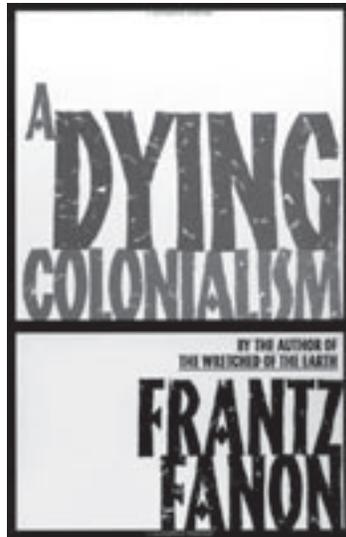
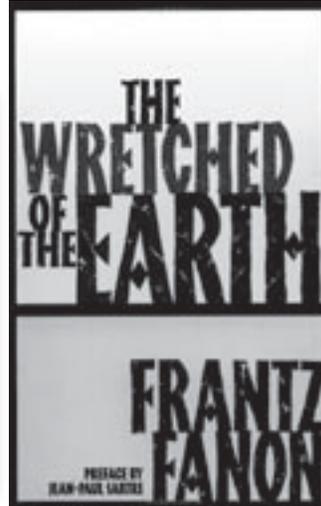
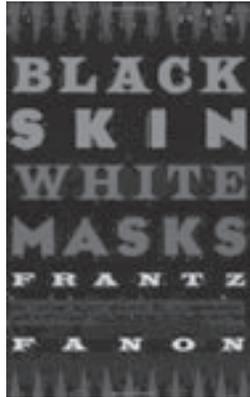
As Gibson illustrates, Fanon understood the necessity of creating multiple forms of resistance which allowed community participation on different levels. The victory of the Algerian revolution occurred not only because of the armed struggle (indeed, there were several military setbacks, particularly the Battle of Algiers) but also because of massive resistance on other levels.

The creation of community support institutions and new ways of being became the basis of the Algerian nation

and ultimate victory.

#### FANON AND THE ANTI-AUTHORITARIAN TRADITION

Accessing Fanon’s work may be difficult for many within the anti-authoritarian and anarchist movement(s). As



a revolutionary nationalist, Fanon

worked within the confines of a traditional party structure and called for the construction of a nation-state, an idea vigorously opposed by many anarchists. Indeed, as Andréa Schmidt noted in “Anarchist Approaches to Anti-colonial Struggles: French Anarchists and the Algerian War” many anarchists opposed the FLN on the basis they were not anti-statist, while other groups gave conditional support.<sup>19</sup> The anarchist Alfredo Bonnano held that anarchists “refuse to participate in national

liberation fronts, they participate in class fronts which may or may not be involved in national liberation struggles. The struggles must spread to establish economic, political and social structures in the liberated territories, based on federalist and libertarian forms of organizations.”<sup>20</sup>

Given the objections to national liberation fronts by anarchists both in theory and practice, how should anti-authoritarians and anarchists engage the legacy of Frantz Fanon? More to the point, perhaps, how can we engage and access the legacy of national liberation struggles that marked the radical uprisings of the 1960s and 1970s?

Well, Fanon should be accessed on two levels. One, Fanon articulated the Third

World as not only comprising nations of the global south, but also as a space of mediation that seeks liberation both from authoritarian socialism and imperialism. Fanon warned newly independent countries not to imitate Europe and also called for these countries “to advance a step further, if we want to bring it up to a different level than that which Europe has shown it, then we must invent and we must make discoveries.”<sup>21</sup>

It is also important that Fanon understood national liberation as one part of the larger process of revolution against imperialism. Indeed, Fanon’s work in creating Pan-African consciousness in particular and a larger Third World consciousness in general stemmed from his belief that independent countries represented “liberated territory.” Similar to Che Guevara, who articulated the theory of “One, Two, Many Vietnams,” Fanon’s revolutionary nationalism contained the germ of the international solidarity of oppressed people in the métropoles and the colonies.

Second, Fanon’s theories of

organization should be a point of investigation for anti-authoritarians. Though he was a member of the FLN, Fanon was a harsh critic of the vanguard model of organization. In the chapter “Spontaneity: Its Strength and Weakness,” Fanon rejected “the fetish of organization” and wrote, “The notion of the party is a notion imported from the mother country.”<sup>22</sup> Fanon’s perspectives on organization were based on the class contradictions in African society; that is, movements for national liberation were often articulated by a native elite formed in the métropole. Fanon’s call for the creation of a national culture was a means to orient political organizations to the rhythm and needs of the people they sought to serve. As we can see in the Gibson texts, this meant the creation of alternative forms of communication and governance that allow for greater spontaneity and participatory democracy. In this sense Fanon is not calling for a vanguard party but for organizers to lead by following. In the African experience this was most clearly articulated by the revolutionary Amílcar Cabral, the leader of the revolution in Guinea-Bissau who used popular power and popular education as a means of creating liberated territory.

Those in the anti-authoritarian tradition should take from Fanon the need to recreate a culture of resistance that develops a new sensibility among the oppressed. Today in France, millions of Arab women are rejecting calls by the government to “de-veil” themselves in public schools. As we can see in this case, much of what Fanon wrote still has relevance for today.

We must accept that outsiders (i.e. people of color, women, students) are forces of revolutionary change. But in the final analysis, we must rise to the challenge that Fanon left to us in *The Wretched of the Earth*: “Each generation must out of relative obscurity discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it.”<sup>23 / 24</sup> ✨

#### ENDNOTES

1. The use of Fanonian ideas like split associations, double consciousness, and reclamation of identity all marked the development of an avant-garde Black cinema, which flourished in Los Angeles, particularly at UCLA. For more information, see Marlon Rigg’s *Tongues Untied* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1989); *Ethnic Notions* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1986); Isaac Julien, *Black Skin, White Masks* (San Francisco: California Newsreel, 1995); Hailie Gerima’s *Sankofa* (Washington, D.C.: Mypheduh Films, 1995); and Charles Burnett’s *To Sleep With Anger* (New York, N.Y.: SVS, 1990).
2. I would also suggest reading *Fanon: For Beginners*, by Deborah Wyrick (New York: Writers and Readers, 1998) and Alan Read, ed., *The Fact of Blackness: Frantz Fanon and Visual Representation* (Seattle, Washington: Bay Press, 1996).
3. Fanon’s refusal to sign articles submitted to *El Moudjahid* reflects a concern for collective practice and against the cult of personality. We can see this in practice today with the Zapatistas, who also practice collective speaking through their masks.
4. David Macey, *Fanon: A Biography* (Picador Press: New York, 2000), 62.
5. Macey, *Fanon: A Biography*, 75. For more on Aimé Césaire read Robin D.G. Kelley’s excellent essay “Keepin it (Sur) Real” in *Freedom Dreams: The Radical Black Imagination* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2002).
6. *Ibid.*, 104.
7. *Ibid.*, 132.
8. *Ibid.*, 162.
9. *Ibid.*, 459.
10. *Ibid.*, 7.
11. *Ibid.*, 7, cited in François Bondy, “The Black Rousseau,” *New York Review of Books*, 31 March 1966.
12. For more information on black existentialism read Lewis Gordon, ed., *Black Existence* (Routledge Press: New York, 1997).
13. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (Grove Press: New York, 1967), 109.
14. *Ibid.*, 179-180.
15. Marie-Aimée Heile Lucas, “Women, Nationalism and Religion in the Algerian Liberation Struggle” in *Re-Thinking Fanon*, ed. Nigel Gibson (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003).
16. For more on the question of sexism in the Black Liberation movement, I would suggest Michelle Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the SuperWoman* (New York: Verso, 1999); Barbara Smith, ed., *Home Girls* (New York: Kitchen Table/Women of Color Press, 1983); bell hooks, *Ain’t I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1984); and Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984).
17. Frantz Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism* (New York: Grove Press, 1970), 84.
18. Nigel Gibson, Fanon, *The Post-Colonial Imagination* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003), 150.
19. The review can be found in *The New Formulation*, Vol. 2, Number 2, Winter/Spring 2004.
20. Alfred M Bonanno, *Anarchism and National Liberation Struggle* (London: Elephant Editions, 1990), 13.
21. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 1964), 315.
22. Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, 84.
23. Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, 206.
24. I would like to thank Ashanti Alston, Kai Lumumba Barrow, and Saulo Colon for their helpful comments and suggestions.

# “The world is made up of stories, not atoms”

by Uri Gordon

SINCE THE best-seller success of *No Logo*, the non-fiction market has seen a veritable torrent of books about “The Movement.” Fascinated with the first wave of grassroots resistance to present a truly global face in real-time rather than in retrospect, scores of journalists, academics, commentators, and self-appointed “leaders” have taken a stab at publishing their own accounts and analyses. Thus, faced with the present publications, one might naturally want to ask: “Do we really need another two books about global anti-capitalism?” In these instances, the answer is perfectly clear: given the combination of inspiring text, poster-perfect photography, and inclusive anti-authoritarianism, it would be hard to get enough of them.

The key to what makes both *We Are Everywhere* and *One No, Many Yesses* so attractive is their shared point of departure, captured in the title of this review borrowed from poet Muriel Rukeyser. It is the understanding that what makes the global movement tick—more prosaically, what enables the global sense of solidarity that connects diverse struggles around the world—is not shared structures, agendas, or even enemies, but *stories*. At protest camps and social centers, in zines, and online, the first thing rebels do when they meet is tell each other their stories—where they’re coming from, why they struggle, what they have done, and how they imagine the future. Instead of standing back from the stories or trying to read them selectively in the service of one agenda or another, both of these books do what nobody has really tried before: they honestly attempt to immerse themselves in the movement’s polyphony, making the stories their primary subject-matter. Paul Kingsnorth invites us

A review of:

*We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism* edited by Notes from Nowhere (London/New York: Verso, 2003).

*One No, Many Yesses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* by Paul Kingsnorth (London: Free Press, 2003).

to join him on his own journey “into the heart” of the movement, a journey that takes him around the world from one site of resistance to another; his own experiences and descriptions are bound together by the narratives he gathers from interviewees. *We Are Everywhere* is even more centrally about telling good stories: the voices are entirely those of the movement itself. Far more than an anthology, it is an attempt to allow as many of these voices as will fit between two covers to do their own talking, directly out of the struggles of the past ten years.

Some points worthy of criticism do remain, but overall these books represent two of the most encouraging contributions to the project of charting the diversity of global resistance, and anti-authoritarians are bound to enjoy and learn from them.

## WE ARE EVERYWHERE

In the foreword, the members of the aptly named *Notes from Nowhere* editorial collective describe their effort as falling “somewhere between an activist anthology and a grassroots history, agitation collage and direct action manual,” bringing together accounts of a global

movement told by those who are actually part of it:

*We wanted a way to document, broadcast and amplify these unheard stories coming from the grassroots movements that have woven a global fabric of struggle during the last decade.... These are moments both intimate and public, charged with inspiration, fear, humour, the everyday, and the historic.*

*Like this movement, we relish intimacy, subjectivity, and diversity, and we think that personal stories have as much (if not more) to teach us than any manifesto. In this we differ from many past traditions of struggle. We are part of a new, radical, transformative politics based on direct democracy; one that values our individual voices, our hopes, our joys, our doubts, our disasters, and requires no sacrifice from us except that we sacrifice out fear.<sup>1</sup>*

From the start, *We are Everywhere* was an inside job. The editorial collective is composed of Katharine Ainger, Graeme Chesters, Tony Credland, John Jordan, Andrew Stern, and Jennifer Whitney—all seasoned activists from Europe and North America, variously involved with Reclaim the Streets, Indymedia, Peoples’ Global Action, and similar anti-authoritarian formations. The materials are truly global in scope, containing everything from the declaration of the Thai “Assembly of the Poor” to interviews with Argentinean workers and *piqueteros* to post-summit dispatches, and analyses culled from websites and activist e-lists. The richness of stories and documents is

staggering.

Such a load of raw material takes a lot of intelligence to put in semblance of order, but to their credit the editors have managed to do so coherently and attractively.<sup>2</sup> Instead of deliberating between a chronological and a thematic approach, they have seamlessly combined the two by arranging the material in five interweaving threads. The bedrock of the book is a time-line of events, “The Restless Margins”, which runs from cover to cover at the bottom of the page. It chronicles every major protest, occupation, and strike that has taken place around the world over the past decade, beginning on New Years day 1994, with the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas.<sup>3</sup> The bulk of the book, fifty-odd stories and documents from around the world, roughly corresponds to this time-line, but at the same time they are sorted in six thematic sections entitled “Emergence,” “Networks,” “Autonomy,” “Carnival,” “Clandestinity,” and “Power.” Each section opens with an introductory essay by the editors, who also provide background material at the opening of some of the stories as well. Finally, interspersed among the stories in each section are two further types of material: thirteen one-page “shorts” on different aspects of direct action (among them affinity groups, guerrilla gardening, culture jamming, and jail solidarity); and summaries of the major “Global days of action,” beginning on May 16<sup>th</sup> 1998 (the first Global Street Party) and concluding with October 12<sup>th</sup> 2002 (solidarity with Argentina).

It is clearly impossible to do justice to over five hundred pages of stories, but here is a brief selection to give you a taste. On page 122, the Brazilian Landless Worker’s Movement (MST) squats a corporate plantation and spends the night resisting the owners’ strongmen in their Toyota vans:

*The next day was full of activity. The camp had survived the first crucial 24 hours and the news spread like wildfire in the region. People began pouring in from the neighbouring villages. A delegation arrived from*



February 11, 2002 – *Piqueteros* provide security on a major road blockade during the economic collapse and popular uprising in Argentina. *Piqueteros* are a movement of the poor and unemployed who use road blockades and the economic disruption they cause to demand better jobs, food and housing. Photo from *We Are Everywhere* by Andrew Stern / AndrewStern.net.

*Cruz de Reboucas, begging the MST to send another bus to the shanty town to pick them up, but Cicero was adamant: “The bus came for you on Sunday morning, and you weren’t there. If you want to join our camp now, you’ll have to find your own transport.” Somehow, they managed and a dozen or so families arrived a few hours later. More commissions were set up ... to build more tents; to set up communal kitchens; to organize literacy classes for adults and children; to set up a women’s collective.... Everyone was busy.”<sup>4</sup>*

One difficulty with the material representing movements in the global South, acknowledged by the editors, is that much of it was actually written by Northern activists working with those movements. To be sure, this is merely the inevitable if unfortunate result of language and distance, and of the fact that people struggling for their livelihoods and homes often have better things to do than write materials for a Northern publication that they can’t afford to purchase. However, this also points to

a broader issue, namely that the inspiration we garner from the global nature of present-day struggle is in most cases a mediated experience, passing through the filter of the written word and web-based communication. Where this experience is more immediately accessible—at global convergences like summits or social forums—it remains largely a privileged one. I do not mean to channel these considerations in the direction of a fruitless guilt trip, but rather to occasion some reflection on how to compensate for these limitations. One possibility is to read *We Are Everywhere* as a book which points the reader, Zapatista-style, to what it is not—prompting us to recall, and create, our own stories of resistance at home. Thus, in matters of inspiration just as in matters of action, we are called upon to remember that the global retains its value only inasmuch as it leads us back towards the local, towards the inspiration each of us can draw from our own everyday resistance.

It is quite hard to absorb the wealth of materials included in *We Are Everywhere*, and the editors probably intended to convey just such an impression—a swarm

of events, pictures, and voices that tries to come as close as possible to representing an adequate picture of the diversity and spontaneity of global anti-capitalism. As a result of this ordered chaos, *We Are Everywhere* is best taken in small tastes, one story or section at a time. Or, as one member of the editorial collective recently told me, “Keep it in the toilet.” This approach to the book betrays a little secret about *We Are Everywhere*: it isn’t only a book about the movement, it is also written in large part for it. Somehow the book comes across as an activist extravaganza, a celebration of all the ruckus we’ve caused over the past few years and, as the title suggests, a call to pride and solidarity that becomes tangible through the perception of a common struggle.

Nonetheless, the book will also appeal to a general audience. Its opulent design and “high production values” make it an attractive candidate for any non-fiction section. At this point, I might add that precisely because of its lavish presentation and epic scale, *We Are Everywhere* would have greatly benefited from a larger format (it is only 5”x7” in size) and from the printing of at least a few of its spectacular inner-page photographs in colour. Considering that the book is going for a sweet £10.99 / \$16.99 on retail and that the editors are donating all royalties to the movement, the cocktail-party socialists at Verso could have been a little less stingy.

Politically speaking, the book represents as much of a diversity as can be expected from the editors’ inclusive approach to the basic anti-authoritarian spirit of the movement. While there are certainly some contributions from a self-defined anarchists, much of the inspiration for *We Are Everywhere* comes from the larger part of the movement, one that espouses a grassroots version of bottom-up social power without viewing itself in terms of the western anarchist tradition. This broad approach to the movement, as a network of affinities that transcends any strictly-defined political perspective, underlines the resistance to orthodoxy that has become a linchpin of the new anarchism. This makes way for coopera-

tion and solidarity not on the basis of a capital-A banner, but rather on the basis of a recognition of shared values such as self-organization, spontaneity, creativity, decentralization, direct action, and the rejection of both reform and seizure of state power. Whatever we choose to call their sum-total (and for me “anarchism” is as good a label as any), the point we encounter again and again throughout this book is that it is these values rather than any vanguardist pipe-dreams that define social resistance today.

Finally, perhaps the most important aspect of affinity between *We Are Everywhere* and contemporary anarchist accounts relates to the dual nature of the revolutionary project—a double movement of resistance and creation, destruction and constitution of alternatives. In the final thematic essay, “Power”, the editors write:

*“We renounce power,’ says activist Raul Gatica, from the Mexican Indigenous People’s Council of Oaxaca, ‘and build in the immediate now a different way of being.’ Keeping the balance between resistance and reconstruction, between saying no to ‘power over’ and building our collective ‘power-to’ at the same time, is key to the success of our movements. In other words, we say no by constructing our yeses.... When those resisting on the streets are also involved in the creative acts of building new ways of living, we reduce the danger that our radical political analysis might become disconnected from the everyday needs of ordinary people. When those working to develop alternatives participate in moments of confrontation and conflict, they are reminded of the system of oppression, they reaffirm their identity as different and they remember what it is they don’t want to build.”<sup>6</sup>*

### One No, Many Yesses

If *We Are Everywhere* is ideal reading for the toilet, then Paul Kingsnorth’s book is exactly what you’d want to give to your grandmother who wonders what

this activism thing is all about. Unlike other books on the movement intended primarily for the “general reader,” Kingsnorth decided not to employ any the usual formats of second-hand reportage, highly opinionated writing, or academic data-crunching. Instead, he has written a travelogue.

Starting in 2001 Kingsnorth trekked the world over, visiting all the famous anti-capitalist hot-spots (Chiapas, Durban, Cochabamba, Porto Alegre, New York, Genoa), playing “participating observer” and conducting interviews with activists. Backing this up with plenty of facts and a down-to-earth analysis of his topics, the result is a thorough, well-researched, and eminently readable presentation of the movement and its key agendas on a global scale.

After an introductory chapter set in Chiapas, the book is divided in two parts. The first, “One No,” begins with Genoa and the third global conference of the PGA in Cochabamba, moving on to post-Apartheid South Africa, anti-consumerism and culture jamming in the US, and the West Papuan resistance movements. The latter was, for me, the most interesting chapter in the book. Still “off the map” for many activists in the North, West Papua is a region where some of the worst abuses of human rights and ecological balance are occurring today. Suffering under Indonesian occupation for over forty years, West Papua has more recently been opened up to almost limitless exploitation by multinationals. Kingsnorth does a very good job of presenting the reality of this very surreal place, meeting with members of resistance groups and clarifying the relationship between the colonial and neoliberal aspects of the situation.<sup>8</sup>

The second part of the book, “Many Yesses,” naturally begins at Porto Alegre, the supermarket of alternatives, and moves on to the exploits of the MST in Brazil and of U.S. citizens undermining large corporations and building community power. The manifold examples of such efforts, especially in the global South, remain an important source of insight—not necessarily because of the

particulars of this or that form of action, but more fundamentally because such alternatives invariably remain grounded in the very tangible, pedestrian needs and desires of those who create them. Prognostic blueprints, as most of us are realizing, never match the flowering of the unexpected. When people decide to take matters into their own hands for a change, anything can happen.

Kingsnorth takes on something of a literary approach in this book, at least as far as his own person is concerned. As someone who was involved in road protests in the early nineties, helped set up the Free West Papua Campaign, and worked for two years as deputy editor of *The Ecologist* (where he was a blessed thorn in the side of Monsanto), I seriously doubt whether he knew as little as he pretends to have known about capitalism, and the movements resisting it, when he set out to write this book. But Kingsnorth not only makes the entirely reasonable decision to assume no prior knowledge or involvement on the part of the reader, he also internalises this position in his own presentation. Thus his account reads as the discovery quest of a sympathetic outsider, an average British bloke who just wants to know what this is all really about. By sounding curious, he draws the reader's curiosity. This is, I think, largely a show—Kingsnorth masters his material, and can conjure up all the facts and figures he needs when he needs them. But the effect, in literary terms, is successful and actually quite pleasing:

*As the dancing goes on, and the night draws in, and everyone gets progressively more drunk, including me, I look around me and I realise something. It's when everyone is up and moving, ripping and running around in mad circles to the Che Guevara song, under a waving, multicoloured, chequered flag; the symbol of the campesino farmers of Latin America. I'm being swung from South African to Colombian to ecologist to anarchist, from Brazilian to Bangladeshi, from cocallero to tribes-*

*man, all of them grinning madly, most of them dancing badly and me worst of all.*

*It's when I look around and see that everyone who surrounds me—all colours, from all corners, all together even as they are so far apart—all of them, all of these people, are determined and somehow together. I realise that they have between them something too powerful to wash away.... I can't see anything that will shut them up, shut them down, make them go home quietly and stop causing so much trouble. Apart from winning.<sup>7</sup>*

The book closes with a concluding, "what do we do?"-type of chapter, which is the only real disappointment. Kingsnorth is still wedded to the ideas that NGOs and lobbyists were trumpeting around the time of Seattle, namely that the problems all boil down to bad governance. Thus, the extent of systemic change he proposes is to replace present-day institutions with better ones—a global fair trade regime instead of the WTO and IMF, a reconstructed UN with real power for the Third World, no privatization for public goods. All of which is supposed to clear the ground for people building their own solutions from the ground up—solutions like a bias in favour of local businesses and trade, political parties that actually speak in different voices. You get the picture. It is curious that Kingsnorth so openly celebrates the anti-hierarchical sensibilities of the global movements, but gives them only lip service when it comes to appreciating the degree of change that they prefigure. As for the possibility of achieving these goals—it is sometimes hard to say who is more naïve, the "radical reformers" of global governance or those of us who believe that in a fight that often seems hopeless, we might as well put our energies into abolishing governance altogether.

But these proposals, for all their limitations, are hardly the point of the book. Overall, they don't cloud the book's main agenda, which is to present the

movements in accessible, intelligent and interesting ways, faithful to their own realities. Kingsnorth lets neither figures nor polemic obscure the living voices of the people he encounters on his journey, and weaves together the stories of resistance from around the world with skill. His human touch makes *One No, Many Yesses* simply a good read for mainstream audiences, which is what is most missing from a lot of the literature. Ask your grandmother. ✨

#### ENDNOTES

1. Notes from Nowhere, eds., "Opening Salvo," in *We Are Everywhere* (London: Verso, 2003), 14.
2. Fair disclosure: an excerpt from my own report after Genoa is also included somewhere in *We Are Everywhere*, and I'm friends with three of the editors. But neither circumstance is the cause for my very favourable response to this book.
3. More than a convenient starting point, it seems that the Zapatista trajectory—extending through the *Encuentros*, the beginnings of Peoples' Global Action and the first large-scale global protests—firmly grounds both these books' meta-narratives.
4. Sue Branford and Jan Rocha, "Cutting the Wires: the landless movement of Brazil," in *We Are Everywhere*, 131-2.
5. Rowena Kennedy-Epstein, "The Anticipated First," in *We Are Everywhere*, 210.
6. Notes from Nowhere, "Power," in *We are Everywhere*, 392-393.
7. Paul Kingsnorth, *One No, Many Yesses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* (London: Free Press, 2003), 84-5.
8. A good online portal is <http://www.westpapua.net/>.

# Reading Class

## Something of the Who, What, Where, Why, When and How of Consciousness

by Andrew Hedden

### WHERE I STOOD

I FIRST WENT anarchist in high school, which put me at odds with a lot of things—at least intellectually. Capitalism, domination, the ridiculously enormous student parking lot: all were targets of my trenchant critique. Then there were the times when I'd hear students discussing consumerism, which always came back to a certain paradox: shopping at the alternative “punk” store in the mall was invariably the same as shopping at the “preppy” stores. Somehow, this conclusion invalidated the need to be critical, and consumerism remained the framework of our lives. But I knew better than to stop the discussion there and continue shopping. In that oh-so-formative senior year of high school, I read *Commodify Your Dissent*, an anthology of writings from *The Baffler* magazine.<sup>1</sup> *The Baffler* was (and is) devoted to harping on all things business in American culture—something I quickly picked up on, particularly their point that hipness and rebellion haven't just been co-opted by corporate salesmen: they've become the very ideology of free market capitalism itself. So I knew what was up. Some of my friends turned to rock bands to be different—I turned to anarchism.

Several years later and I'm still an anarchist, still have a beef with capitalism, domination and big student parking lots—and since I got this new anthology, *Boob Jubilee*, I guess you could say I still read *The Baffler*. But I'm no longer in high school, I'm in college, which—quips about the maturity of student life aside—is very much different from K-12 education. Reading books like bell hooks's

A review of:

*Boob Jubilee: The Cultural Politics of the New Economy* edited by Thomas Frank and David Mulcahey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003).

*Where We Stand: Class Matters* by bell hooks (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000).

*Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker* by Joanna Kadi (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1996).

*Where We Stand: Class Matters* and Joanna Kadi's *Thinking Class* have been especially helpful to me in figuring out this difference, which has inevitably led me to think differently too, about anarchism, capitalism, domination, student parking lots—and also *The Baffler*.

### THE CULTURE WAR DID NOT TAKE PLACE

The best thing about *The Baffler* that the previous anthology *Commodify Your Dissent* showcased was the remarkable wrath its writers could unleash on tripe like *Wired* magazine, Nike or MTV-sponsored poetry readings through words and sentences alone. If you liked it at all, it was probably for the writing. And if you like *Boob Jubilee* at all, it will probably be, again, for the writing. Yet something about the overall thrust of *Boob* suggests that the editors realized there's more to critiquing capitalism than proving the culture of business is balo-

ney. In *Boob*, getting down on corporate culture and faux-freethinking becomes but one thread in a larger yarn dissecting a different contemporary conundrum: How in the hell did Rich White Males manage to become political pariahs in popular culture?<sup>2</sup>

Culture War, *The Baffler* says, that's how. This larger thesis emerges in the work of co-editor Thomas Frank, who contributes three pieces to this anthology, along with the two supporting essays by Chris Lehmann. “Mention ‘elites’ these days,” Frank explains, “and nobody thinks of factory owners or gated-community dwellers. Instead, they assume that what you're mad as hell about is the liberal media, or the pro-criminal judiciary, or the tenured radicals, or the know-it-all bureaucrats.”<sup>3</sup> In an ever-increasing onslaught of pundits, publishing, TV, and radio programs, the American Right has sought to efface economic reality with cultural claims. Lehmann offers a spirited history of one tactic in this strategy, the charge against “liberal media” which he dates back to a speech by then Vice President Spiro Agnew in 1969. Those were the days, of course, that saw the height of the struggle of the 60s, but also the inklings of the larger backlash to come. “In the backlash vision,” Lehmann writes, “owner and worker stood in defense of the besieged values of Americanism; whatever differences they had were dwarfed by the colossal arrogance of the real class enemy, the media.”<sup>4</sup> Yet while Good Ol' American Values have served as the weapons of the Right for the past 30-odd years, the battle itself has largely been rhetorical. “Shout though



they might,” Frank writes, “they never got cultural history to stop”—that is, the Right never did repeal rock ‘n’ roll. “But what they did get was far more important: political power.”<sup>5</sup>

As is hinted by a comparison of the old anthology’s subtitle with the new one, this is in many ways just an extension of *The Baffler* beef with the “Business of Culture” to the “Cultural Politics” of the American Right. In both scenarios, the real inequities of capitalism get ignored as politics becomes a matter of personal attitude and lifestyle, rather than concerned with the true efforts needed to challenge inequity (whatever those are). The deal with the Right though, is that it employs Culture War consciously as a tactic of diversion in the larger Class

War. The victims of consumerism, meanwhile—those would-be “revolutionaries and creative individualists and prude-defiers and boss-shockers”<sup>6</sup>—treat the Culture War like “The Real Thing,” when it’s as real a thing as the carbonated sugar water known for that slogan. The aim of the previous anthology *Commodify Your Dissent* was shown in the bulldozer on the cover—pushing past all the intellectual bullshit of consumerism to get at the reality of the class society underneath. *Boob Jubilee* does its share of bulldozing, but goes a step further and starts looking at all they’ve uncovered.

Turns out, what they find is, as usual, described really, really well. Of the seven sections this anthology is broken into, one is entitled “Cyclorama of the

Great Debauch.” I had to look it up, but once I found that a “cyclorama” is a “large composite picture placed on the interior walls of a cylindrical room,” I found the title pretty appropriate. For a large composite picture of today’s United States we are offered essays like Christian Parenti’s “Bring Us Your Chained and Huddled Masses,” on the prison industry in Crescent City, California;<sup>7</sup> and Nelson Smith’s “A Partial History of Alarms,” which discusses how “alarms illustrate the appeal to force implicit in the very concept of property.”<sup>8</sup> Both essays offer a great illustration of, in Smith’s words, “the attachment of private property [and capitalism] to a larger, more brutal entity: the state.”<sup>9</sup>

Still, some essays detailing “the

Great Debauch” are more wanting. Ben Metcalf’s “American Heartworm,” for instance, offers a tale of Metcalf family poverty along the Mississippi River, where “a high degree of emotional suffering and moral decay has become almost a point of pride,” lawsuits are “the height of glamour and achievement,” and “a food stamp is met with less suspicion than a five or ten dollar bill.”<sup>10</sup> While there is a satire of Americana somewhere in this essay—Heartworm as opposed to Heartwarm—it’s still rather unclear what Metcalf is doing. It’s clear enough *how* he’s doing it: Metcalf’s Twain-esque eloquence makes the essay a pleasure to read. But it’s less of a pleasure to ponder its politics. It works as an unfortunate contrast to the piece preceding it, Mike Newirth’s “Give the Millionaire a Drink,” which fictitiously recounts the patriarchal depravity of the wealthy in East Hampton, New York. Whereas Newirth’s piece illustrates drug abuse and sexual assault where we’re not supposed to find it, i.e. on the playgrounds of the rich, Metcalf illustrates “moral decay” where popular culture is always telling us it’s at: backwoods poor country. If Metcalf is trying to put the lie to American myths about the majestic Mississippi, he’s doing so without paying much heed to the possibly less majestic but no less vacuous lies about poor whites and trailer parks. Metcalf’s piece is also telling for whom he chooses *not* to paint into the picture—himself. One wonders how Metcalf is related to the family he is so eloquently lamenting, if indeed he is at all. The failure to locate himself in the picture ultimately contributes to a greater failure to put the Metcalf family itself in a larger picture. Any possible social origins of their problems are eschewed in favor of blaming the Mississippi River itself: a great metaphor, perhaps, for a literary editor at *Harper’s Magazine* (which Metcalf is), but not an effective critique of capitalism (which *The Baffler* aspires to make).<sup>11</sup>

Many of the works spread throughout *Boob Jubilee* do the usual *Baffler* thing—tearing apart business culture and laying into popular culture. While it’s noth-

ing new for them, it’s also what they’re best at. Paul Maliszewski’s *I, Faker* really stands out in this regard. It retells the author’s experience having satirical articles and guest columns published as business wisdom in *The Business Journal of Central New York*. Some of the things he managed to get in print—including a School of America’s torture manual *very* thinly rewritten as a manager’s advice column—almost single-handedly put the lie to the common claim that irony is dead.

After clearing away the intellectual bullshit, *The Baffler* finds a society inevitably full of shit itself, where the gap between rich and poor is incredibly large, and only getting larger. Yet when it comes to doing something about all the shit, *The Baffler* doesn’t do much. Maybe they nudge it a bit, but then they pass on the clean-up job to government and federal regulation. In the introductory essay, they grieve that in the Nineties, “We all had ‘tude by the ton, but no dissent to speak of.” The “we” they’re referring to might as well be *The Baffler* itself.<sup>12</sup> They hint that had there not been “a catastrophic failure of critical intelligence” in intellectual life over the past few decades, the Right wouldn’t be having its way with America right now.<sup>13</sup> But the notion that intellectual activity could really pull this country out of the shit-house is something they never really explain. In all, what could pull us out is a Left unexplored. The closest they come, perhaps, is Christian Parenti’s “Us Against Them in the Me Decade,” an account of labor struggles in the early 1970s, or maybe Thomas Frank’s take on the 1996 Detroit newspaper strike in “When Class Disappears.” But add all these pieces together and what you have is little more than a love letter to the labor struggle of yesteryear.

Given that the bulk of these essays were written during the opening rounds of the anti-globalization movement, Seattle included, it really makes one wonder why all that’s said about *contemporary* organized resistance amounts to Chris Lehmann’s cheap jabs at “our atrophied left’s allegiance to Lifestyleism,”

supposedly indistinguishable from “the global market’s rhetoric of shopping-as-liberation.”<sup>14</sup> Many of *The Baffler*’s authors are insiders in business culture, but they aren’t necessarily asking how to reject it, or bring it down; it seems they just want to get cynical about it for a while, in essay-length equivalents of bull-shitting at bars on Friday nights. But come Monday, one can bet they’ll still return to their day-job. Of course, there’s that possibility they’re all doing more than just working and writing for *The Baffler*—but if that’s the case, it’s about time they made it part of the conversation.

#### THINKING CLASS MATTERS

Given my high school’s location in a mostly white suburb, students’ parents tended to have incomes that were, shall we say, above average. The student to car ratio was large as a result, so that the school’s student parking lot knew a gigantism that Lewis Mumford could have had a field day on.

As it was, my ideas about capitalism and domination were big, too—but my solutions were small. Outside of school, I was busy learning a thing or two in an anarchist collective—so that in school I felt like a special outsider. Everyone commuted by car—so what better way to fight the system than to commute by bicycle? With my abstract take on capitalism, this was my abstract solution.

Now in college, I still ride a bicycle now and again, but I no longer see it as the mode of expression for any sort of radical, anti-capitalist critique. I see things differently. Sitting in a college classroom, I can see what most of the students have in common—they’re mostly white, middle to upper class like myself. I’m also noticing who is not here—namely, friends I’ve left back home who can’t afford college as I can. What I’m finally conscious of in school and elsewhere, after all this time, is not a student parking lot: it is class.

While this consciousness has primarily been—thanks to a few rather radical professors—the product of class-conscious curriculum, I know this is hardly a norm. Reading bell hooks’s *Where We*



*Stand: Class Matters* and Joanna Kadi's *Thinking Class* has told me as much, and more. Both books are the personal stories of working-class women of color engaging with class: Kadi as a "working-class Arab halfbreed queer girl"<sup>15</sup> from a General Motors city, and hooks as a working-class black woman from Kentucky.

The contents of Kadi's *Thinking Class* can be roughly categorized as analytical essays, personal memoirs, and poetry—I say roughly, because each piece includes elements of all three. In a series of sketches entitled "Catholic School Days," Kadi describes through her earliest memories of grade school the often brutal socialization of class and gender—some boys tracked for jail, for instance, some girls tracked for teenage pregnancy, or

worse—and the endless struggle against it. In essays like "Making Sense of My Happy Childhood/Creating Theory," Kadi seeks to theorize her experience as a survivor of sexual abuse, exploring child abuse through its connections with other forms of oppression, namely racism, classism, and ablism. She brings this same balance of experience and analysis to discussions of working class culture, cultural imperialism, and classism.

hooks's *Where We Stand: Class Matters* takes a similar approach, weaving together the analytical with the personal. Over the course of fourteen short essays, hooks takes her memories of class as a starting point, then works in the necessary links to race and gender. From her parents' class backgrounds, to her own working-

class childhood, hooks follows her life through college and into a place of class privilege in academia. From there she analyzes the conceptions of rich and poor in popular culture, of and among blacks and whites as well as in feminist circles, and then outlines a few tentative steps towards "living without class hierarchy."<sup>16</sup>

Kadi and hooks both recall finding great pleasure in books and ideas from a young age. They both followed their desire for more into the hallowed walls of academia, only to discover, once they got there, a world more hollow than hallowed. "At the university where the founder, Leland Stanford, had imagined different classes meeting on common ground," hooks recalls, "I learned how deeply individuals with class privilege

feared and hated the working classes.”<sup>17</sup> Kadi’s “overwhelming feelings of confusion, depression, inadequacy and shame”<sup>18</sup> drove her to leave after just four months of university, only to reluctantly return to women’s studies years later. hooks stuck out her years at Stanford, but had no easier time of it.

For both women, to enter the university was also to enter a hostile realm of class privilege. Having weathered the struggle and come out on the other side with college degrees, they both find themselves facing a personal crisis of class identity—“Am I working-class now that I have a university degree?”<sup>19</sup> While hooks’s allegiance to the working class remains intact beyond graduation, she notes how the experience “had planted my feet on the path leading in the direction of class privilege.”<sup>20</sup> Much of her book is—in accord with its title—determining where she stands, based on her effort to forge a place in academia as a woman from the working-class, without at the same time abandoning solidarity with the poor.

Kadi shares hooks’s allegiance to the working-class. But she wonders: why do we assume university degrees cancel out working-class identity in the first place? Degrees, she concludes, confer more than knowledge and experience: they establish who is smart and who is stupid. “But working-class people can’t be smart,” or so goes the prevailing social logic. “Therefore, since we’ve earned a college degree, we are no longer working-class.”<sup>21</sup> Kadi knows that’s bullshit: “rich people aren’t necessarily smart,” nor do working-class people “acquire privilege, entitlement, and arrogance after slogging it out in the university.” In all, it begs a larger question: “does class location change if one factor governing class location alters?” Echoing similar conclusions by hooks, Kadi answers in the negative:

*...I believe class identity comes from many places: education, values, culture, income, dwelling, life-style, manners, friends, ancestry, language, expectations, desires, sense of entitlement, religion, neighborhood, amount*

*of privacy. If one of these, such as education, shifts dramatically, class identity doesn’t change.*<sup>22</sup>

#### WHAT REALLY MATTERS

When hooks and Kadi’s definition of class collides with *The Baffler*, a perennial Leftist difficulty results: what is the working-class, anyway? At least implicit in *The Baffler*’s work is that class is economic, and that to say otherwise is cultural obfuscation. “Those endlessly debatable matters of attitude, language pitch, and representation, they [the Right] have found,” contends Lehmann, “always trump mundane questions such as ownership and allocation of corporate resources.”<sup>23</sup> Yet I find it interesting that *The Baffler*, for all its grumbling about who the real elites are in this country, had nevertheless helped orient me towards my high school peers in a—dare I say—elitist manner. Fighting capitalism was about riding my bike or abhorring consumerism, not clocking a boss, or even contesting the oft-overheard classist contention conveyed to failing students by teachers: “Well, I’ll always need someone to fix my toilet.” While deploring lifestyle (and in many ways, rightly so), *The Baffler* either waxes nostalgic over “the revolutionary legacy of the Thirties”<sup>24</sup> or explores working class culture in ambiguous ways à la Metcalf, all the while getting by on—but never quite elucidating—the assumption that class is all about the economy.

The Right points the finger at the Left and accuses “Elitists!” *The Baffler* points the finger back and cries, “No, you’re the elitists!” In light of the Right’s success in popular culture, it would seem more helpful to acknowledge that the Left has, in fact, an elitist streak a mile wide, instances of which hooks and Kadi provide in spades. As hooks notes, “Lack of concern for the poor is all the more possible when voices on the left ignore this reality while focusing primary attention on the machinations of the powerful.”<sup>25</sup>

In her essay “Homophobic Workers or Elitist Queers?” Kadi challenges the assumption in the queer movement that

working-class people are somehow more homophobic than the middle and upper classes, an argument she extends to the Left as a whole. Thanks to these played-up images of bigoted workers, “rich people have continued to bask in the glow of the winners’ circle lights, as progressive middle-class people consistently cast working-class people unfavorably.” Kadi illustrates an important difference in terms of the homophobia of the rich and of the working-class:

*Truck drivers and garbage men don’t determine social policies. We don’t make laws and decide what’s acceptable and what’s not. Wealthy people hold that power. They don’t wait outside queer bars to beat us up; that’s a working-class response for sure. But wealthy people do occupy judges’ benches and presidents’ offices and corporate boardrooms, and devise policies that ensure our children will be stolen, our relationships outlawed, our jobs taken, our partners denied health insurance.*<sup>26</sup>

hooks found similar class attitudes among feminist circles, as among white peers who wore trips to the Third World as badges of honor. “Like a charity one has donated capital to and need never give to them again because the proof of generosity was already on record, their one-time contribution could take the place of any on-going constructive confrontation with class politics in the United States.”<sup>27</sup> It is a common practice among mostly white middle-class liberals, it would seem, to project problems onto outside targets beyond their everyday lives. Incubated in privilege, elitism is what hatches. The liberal weekly newspaper for the town in which I live—which thrives solely on the college-student driven economy—prints entire issues devoted to the local anti-war movement, yet has no qualms about printing jokes lambasting the poor. Then there was the complaint of a fellow student—who considers himself a socialist, incidentally—deriding a “white trash” themed party (a popular college hap-

pening, I've noticed), not as classist, but as "gay." So much for the working-class being the sole homophobes.

As they draw their analysis from personal experience, hooks and Kadi haven't the privilege to leave out the connections to race and gender. All but three of the twenty-nine writers in *The Baffler* anthology are men, while race is never addressed directly. This doesn't necessarily invalidate what *The Baffler* has to say, but it certainly limits it. For instance, Chris Lehmann notes that Pat Buchanan wrote Agnew's 1969 liberal media speech, but fails to acknowledge the importance of this fact. Those "cultural" appeals the Right makes to the working-class are often along racial lines, and Buchanan's frequent anti-immigrant tirades are a case in point. The lack of this connection in *Boob Jubilee* is enough to make one wonder whether race and gender might fall under "Lifestylism" in *The Baffler* taxonomy. If so, they certainly wouldn't be the first leftists to do so, as so many "progressives" already efface real oppressions with the broad epithet "identity politics."

#### EVASION

I'm no stranger to broad epithets. I took to anarchism easily because domination seemed such a blanket ill. My error was in thinking opposition to domination in-and-of-itself could serve as a blanket solution. Domination is a broad, insidious problem; but it exists in particular forms—capitalism, racism and sexism among them—and each of these demands an understanding and practice of their own as well as in the context of other oppressions. *The Baffler*, hooks and Kadi alike bring affecting prose to a particular problem: all are writing about capitalism and the realities of a class society in an innovative and engaging way—particularly when measured against the dry rhetoric in most leftist writing on class. Unlike *The Baffler*, however, hooks and Kadi put themselves into their work, and thus have an easier time making connections to other oppressions, as well as finding grounds for resistance.

Misunderstanding capitalism as an evil beyond me, my middle class ass took

critique to the streets—atop a bicycle. In a way, I was really missing *The Baffler's* point about lifestyle as resistance, evading the need for more concrete organizational efforts by championing my isolated bike ride. But if I was going to learn anything about concrete organizing, it wasn't going to be from anything I read in *The Baffler*, and that still holds true today with *Boob Jubilee*. Setting ourselves outside resistance, or projecting ourselves onto the past leaves us lost, searching for what to do and where to begin. Without the essential evaluation of where we stand in the scheme of domination, we remain baffled, unable to discern what is required for enduring social change—including the need for true solidarity with oppressed groups of which we're not a part. ✨

#### Endnotes

1. Thomas Frank and Matt Weiland, eds., *Commodify Your Dissent* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997).
2. In this review, I take the anthology as my only point of reference for critiquing *The Baffler*. I'm writing under the assumption that the anthology is meant to reach a larger audience than the magazine, and that the pieces that constitute it were thus chosen because they best represent what *The Baffler* is about. I'm well aware that there are some pieces in the magazine that counter my critiques, which is probably to say I think they should have been included in the anthology. Many thanks to Jeff Purdue for helping me to clarify nearly all that appears in this review.
3. Thomas Frank, "The God That Sucked," in *Boob Jubilee*, eds. Thomas Frank and David Mulcahey (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), 9-10.
4. Chris Lehmann, "The Eyes of Spiro Are Upon You," in *Boob Jubilee*, 134.
5. Thomas Frank, "The God That Sucked," in *Boob Jubilee*, 10.
6. Thomas Frank, Greg Lane, David Mulcahey, Emily Vogt, "This Car

Climbed Mount Nasdaq," in *Boob Jubilee*, 5.

7. Anyone who has read Parenti's important class analysis of the U.S. prison industry, *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis* (New York: Verso, 1999), will not find anything new in this piece, which is more or less an adapted chapter of that work.
8. Nelson Smith, "A Partial History of Alarms," in *Boob Jubilee*, 48.
9. *Ibid.*, 45.
10. Ben Metcalf, "American Heartworm," in *Boob Jubilee*, 30, 39, 42.
11. There is, of course, the question of whether Metcalf's essay is just satirical fiction, which *The Baffler* has been known to print; if that is the case, it certainly leaves one to wonder where all these accounts of the poor are coming from, other than Metcalf's imagination.
12. Frank et al., "This Car Climbed Mount Nasdaq," in *Boob Jubilee*, 5.
13. *Ibid.*, 6.
14. Chris Lehmann, "Boom Crash Opera: Shadowboxing in the Culture Bubble," in *Boob Jubilee*, 283.
15. Joanna Kadi, *Thinking Class: Sketches from a Cultural Worker* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1996), 6.
16. bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000), 157.
17. *Ibid.*, 35.
18. Kadi, *Thinking Class*, 42.
19. *Ibid.*, 52.
20. hooks, *Where We Stand*, 37.
21. Kadi, *Thinking Class*, 53.
22. *Ibid.*, 53. For an almost identical definition of class from hooks, see her quotation of Rita Mae Brown, hooks, *Where We Stand*, 103.
23. Chris Lehmann, "The Eyes of Spiro Are Upon You," in *Boob Jubilee*, 141.
24. Thomas Frank, "When Class Disappears," in *Boob Jubilee*, 295.
25. hooks, *Where We Stand*, 46.
26. Kadi, *Thinking Class*, 151.
27. hooks, *Where We Stand*, 148.

# The New Anti-Imperialism

by Chuck Morse

**L**EFTISTS OFTEN point out that the terror attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 were an enormous gift to President Bush: they created the political context he needed to launch the repressive campaigns long planned by his aides and that now characterize his presidency. It was a golden opportunity and he seized it.

Yet it is important to remember another fact of equal or perhaps greater significance: Bush's "War on Terror" *has also been a gift to us*. Specifically, his hyper-aggressive, ultra-brutal neo-colonialist policies have nurtured the growth of massive international resistance to American imperialism. From Baghdad to Madrid, and in endless cities and towns across the globe, ordinary people have risen up to denounce the center of world power and now genuinely restrain if not threaten its activity.

Opposition to US imperialism has grown to such proportions since the start of the Iraq war that Noam Chomsky now describes world public opinion as "the second super-power." However, we are actually witnessing something much more exciting than the term "public opinion" suggests: the beginnings of an international anti-imperialist *movement*. This movement is mobilized against a common enemy and has begun to forge a shared discourse about imperialism, self-determination, and the destructive effects of the market. Something of this scale has not occurred since national liberation

A review of:

*The New Imperialism* by David Harvey  
(New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

*Incoherent Empire* by Michael Mann  
(New York: Verso Books, 2003).

*Bush in Babylon: The Recolonisation of Iraq* by Tariq Ali (New York: Verso Books, 2003).

movements swept the globe in the 1960s.

This new movement is also *deeply* conflicted. Quasi-fascist religious militants, liberals, and anarchists all uneasily share a place on the new spectrum of dissent; despite this newfound common cause, we remained divided in important ways.

How should we respond to the diversity of this movement? First of all, we should not allow it to "shock and awe" us. Significant historical changes always produce contradictory responses that draw, to an extent, from the same source: the old labor movement had its fascist and socialist wings, there were neo-Malthusian as well as anarchist tendencies in the ecology movement, and both the Black Panthers and Ron Karenga's US organization grew out of America's black liberation movement.

What we need to do is engage this new movement and nurture the worldwide mobilization against American imperialism. We must fight its regressive tendencies, radicalize and deepen its discourse, and press it towards the most systemic and utopian solutions to the present crisis. Specifically, we must devote ourselves to cultivating a *vision* that articulates a coherent critique of the "War on Terror" and a positive view of ourselves as revolutionary—or potentially revolutionary—actors.

Unfortunately few works are available that will help us in this effort. The established theorists, as often happens



when new movements emerge, are of little use. They tend to wave the flags of defeated causes, are resigned to the status quo, or simply lack the depth necessary to embrace the fullness of the potentialities before us.

It is our responsibility to write the literature of future revolutions and, as daunting as that is, we can begin now by critically examining some of the existing books on the “War on Terror.” At minimum, this can help us identify some of the theoretical challenges we face.

The books reviewed here—all written around the time of the US/UK invasion of Iraq—offer insights into the nature of present international conflicts and contain premises that either enhance or undermine our capacity to envision our activity as dissidents.

#### DEFEATED CAUSES

David Harvey, a British-born scholar now residing in the United States, is the author of significant interdisciplinary studies in contemporary social theory, such as *The Condition of Postmodernity* (his best known book). His work is characterized by a non-dogmatic, Marxist analysis of changes in political, cultural, and economic circumstances and, accordingly, it is easy to be excited by the publication of *The New Imperialism*. There is good reason to hope that he would relate the “War on Terror” to a broader critique of capitalism as well as the oppositional forces generated within the social order.

Although Harvey does link his analysis of the “War on Terror” and the “new imperialism” to a critique of capitalism, readers will find little of significance in his commentary on the war or the broader theoretical perspective with which he frames it. Only two of the book’s five chapters treat current militarist campaigns in any detail and the others really only exist to set the stage for his very Marxist argument that the Iraq war is an expression of underlying developments in the economic base. Unfortunately the book is also terribly ponderous, devoid of a narrative center, and awash with the sort of pompousness typical of those who spend the greater portion of their lives

lecturing to graduate students.

The book’s first and best chapter, “All about Oil,” demolishes the various claims made to justify the war on Iraq and situates it within political pressures facing the Bush administration (both domestic and international). This prompts the reader to consider the deeper, systemic reasons for the adventure and it is here that the most substantive—and labor-some—part of the book begins. After long detours through the history of imperialism, capitalism, and conceptual distinctions of varying relevance, Harvey comes to his main point: the war in Iraq is a super-structural expression of long-standing pressures in the economic base (stated in non-Marxist parlance: the economy is making states fight each other). These pressures have been maturing since the 1970s, were intensified in the 1990s, and now must be resolved: specifically, it is necessary to find a way to avoid a crisis of overaccumulation that could potentially threaten the future of capitalism (this occurs when the system produces more commodities and capital than it can profitably absorb). The leaders of the system thus undertake what Harvey calls “accumulation by dispossession,” which he regards as a “primary contradiction.”<sup>1</sup> This term describes the process wherein capitalism destroys areas of the world and/or parts of the social structure to create new areas for the investment of surplus capital and labor, thus forestalling generalized breakdown and ensuring the continued accumulation of capital. Although the state and capital partake of different logics—what he calls “the logic of territory” and “the logic of capital”—they often act in concert to produce singular historical results, such as war. In other words, Harvey explains the war in Iraq with the stunning insight that capitalism destroys in order to create.

Harvey’s truism about capitalism is only meaningful in the context of broader assertions about the trajectory of the social order. Presumably, as a Marxist, he would be inclined to locate the war in Marx’s teleological vision of history: he could argue that the war is a necessary step in the universalization of capital-

ism, which must occur in order to lay the foundation for the inevitable emergence of the proletariat as the agent of world revolution. This would be a very orthodox Marxist reading and he seems inclined towards this when he notes (elsewhere) that he shares “with Marx, the view that imperialism, like capitalism, can prepare the ground for human emancipation.”<sup>2</sup> However, Harvey backs away from this and even divorces himself from the key Marxist claim that the proletariat (or any other social force) will emerge as a transformative, revolutionary class. Although I share his pessimism about the revolutionary destiny of the industrial proletariat, Marxism—a theory of class struggle—falls apart when not linked to a theory of the proletariat’s revolutionary agency. Harvey’s reworked Marxist vision only accords historical agency to the capitalist—but not the dispossessed—class and thus depicts capitalism as an overwhelming, unstoppable force that does not contain the seeds of its own negation. And of course this perspective also deprives those who oppose capitalism of any theoretical framework in which to ground their efforts.

This is why it makes sense that Harvey’s proscriptions for the future are so dismal. Instead of demanding a radical transformation of social affairs, he meekly calls for “the construction of an updated ‘New Deal’ led by the United States and Europe, both domestically and internationally, [which] in the face of the overwhelming class forces and special interests ranged against it, is surely enough to fight for in the present conjuncture.... [T]his might... actually assuage the problems of overaccumulation for at least a few years and diminish the need to accumulate by dispossession and might encourage democratic, progressive and human forces.... This does seem to propose a far less violent and far more benevolent imperial trajectory than the raw militaristic imperialism currently offered up.”<sup>3</sup>

Of course Harvey should be commended for relating his analysis of the “new imperialism” to systemic pressures emerging within capitalism, as they are

doubtlessly among the key factors driving the Bush administration's adventures. However, the core assumptions of Marxism cannot be sustained here or elsewhere, and Harvey's version is particularly corrosive for those who would nourish the new anti-imperialist movement unfolding across the globe.

#### ALL HAIL THE STATUS QUO

Michael Mann is a noted social theorist of British ancestry as well. His two volume *Sources of Social Power (A History of Power from the Beginning to AD 1760 and The Rise of Classes and Nation States 1760-1914, respectively)* is a leading work of comparative sociology. We also have good reason to expect that he will place the "War on Terror" in a deeper historical context.

Mann's *Incoherent Empire* is a powerful indictment of the "new imperialism" advanced by the Bush administration (and the American government generally). Mann's central thesis is that the attempt to create an American empire—a goal articulated by many of Bush's ideologues and advisors—is doomed to failure and that pursuing it will needlessly damage the United States and produce unnecessary suffering worldwide.

Drawing on his previous work, Mann distinguishes between four types of power—military, political, economic, and ideological—and, in the first four chapters of his book, examines the United States' possession of these powers and argues that the country does not possess them to the degree required for full imperial dominance. The later half of the book illustrates this through the examination of

the war in Afghanistan, the "War against Terrorism," the United States' response to North Korea and "rogue states" generally, and the war against Iraq.

The new imperialists' attempt to build an American empire is restricted in manifold ways, both domestically and internationally. Ideologically, Mann writes, "American democratic values are flagrantly contradicted by an imperialism, which is strong on military offense but weak on ability to bring order, peace and democracy afterwards [which the Bush administration claims it will do]."<sup>4</sup> Likewise, internationally, the new imperialism is at variance with the principle of national self-determination, which is imbedded in very structure of world politics and leads people to oppose imperialist ventures. Economically, the United States is a formidable power, but still only what Mann calls a "back-seat driver" of the global economy, because it cannot control foreign investors or economies and is incapable of fully overcoming resistance to its global economic policies. Politically, he describes American power as schizophrenic because of its oscillation between unilateralism and multilateralism. The US is a giant on the military terrain, but still unable to commit the resources necessary for real imperial control (specifically, as we now see in Iraq, it can win wars but cannot provide the much larger number of troops and *materiel* necessary to sustain imperial domination).

According to Mann, the consequence of the US's unique possession of these powers is that the longed-for "American Empire will turn out to be a military giant, a Back-seat economic driver, a

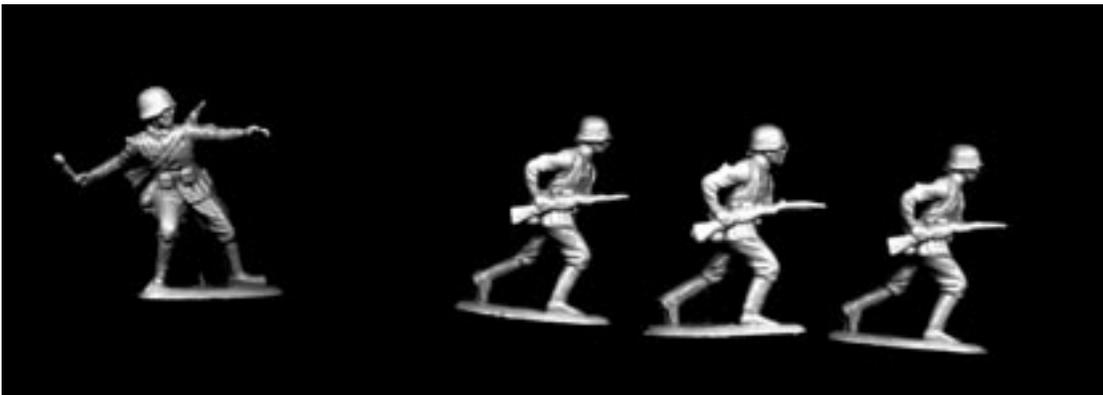
political schizophrenic and ideological phantom. The result is a disturbed, misshapen monster stumbling clumsily across the world. It means well. It intends to spread order and benevolence, but instead it creates more disorder and violence."<sup>5</sup> That is, it will become an *Incoherent Empire* if Bush's planners continue to pursue their imperial designs.

Mann's sharp analysis of the individual campaigns paints a picture of an Administration that is stupidly pursuing policies that actually undermine its own ambitions. Among other examples, he shows that the brutal, indiscriminate nature of the "War on Terror" actually creates more terrorists and that the increasingly military (as opposed to diplomatic) response to "rogue states" actually prompts states to acquire weapons of mass destruction (because they are threatened).

This book is also well written and fortunately not plagued by the same ponderousness found in *The New Imperialism* (although there are an unusually large number of errors—like "The strong are become fearful,"<sup>6</sup> etc—that presumably reflect the rush to publish the book).

But Mann is no radical. In contrast to David Harvey, Mann does not question the market economy; the idea that there could be an alternative to capitalism is simply beyond consideration for him. He believes that "the Age of Class Struggle is in decline"<sup>7</sup> and, in this spirit, sums up his feelings on the issue by writing that "Sweatshops are better than no shops, child labor is better than child mortality. To be exploited by capitalism is better than to be excluded from it."<sup>8</sup>

He also has a well-developed commitment to the American state. For Mann, "getting back to the Clinton years would now be a great achievement. But if we have learned anything, it should be to move toward a better future through combining American leadership and the acceptance of international law and norms regulating



world conflict.”<sup>9</sup> And, in the book’s last sentence, he writes “Luckily, the United States is a democracy, with the political solution close at hand in November 2004. Throw the new militarists out of office. Otherwise the world will reduce American’s power still further.”<sup>10</sup> His convictions are also evident in his constant use of the pronoun “we” when referring to the United States government—e.g., “We cannot simply remove him [Saddam Hussein] and bring order to Iraq”<sup>11</sup>—and he seems to think he is giving advice to policy makers (the book is full of policy recommendations like “The US should leave alone conflicts involving national liberation fighters.... The US should denounce terrorism and state terrorism equally.”<sup>12</sup>)

His naturalization of capitalism makes it impossible for him to explain things that Harvey would regard as an inevitable consequences of the dominant social relations. Whereas Harvey casts the “War on Terror” as a necessary, ineluctable result of the existing patterns of social development, Mann believes that many important aspects of our present predicament merely reflect inexplicably dumb choices. For Harvey the “War on Terrorism” is part of a broader strategy to carry out “accumulation by dispossession” in order to open up more of the world to capitalism and, for example, he would presumably regard the fact that it has become a war on Muslims as a predictable aspect of the overall project. But, for Mann, the fact that the “war on terror” has become a war on Muslims as a whole is simply “stupid.”<sup>13</sup> In a similar vein, he describes British participation in the Iraq war as “tragic mistake”<sup>14</sup> as opposed to the expression of systemic imperatives. (He even declares that he feels “sympathy” for Blair, given his entanglement in American foreign policy.<sup>15</sup>)

Although the parameters of Mann’s critical stance are far less appealing than Harvey’s, his emphasis on the frailty of the new imperialist project is refreshing when compared to the former’s depiction of the inexorable march of capitalism. Mann does identify real vulnerabilities, but wants to rectify, not exploit them.

Unfortunately he is fully resigned to the status quo.

#### A MILE WIDE, AN INCH DEEP

**B**ush in *Babylon* by Tariq Ali—a Pakistan-born writer who now lives in London—aims to place the present war against Iraq in the long history of conflicts between that country and the West and to encourage resistance to the occupation. “Without knowing the past,” he explains in the Introduction, “it is impossible to understand what is happening today, and the history is presented here as a warning to both occupier and resister. The occupier will learn from it that Iraq has a very rich history of struggle against empire. The resister will, I hope, avoid the mistakes and not repeat the tragedies that permitted the occupation to happen.”<sup>16</sup>

This book contains a sweeping history of the Iraqi encounter with colonialism from the 13th century to the contemporary era. After setting the stage with a discussion of the present conflict and citations from many fine Iraqi poets, Ali jumps into the earliest historical accounts of Iraq, traces the emergence of modern Iraq from British colonial rule, analyzes the ouster of the British puppet regime in 1958, looks at the emergence of the Baath Party and Saddam Hussein’s rise to complete dominance, and, in the final chapters, examines the war and the prospects for resisting it.

Ali’s work is much more amenable to activist concerns than the previous two. Unlike Mann, he is explicitly hostile to capitalism and, unlike Harvey, convinced that we need not limit ourselves to meager demands for a “New Deal.” He explicitly calls for militant action against the United States and UK’s imperialist aggressions and even writes that “if there is one area where the cliché that classical revolutions are a thing of the past is likely to be proved wrong, it is the Arab world.”<sup>17</sup> His commitment to activist intervention is also implicit in the emphasis he places on political struggles in the history of Iraq (i.e., they matter).

Ali is sharp stylist and it is hard not be pleased by the barbs he throws at vari-

ous figures and to see that at least one prominent writer is willing to dispense with academic pleasantries. For example, he describes Kofi Annan as “a dumbwaiter for American aggression”<sup>18</sup> and points out that “the British prime minister now seems to regard the posterior of a US president as his natural habitat.”<sup>19</sup> (This is a welcome contrast to Mann’s sympathies for Blair).

One of Ali’s objectives is to help orient opponents of the occupation and he provides explicit proscriptions for action. He states that “the immediate tasks that face an anti-imperialist movement are support for Iraqi resistance to the Anglo-American occupation, and opposition to any and every scheme to get the UN into Iraq as retrospective cover for the invasion and after-sales service for Washington and London. Let the aggressors pay the costs of their own imperial ambitions.”<sup>20</sup> He also calls for the strengthening of opposition in the imperial homeland and the expansion of the World Social Forum’s agenda from its economic focus to the political issues of imperialism and war. However, his recommendations raise more questions than answers: for example, he does not elaborate on what it means to “support the resistance” or indicate how we could distinguish between different tendencies in the resistance or between genuine resistance and simple jockeying for power. Likewise, his demand that the UN not be allowed into Iraq is premised on the idea that its absence would incur greater political costs for the occupiers—not upon what might or might not be good for the Iraqi people. Unfortunately he does not speculate on the existence of Iraqi democratic traditions or practices that could provide the basis for a non-coercive alternative.<sup>21</sup>

There are several other problems with his analysis. First, his book is largely a study of political parties, states, and politicians, specifically those representing the imperialist West, which is bent on destroying the Arab world, and those of the Arab elites, who invariably sell their people out. The only other category he advances—and the only one referring

to popular social action—is “the Arab street,” an entity he does not define and, as such, has no more content than we find in the nineteenth century “mob.” His analysis is not built upon a deeper vision of the social forces that drive the actions of the various parties, such as the conflict between classes or the imperatives of state power and, as a result, his sweeping treatment tends to remain on the surface.

I suspect that the lack of theoretical depth explains his tendency to romanticize communists (like so many thinkers who emerged from the New Left and now reject communism’s politics, he holds onto the tradition as an aesthetic or myth). Although he offers many criticisms of the Iraqi Communist Party—he notes its presence in the Governing Council created by the US after victory and points out its deference to the Soviet Union during earlier years—he does tend to present it as the only genuinely oppositional force. This is reinforced by repeated references to Che Guevara and his (admittedly moving) eulogy for Khalid Ahmed Zaki, a Communist Party activist whom he knew and whose death in struggle, he says, “symbolized the defeat of an entire generation.”<sup>22</sup>

His failure to present a deeper analysis of social affairs is not an issue of mere academic interest, but of great strategic and political importance for our response to the war. It is not enough to merely denounce the greed, stupidity, or brutality of the imperialists—as Ali does so eloquently—because that is not, in itself, an argument against the occupation: would the occupation be just if it could be ascertained that the occupiers are less greedy, stupid, or brutal than other potential governing forces in Iraq? Our resistance must be grounded in a broader vision of the historical potentials at hand if it is to be genuinely cogent.

It is instructive to think about how the revolutionaries of the classical period framed this issue. They had rich debates on the national question: some supported national independence (Lenin) and others did not (Luxemburg); and Marx, for example, even believed that British

colonial rule in India was fundamentally progressive. Their various responses to colonialism and demands for national liberation reflected broader estimations of the meaning of these things within the historical trajectory of the social order as a whole. And, although we do not want to resurrect their formulations, they point to an enduring question we must answer if we are to do more than chatter about the world and actually advance compelling solutions to current social problems. What is and is not historically progressive? Is it capitalism? Is it the emergence of old tribal forms in a modern guise? Is it something else? Ali does not speculate on these questions and thus his outrage at the occupation lacks a solid foundation. Although the strong aesthetic virtues of the book—his stylistic strength and use of poetry—hint at a connection to a larger totality of human experience, this is only implied.

Ali’s book is the least rich theoretically and yet the most rewarding politically. Despite its problems, it at least brings us to the threshold of some of the complicated and compelling enduring problems we must confront.

These books will not provide the resources we need to strengthen and radicalize the anti-imperialist movement that Bush’s “War on Terror” has helped forge for us. Harvey offers a critique of capitalism, Mann points to the fragility of American imperial designs, and Ali depicts the long history of conflicts in and over Iraq, but the two works with real depth are antagonistic to revolutionary action, while the one that cultivates a sense of revolutionary potential only skates on the surface.

These books’ shortcoming have less to do with their respective analyses of the “War on Terror” than problems inherent in the theoretical frameworks they use to make these analyses. This is to be expected, although we should also remember that the world’s response to the “War on Terror” will have an effect on what is regarded as permissible in the theoretical realm.

It is imperative that we engage the

worldwide movement against American imperialism and find a way to advance a coherent critique of the prevailing social order as well as a positive vision of ourselves as revolutionary agents. Although the established theorists may, in the end, only indicate problems to avoid, that alone is instructive and something we should learn from as we press ourselves to imagine a revolutionary response to the “War on Terror.” ✨

#### ENDNOTES

1. David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 176.
2. Nader Vossoughian, “Interview with David Harvey: Questions about The New Imperialism” <http://agglutinations.com/archives/000013.html>
3. David Harvey, *The New Imperialism*, 210-211.
4. Michael Mann, *Incoherent Empire* (New York: Verso Books, 2003), 120.
5. *Ibid.*, 13.
6. *Ibid.*, 43.
7. *Ibid.*, 88.
8. *Ibid.*, 66.
9. *Ibid.*, 265.
10. *Ibid.*, 267.
11. *Ibid.*, 87.
12. *Ibid.*, 189.
13. *Ibid.*, 178.
14. *Ibid.*, 263.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Tariq Ali, *Bush in Babylon: The Re-colonisation of Iraq* (New York: Verso Books, 2003), 17.
17. *Ibid.*, 166-167.
18. *Ibid.*, 160.
19. *Ibid.*, 137, Note 80.
20. *Ibid.*, 168.
21. Ali advances a particularly sharp critique of the UN, which I regard as a useful corrective to the tendency among Leftists to appeal to the UN and international law in times of crises. He writes that “the world has changed so much over the last two decades that the UN has become an anachronism, a permanent fig leaf for new imperial adventures.”(194)
22. *Ibid.*, 100.

# Is There a Postanarchist Universality?

## A Reply to Michael Glavin

by Saul Newman

**W**HAT IS IT about the conservative fathers of radical sons? Glavin's account of the conversation he had with his father recalls the ongoing arguments I have with mine. I am constantly bringing up issues such as the growing power of the state, the unprecedented levels of surveillance and social control, the overturning of legal precedents, and the continual infringements on civil liberties and human rights—all of which are being sold to us under the dubious label of "security." I think that by sticking to the generally acceptable discourse of rights, laws and civil liberties, this will sway him. But to no avail. I ask my father if he thinks it is legitimate for governments to be able to check what books citizens are borrowing from public libraries, to monitor their email and mobile phone communication, to fingerprint them at airports, etc. But he says exactly the same things that Glavin's

father says—that if you have nothing to hide, you have nothing to fear; and that he doesn't care what the government does as long as it keeps the terrorists and "mad mullahs" as far away from him as possible. In other words, he, like many others, is prepared to accept, in return for some illusion of security, measures of control and surveillance that would have been unthinkable a few years ago.

That these sorts of measures could take place in liberal-democratic societies, however, should not necessarily surprise us. The paradox of liberalism has always been that freedom must have limits placed upon it for it to be realized—that the state itself is based on a social contract, whereby a degree of freedom is sacrificed in return for security. Of course many liberals are outraged by the obvious abuses of power by governments—for instance, the detention camps in Guantanamo Bay that have no legal sanction or legitimate authority. However, when it comes to more sophisticated techniques of control and surveillance, such as DNA testing, the language of liberalism may be of little help. It may be, as Giorgio Agamben suggests, that modern societies, whether liberal-democratic or totalitarian, already move on the terrain of biopower and biopolitics.<sup>1</sup> This is a form of power, first detected by Foucault, that takes biological life, "bare life" as its target—seeking to regulate, monitor and control it. The very language of human rights, upon which liberalism is based, is already inscribed within this logic, and marks the modern subject's inclusion within, and subordination by, the structure of the modern state.

**T**he great theoretical innovation of classical anarchism—that of Ba-



kunin and Kropotkin, in particular—was precisely to detect, behind the ideological simulacra of both liberalism and Marxism, this brutal reality of state power. The state takes on a number of forms and guises, and reveals itself in a number of ways—from the liberal state to the Marxist workers' state—but at its heart, it embodies the inexorable logic of sovereignty. From the anarchist perspective, neither liberalism nor Marxism were able to provide a sufficient analysis of the state: the former was trapped in the flimsy language of the social contract, in which the rights that supposedly protected the individual from the state were the very same rights that were guaranteed *by* the state; the latter made the fatal mistake of seeing the state as a neutral tool that could be used



to revolutionize society, and thus neglected the fact that state power had its own logic, and was not simply determined by class interests. Only anarchism focused on state power itself, seeing it as the fundamental impediment to a free society.

However the question that goes to the heart of this discussion—and indeed to the whole postanarchist problematic—is the ontological basis upon which a critique of this state power is mounted. For the classical anarchists, it was based on a fundamental human essence with distinct rational and moral properties, whose development was thwarted by the operation of state power. Bakunin's critique of the state, for instance, was framed in a kind of Manichean imaginary that conceptually separated “natural law” and “artificial law,” the essence of humanity from the institutions and mechanisms of power. This way of thinking was part of an Enlightenment-positivist paradigm that informed all the progressive and socialist political philosophies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—from the early utopian socialists like Fourier, to the historical materialist prognostications of Marx and Engels. Classical anarchism, despite its radical intervention on the theory of the state, was also part of this epistemological tradition—a tradition that held that man could be liberated from political domination, and ideological and religious obscurantism, through the use of his rational faculties; and that society itself was governed by a rational logic and organic order that could be revealed through scientific investigation. Despite Bakunin's suspicion of scientists, he claimed that the revolution would be a “scientific” one—that is to say, it would conform to the laws of science and nature, and lead to the emergence of a society freed from the mystifications of power, authority, and religion.

Now from the perspective of post-structuralist theory, some of these assertions become problematic: can we assume that there is a rational order to society or that society is even transparent to itself; can we assume that social developments are determined by dialectical forces or the “immutable” laws of history; can we as-

sume that there is a subject with a human essence, and so on? Instead, poststructuralist thinkers, or those grouped under this label, have stressed the linguistic and discursive construction of social identity, thus challenging the positivist conviction that there is an empirically observable objective social reality. Moreover, what separates poststructuralism from structuralism as such, is that poststructuralists also stress the indeterminacy and instability of the discursive structures that shape social reality and identity.

These insights have crucial implications for radical politics, not least of all because they highlight both the autonomy and contingency of the political domain. For instance, Ernesto Laclau, whose thinking is informed by perspectives such as deconstruction and Lacanian psychoanalysis, has argued that the problem with Marxism was its economic and class essentialism, and its dialectical determinism. This meant that Marxism was unable to theorize a truly political dimension, despite the fact that throughout the history of Marxism, increasingly political solutions—such as the Leninist intervention—had to be found to deal with the central crisis of Marxist theory: why the proletariat wasn't becoming “class conscious” and revolutionary in the way that Marx predicted. The aim of the post-Marxist project is therefore to theorize a dimension of “the political” which is autonomous, contingent, and not determined by historical and economic forces. This is based on the idea that society itself is not an objective reality with its own scientifically verifiable laws and mechanisms. From a post-Marxist perspective, “‘Society’ is not a valid object of discourse.”<sup>2</sup> In other words, there is no essential identity or fixed principle at the base of society: it is constituted through a series of ultimately unsuccessful discursive and ideological representations.

Now I believe that a similar “deconstructive” critique can be applied to anarchism. The paradox of anarchism is that, on the one hand, its attempt to see the state as autonomous from economics and class, and as having its own logic, creates the theoretical conditions for an auto-

nous and specifically political dimension; on the other hand, it is because anarchism sees political transformations as being determined by historical forces that this potential for an autonomous political dimension is effectively eclipsed. In other words, if the revolution against the state is conditioned by a sort of rational, dialectical unfolding of society, then where is the space for contingent political interventions? Postanarchism is therefore the attempt to theorize a specifically political dimension within anarchism itself, and it contends that this is impossible without a thoroughgoing deconstruction of the essentialist conceptions of subjectivity and society that anarchism is based on.

**I**n outlining certain theoretical aspects of this deconstruction of anarchism, I will attempt to answer some of Glavin's criticisms. What Glavin objects to, broadly speaking, is the attempt by me, Todd May and Lewis Call, to find some kind of common ground between anarchism and postmodern or poststructuralist theory. When Glavin says that we have “created intersections” between these discourses, he is in a sense right: these intersections did not exist before—at least to the extent that they were not written about widely before. The point about postanarchism or postmodern anarchism, or whatever one chooses to call it, is that these links have to be constructed. This is not to say, however, that there is no basis for this intersection—poststructuralism is, as I have suggested before, an inherently anti-authoritarian discourse, and for this reason it has clear implications for anarchism. It is more the case of asking oneself what is there in poststructuralism that allows us to re-engage with anarchism, and what is there in anarchism that still speaks to us today?

Glavin's main objection is that by bringing together poststructuralist theory and anarchism, we deny ourselves an universal ethical and political dimension that would allow us to resist power today. This is an important point, and one that I am becoming increasingly concerned with. There is no doubt that anarchism, and radical politics generally, needs some

kind of universal emancipative dimension—more so today than ever. However, at the same time, I would argue that anarchism cannot simply turn its back on important theoretical developments like poststructuralism, deconstruction, and psychoanalysis, which, on the surface at least, would appear to place this universal dimension in jeopardy by questioning the idea of the universal human subject. Instead, I would suggest that it is possible to theorize a universal dimension *within* the poststructuralist problematic itself, and that this can inform a postanarchist politics.

One of the central propositions of poststructuralist theory is the constructed nature of the subject. What this means is that our understanding of ourselves as subjects, with a social, political, cultural, or even sexual identity, is constituted through our interaction with certain discursive structures—whether they be networks of power/knowledge, or linguistic and symbolic systems. This doesn't mean that we aren't flesh and blood human beings with desires and impulses, but that the way we make these desires and impulses intelligible depends on our immersion in the world of language and discourse, and through this, our social interactions. Let's take the concept of the human: what it means to be human is something that has changed throughout history. As Foucault has argued, the very idea of us having a sexuality that constitutes the core of our being is a relatively recent idea. Moreover, for Foucault, this construction of the subject is also linked to practices that dominate him. In other words, the subject is constructed in such a way that the expression of his freedom and autonomy can often mean the opposite. For instance, the paradox of the liberal subject—the autonomous subject with formal rights and freedoms—is that he is *at the same time* a disciplined, normalized subject. Indeed, as Glavin himself points out, modern practices of surveillance and control operate in a very Foucauldian way, not to actually repress the subject as such, but to construct him/her as a constantly self-policing subject.

However, Glavin raises the important

objection here that if there is no essential subject to liberate, then how do we actually resist these practices of control—beyond a simple transgression which, he suggests, only reaffirms what one is transgressing? In other words, what is the ethical and ontological foundation for resistance? However, the first thing to mention is that, while transgression can indeed reaffirm the law and power structures, it can also destabilize them and create new openings for political action, new possibilities for freedom. For Foucault, power and resistance exist in a very *undecidable* relationship, in which one incites the other, but at the same time, resistance can also lead to a reversal and destabilization of current power arrangements. While we cannot hope to escape the play of power entirely, our action can lead to a rearrangement of power relations in ways that are less dominating and hierarchical. As Glavin himself points out, radical democratic practices are never absolutely free from power—they still involve certain relations of exclusion; but they are much more decentralized, and allow for much greater reciprocity, than current political arrangements.

Despite this, however, I would argue that Foucault's account of power and resistance is ultimately inconsistent without some notion of subjectivity. Indeed, it could be suggested that this was perhaps behind Foucault's later focus on subjectivity and ethics. It is for this reason that I have found it fruitful to read Foucault and Lacan together: the former provides the latter with a theory of power, while the latter provides the former with a theory of the subject. Psychoanalytic theory developed a highly innovative account of the subject, starting with Freud's discovery of the unconscious, which undermined the Cartesian account of the transparent and self-determining individual based on the Cogito. Lacan radicalized Freudian psychoanalysis by combining it with structuralist linguistics. The unconscious was "structured as a language" through a series of signifiers, so that we form an understanding of ourselves as subjects through language. At the same time, however, we are never completely represented in

language; there is always a lack or gap in the symbolic order itself where we cannot find ourselves. Paradoxically, this void or lack in symbolization *is* the place of the subject—the place from which desire emerges.

The reason why I find this theory of the subject appealing, and why I see it as applicable to anarchism, and radical political theory generally, is because it has the benefit of going beyond both essentialism *and* constructivism. It is non-essentialist because it sees the subject as being constituted through external structures of language. At the same time, it is not entirely constructivist because the subject's place in this external structure is always unstable. The subject is positioned in relation to the "real"—but the real is not some natural, pre-symbolic essence that one can return to; it is, rather, something that is paradoxically created by language itself as its empty place, an empty place that is impossible to symbolize or fill. What this amounts to is a radical indeterminacy in the structure of the subject. This indeterminacy introduces to the political field a radical freedom and contingency of agency. As Laclau puts it: "The freedom thus won in relation to the structure is therefore a traumatic fact initially: I am *condemned* to be free, not because I have no structural identity as the existentialists assert, but because I have a *failed* structural identity."<sup>3</sup>

So, to respond to Glavin's characterization of my Lacanian (and also Stirnerian)-inspired notion of the subject, it is not so much that the subject can simply create his or her own subjectivity *ex nihilo*, in an existentialist sense. It is more that the subject's identity—because it seeks a full representation which is ultimately impossible—is continually reconstructed discursively through social practices. In other words, we do not simply choose to become anarchists in a vacuum; nor does anarchism emerge from some kind of human substratum or natural ethical sensibility. We become anarchists through an involvement in different political and ideological struggles. Glavin invokes May's reading of Foucault—saying "we are subjects", "we think of ourselves as subjects",

etc. However, from a Lacanian perspective, this subjectivity is never guaranteed, and it only occurs against the background of absence and negativity that make it inherently unstable. Our subjectivity is always incomplete and structurally lacking, and because of this we seek out different ways of securing an identity.

Therefore to say, as Glavin does, that rather than ground resistance in an “empty space” we can ground it “in our own particularity,” doesn’t really tell us much about how this particularity itself emerges, and how it is understood. One’s resistance to the “dominant values of society” might take any number of different forms, from communism, to fascism, or some form of populist politics. In other words, there is nothing to say that this resistance will be understood in the anarchist sense. A specific anarchist identity does not emerge simply from the position of resistance. It has to be constructed through certain practices, whether they are radical democratic activities, or an engagement in certain broad social and political struggles—struggles that might involve other groups, identities and ideologies, such as feminists, Marxists, trade unionists, consumer advocate groups, and so on.

In this sense, there is no such thing as a pure particularity which can serve as an ontological ground for radical politics, as Glavin seems to suggest. Particularity always occurs against a universal background that contaminates its identity and makes it indeterminate. The example that Laclau gives is that of an ethnic minority that is asserting cultural autonomy and differential rights. This particular demand and position is only possible against a universal dimension. For instance, the demand for the right to be different is also a demand for equal rights with other groups: “The assertion of one’s own particularity requires the appeal to something transcending it.”<sup>4</sup> Thus, the assertion of specific rights by one group, on the basis of its own particularity, inevitably involves an appeal to a universal discourse of shared rights and equality. Political activity by this group must there-

fore involve forming contingent alliances, or ‘chains of equivalence’ as Laclau says, with other groups and identities—a process which contaminates the particularity of this group. To give an example, the demand of students for better conditions and more funding cannot remain within this specificity for long; these demands will eventually overlap with the demands of other political identities while forming relations of united opposition to the power that denies them. In this way, the groups in this chain are increasingly unable to maintain their own particularity, as they become united in opposition to a common enemy. A political identity or group cannot get very far without engaging in this process, and that is why the politics of pure difference, which has long been mistakenly associated with post-structuralism, is ultimately self-defeating.

Rather than asserting purely differential identities, poststructuralism seeks to destabilize and make inconsistent any identity, *particular or universal*. What poststructuralism rejects is essentialism—the idea that there is a constant, unchanging substance at the base of identity. From this perspective, the assertion of a purely differential identity and a separatist political position based on this—whether by gays, or women, or ethnic minorities—is simply another form of essentialism. Difference can only emerge in a fragmented, incomplete way through a universal dimension that contaminates and destabilizes it.

However, this universal dimension, by the same token, is itself fragmented and contaminated by the fact that it is formally empty—an empty signifier, as Laclau would say—which means that it can only be articulated through particular identities which stand in for it. This process, whereby a particular identity comes to represent a universal horizon, is what Laclau refers to as the logic of *hegemony*. In political terms, what this means is that a certain political identity or ideology must come to represent this universal dimension. Anarchism itself may be seen in this way—along with Marxism and other socialist discourses—as a certain symbolization or articulation of a univer-

sal idea of emancipation. However, this relationship, as I have suggested, is not guaranteed in advance. It is the result of a temporary constellation of circumstances, which gives anarchism an ability to appeal at certain moments to other identities engaged in political struggles.

However, I would contend that anarchism is especially suited to this hegemonic logic of universality/particularity. For instance, central to the ethics of classical anarchism is the insistence on combining the two principles of equality (universality) and freedom (particularity/difference)—refusing to see them as mutually limiting, as liberalism did. This suggests a logic of contamination between two traditionally opposed principles, seeing one as only realizable through the other. Perhaps contemporary radical politics can take from this a notion of what Étienne Balibar’s calls “equaliberty” as an *unconditional and necessarily excessive* ethical demand.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, this combination of equality/liberty and universality/particularity might also be seen in the anarchist idea of revolution, involvement in which was to be left open to different identities—workers, peasants, the lumpenproletariat, intellectuals *déclassé*, etc—not just limited, as was the case with Marxism, to the proletariat (led by a vanguard party). One might speculate that the contemporary anti-globalization struggle is an example of both classical anarchist *and* poststructuralist hegemonic politics, particularly in the way that it is open to different identities and positions, and yet, at the same time, invokes a universal struggle against the state and capitalism.

The purpose of this discussion has been three fold. Firstly, it has tried to show that Glavin’s idea that particularity “as it is” can serve as the ontological basis for a politics of resistance is untenable, because it neglects the unstable construction of this subjective position. Secondly, it has shown that particularity can only emerge through a political dimension of universality that contaminates it. Thirdly, it has attempted to theorize this universal dimension in terms of a

postanarchist politics of emancipation. My contention here is that, far from a poststructuralist reading of anarchism denying it the possibility of a universal political dimension, as Glavin suggests, it is the only way that it can be realized without returning to notions of human nature and universal rationality. This universal political dimension might be the discourse of rights and freedoms, and resistance against domination—but the point is that these rights and freedoms are mobile because they are no longer anchored in an essentialist identity or position. I cannot speak for May or Call, but,

despite our different approaches, I would say that poststructuralist anarchism—or postanarchism—is an attempt to free anarchism from this essentialist bedrock, and open it to the indeterminacy of political struggles today. ✨

## ENDNOTES

1. See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans., Daniel Heller-Roazen. (Stanford Ca.: Stanford University Press, 1998), 121-122.
2. See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal

Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2001), 111.

3. Ernesto Laclau, “New Reflections On the Revolution of Our Time,” in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*, ed. Laclau (London: Verso, 1997), 3-96, 44.
4. Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipations* (London: Verso, 1996), 48.
5. Étienne Balibar, “Ambiguous Universality,” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies*, 7 no.1 (1995): 48-72, 72.

# Anarcho-Pluralism

## A Reply to Saul Newman

by Michael Glavin

In trying to respond to Saul Newman’s comments, it was hard to get over just how completely he misread my review. I was baffled because I thought that I was being pretty clear in putting forth an anti-essentialist anarchist perspective; so how could Newman think that I was *against* bringing together poststructuralism and anarchism? How could he think that I wanted a universal dimension to anarchism when in fact I argued in favor of “a conception of ethics without grounding and without universal claim?”

It eventually occurred to me that although Newman and I are both anti-essentialists and anti-authoritarians, he misunderstood my review because we have vastly different perspectives. Simply put: Newman is a dualist of sorts, whereas I am a pluralist. Newman’s primary categories are the universal and the particular; my primary categories are the one and the many. We both agree that each term stands in relation to and is “contaminated” by the other, to use his phrase, but for Newman “particularity always occurs against a universal back-

ground.” For me, particularity stands in relation to other particularities. Newman—thinking in terms of his universal categories—elevates my notion of particularity to a “pure particularity” and gives it a status that I never would. He transposes his universal category onto my category of particularity and so misreads my writing by thinking that I put forth the absurd notion of “an ontological basis for a politics of resistance.” To clarify, in my review I do not root resistance in ontological difference; I put forth a *cultural/ideological* basis for resistance. Such a basis is anti-essentialist, contingent upon historical circumstance, and open to redefinition. At the end of the day, Newman and I differ on three central areas of debate: the nature of the subject—and so, agency; universalism—and so, the scope of the anarchist ethical and political project; and the nature of power—and so, the form of anarchist organizations. Newman and myself are but lone representatives of larger trends within the anti-authoritarian movement as a whole and how this argument gets played out beyond the pages of this jour-

nal will profoundly affect the future of anarchist practice.

Let me start by underlining the difference between Newman and myself concerning power. In his response, Newman has come to admit that power is a regrettable necessity: “While we cannot hope to escape the play of power entirely....” I still think that this statement does not go far enough and, at base, is ill-conceived. Power is a medium; it is not something to be eliminated or “escaped.” All organizations involve a power structure of some sort, implicit or explicit. The problem, from an anarchist perspective, and from Foucault’s perspective as well, is not power as such, but rather, *domination*. The problem is the ossification of hierarchies. Anarchism is a practice of power wherein domination is minimized *through* the constant exercise of both restrictive and productive forms of power. One can see the productive and the negative aspects of a democratic organization as being the body politics’ form and shadow respectively. Where Newman concentrates on the power/re-

sistance dichotomy—seeking to limit power—I, as a pluralist, concentrate on more and less desirable power formations and seek to encourage power structures that foster freedom and empower groups and individuals or, more specifically, ones that produce anarchist subjects.

When Newman writes about subjectivity via Lacan, it just does not strike a chord with my self-conception. When he looks at the human psyche, he sees particularity in relation to a universal. I see multiplicity. My understanding of the human psyche is much more in line with Lewis Call's rendering. Although I do not think that identity is as fluid as Call asserts, I agree that the individual is the site of multiple subject positions. When I read Kropotkin who wrote in 1897 that, "man is nothing but a resultant, always changeable, of all his divers faculties, of all his autonomous tendencies,"<sup>1</sup> or Nietzsche who refers to the soul as a "subjective multiplicity" and as "a social structure of drives and affects,"<sup>2</sup> I see my self reflected in those words. I have both a love of driving and an environmental consciousness about the destructive consequences of combustion engines. This internal conflict, between driver and environmentalist, creates the space within which action takes place. I do not think that Newman can account for this embodied multiplicity. Where Newman derives agency out of the play between the gap between the universal and the particular, my understanding of freedom on an individual level, as it is on an organizational level, stems from plurality. Freedom for me is the mediation of conflict through creative action.

Just as when I look at an individual, I see a composite and when I look at society, I see a plurality of groups, when I look at sexual identity I see multiplicity as well. I do not see a universal from which a particular difference is derived; rather I see several forms of sexuality all playing off each other. Superficially, there is heterosexuality, bi-sexuality, and homosexuality; but those sexualities

should immediately be split between the male and female varieties—gay and lesbian sexualities are quite distinct as are male and female versions of hetero or bi sexuality. But these categories are themselves rather broad and arbitrary. In discussing sexuality one could just as easily look at sexual practices rather than the gender of an individual's partner. "What you do" is as legitimate a demarcation of sexuality as "who you do it with." When one looks through these multifarious lenses of sexual practices, one sees a kaleidoscope—a continual realignment of individuals into different categories. The notion of a "universal" here seems quite arbitrary and even ridiculous; worse, if evoked it strikes me as being a political move used to elevate one form of sexuality over, above and against another form of sexuality. I know this is a move that Newman would not choose to make, but I think that this is the siren's call of all universal claims.

Newman wants to maintain the project of universal emancipation. As I have stated in my review, I think that such a project is fundamentally flawed. I think that we need to abandon that project because it leads to a form of domination wherein its protagonists are blind to the nature of their deeds. I think that this is one of the ethical contributions of poststructuralism, as Todd May himself pointed out (and then quickly forgot). In its stead, we need a form of ethics that Foucault tried to sketch out later in his career—a non-universal form of ethics. As he states:

*I don't think one can find any normalization in, for instance, the Stoic ethics. The reason is, I think, that the principal aim, the principal target of this kind of ethics was an aesthetic one. First, this kind of ethics was only a problem of personal choice. Second, it was reserved for a few people in the population; it was not a question of giving a pattern of behavior for everybody. It was a personal choice for a small elite. The reason for making this choice was the will to live a beautiful life, and to leave to others memories of a beauti-*

*ful existence. I don't think that we can say that this kind of ethics was an attempt to normalize the population.*<sup>3</sup>

It seems to me that this is precisely the ethical form that anarchists should adopt. I am not advocating that we become Stoics, but that Stoic ethics are an example of ethics without universal claim. It is a non-proselytizing way to engage the world—a way to respect the values and customs of other cultures. It is from this respectful stance that we can engage in coalitions and alliances and continue to build counter-hegemony. We can join together with groups who may have different ethical systems, but who share many common goals. This is the form of ethics proper to anarchism; it is a recognition that anarchists are but one group among many. ✨

#### ENDNOTES

1. Peter Kropotkin, "Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal," in *Fugitive Writings*, ed. George Woodcock (Montréal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 102.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Random House Inc., 1966), 20.
3. Michel Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 341.

# Joel Schalit Responds to Sureyyya Evren

IT'S NOT OFTEN that I feel compelled to reply to a review of one of my books. However, a number of Sureyyya Evren's criticisms<sup>1</sup> of my collection, *The Anti-Capitalism Reader: Imagining a Geography of Opposition* (New York: Akashic Books, 2002) are loaded with problematic assumptions which merit a reasoned response. Though Evren is absolutely entitled to his opinions, his conclusions are at times based on an incorrect reading of the book. In the spirit of collegial, inter-Left dialogue, I would like to offer the following thoughts.

Evren begins his review by stating that *The Anti-Capitalism Reader* (ACR) is a collection of orthodox Marxist writings that seeks to co-opt the anti-globalization movement for sectarian ideological purposes. While most of the contributors to the volume identify themselves in one way or another as Marxists—Jason Myers, Paul Thomas, for example—the book's introduction makes a very clear case for this vol-

ume as an anti-vanguardist, distinctly heterodox Marxist text, in the "bourgeois" intellectual tradition of Western Marxism—the Frankfurt School, Gramsci, what have you.

As the statement about the ACR's attention to culture makes very clear in the book's introduction, from an orthodox Marxist perspective, the ACR's focus on problems of superstructure make it entirely suspect. The book's position on Marxist orthodoxy could not be spelled out any clearer than in Doug Henwood's article criticizing the revival of Leninism in a post-Cold War context. While Henwood expresses antipathy towards anarchism in his interview with Zizek, this does not automatically imply he is a member of the Socialist Workers Party. Like myself and the rest of the volume's contributors, he maintains an independent Marxist perspective, which while diverse in its understandings of other Left traditions is always open to dialogue.

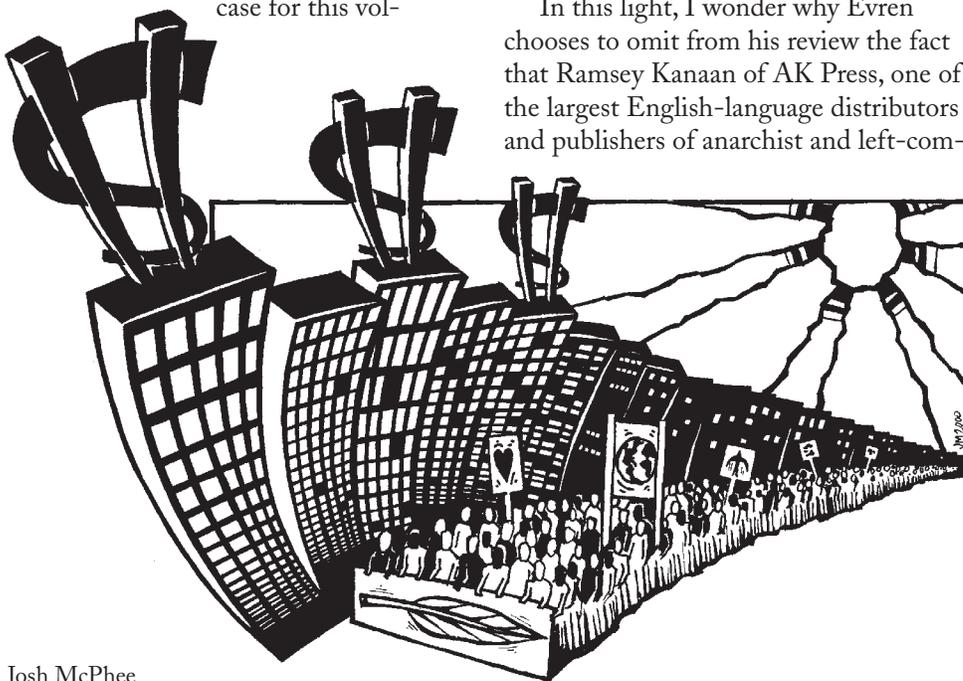
In this light, I wonder why Evren chooses to omit from his review the fact that Ramsey Kanaan of AK Press, one of the largest English-language distributors and publishers of anarchist and left-com-

munist literature, is interviewed in the volume. Or similarly, that there is an empathetic discussion of the sources of religious fundamentalism in the book such as my article, "Secularization and its Discontents," which is formulated as a critique of traditional Marxist readings of religion.

My sense is that articles like these further conflict with Evren's attempt to put *The Anti-Capitalism Reader* in a convenient ideological box. Sadly, they compound his inability—or reluctance—to appreciate the sectarian divisions within the greater Marxist tradition. While I appreciate Evren's desire to polemicize and take into account socialist theory, I am also a firm believer in reading texts a little more closely. Ideological differences between a book and its reader should never get in the way of that.

Best Regards,

Joel Schalit  
Associate Editor  
*Punk Planet Magazine*  
www.punkplanet.com



Josh McPhee

## ENDNOTES

1. Sureyyya Evren, "Appropriating 'Another World,'" *The New Formulation* Vol. 2, No 2 (Winter-Spring 2004): 17-20.

# Summer 2004 Grants Awarded

**T**WICE A YEAR, the Institute for Anarchist Studies awards \$4,125 US in grants to radical writers from around the world who are in need of financial support. In fact, in the summer 2004 granting round, we had \$4,875 US to award. We are very pleased to announce the recipients of the summer 2004 IAS grants:

\$2,275 to **Melissa Forbis** and **Cale Layton** for *Anarchist Trade Unions in Bolivia: 1920-1950*, a translation of *Los artesanos libertarios y la ética del trabajo* by Zulema Lehm and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui (1988). The book presents the history of anarchism in Bolivia and includes numerous interviews with trade union participants from the period of 1920-1950. Because the trade unions organized sectors of the working class neglected by traditional industrial unions, and brought together mestizos and indigenous peoples, men and women, along libertarian lines, they were perceived as a significant social threat by the state. The translation will include a new introduction that links this history of anarchist organizing to the recent uprising and continued resistance in Bolivia, and will be the first English translation of a book on Bolivian anarchism and libertarian trade unions.

\$1,600 to **Trevor Paglen** for *Recoding Carceral Landscapes*. The completed book will offer a collection of images and texts that make visible the social, political, and economic relationships that constitute California's massive prison system. In showing how prisons are connected to the foundational structures of society itself, *Carceral Landscapes* will suggest that prison abolition isn't simply about closing prisons, but about fundamentally transforming the relations that order contemporary American society. In addition to serving as a companion book for an art show by the same name (projected to open at San Francisco's "The Lab" in February 2005), it will be used by the prison-abolition organization Critical Resistance for outreach and education.

\$1,000 to **Stephen Shukaitis** for *Between Sisyphus and Self-Management: The Relevance of Autonomous Organization in a Globalized World*. This book-length project is an effort to reflect, in the domain of economics, on the question: "What structures and practices could sustain the creation of a new social order?" The author will examine the historical legacies and practices of worker self-management to assess the usefulness of the concept under the current conditions of economic globalization. He will draw on examples of self-management in 1930s Spain, 1960s Yugoslavia, and Argentina in 2001, as well as current organizing efforts, to elaborate a contemporary theory of self-management.

# Grant Updates

**Kolya Abramsky** has almost completed the translation of *Global Finance Capital and the Permanent War: The Dollar, Wall Street and the War Against Iraq* by Ramón Fernández Durán. In this book, the author shows how financial institutions force global capitalism into a permanent state of war to maintain its hegemonic control of international markets. The English translation includes updates to the original text, as well as a new epilogue by the author. Abramsky hopes the translation will be published in spring 2005. He was awarded \$1,000 in July 2003.

**Robert Graham** has nearly completed the manuscript for the first volume of *Anarchism: A Documentary History*. The two volume project assembles the definitive texts of the anarchist tradition and organizes them chronologically and thematically. Graham has acquired English translations of classical anarchist essays for inclusion in the first volume of the project that have never before been published. These include substantial selections from Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Latin American texts, as well as essays by Otto Gross, Gustav Landauer, and Diego Abad de Sántillan. *Anarchism: A Documentary History* will be published by Black Rose Books. Graham was awarded \$2,500 in January 2004.

**Nate Holdren** expects to complete his translation of the Colectivo Situaciones' *19 and 20: Notes for the New Social Protagonism* by December 2004. Holdren's translation of the radical Buenos Aires collective's account of the social movements that exploded in Argentina on December 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 2001 will make the book available to an English-speaking audience for the first time. The translation will include a special introduction to the English edition written by the Colectivo Situaciones. Holdren was awarded \$1,000 in July 2003.

**Sandra Jeppesen** is nearing completion a first draft of her book-length project *Anarchy Revolution Freedom: Anarchist Culture*, which she expects to finish in February 2005. Jeppesen examines mainstream and explicitly anarchist representations of revolution to come to an understanding of anarchist culture and to develop a way of theorizing it that is significantly different from Marxian cultural studies. Jeppesen has expanded the project to include a chapter entitled "Networks in Anarchist Culture," in which she will use Deleuze and Guattari's work on the rhizome in *A Thousand Plateaus* to examine the flows, lines of flight, and de-territorializations among nodes, lines, and the field of anarchist culture. A section of this chapter, which uses Ann Hansen's book *Direct Action: Memoirs of an Urban Guerrilla* as a case study, has been published on the IAS website's "Theory and Politics" section under the title "Where does Anarchist Theory come from?" Jeppesen was awarded \$800 in July 2003.

**Marta Kolárová** has completed her project *Gender in the Czech Anarchist Movement*. The article describes the Czech anarchist movement from a gender perspective, and analyzes the movement in terms of women's participation in movement organizations, the gendered division of activist labor, and the representation of women in anarchist publications. Kolárová argues that there is a significant gap between the egalitarian aims of the Czech anarchist movement, and the fulfillment of those aims in practice. The article will soon be published in pamphlet form and on the IAS and Czechoslovakian Anarchist Federation's website ([www.csaf.cz](http://www.csaf.cz)). Kolárová was awarded \$750 in January 2004.

**Josh McPhee** is working on drafts of two essays for *Building New Contexts for Anarchist Graphics, Video and Film*, and hopes to begin work on a third in the

near future. This collection of essays on anarchism and aesthetics will focus on the ways in which anarchist cultural products are produced in a world defined by visual literacy, how this relates to capitalism's use of design and art to brand ideas and products, and how anti-authoritarian signs and signifiers compare and compete. McPhee's first book, *Stencil Pirates: A Global Study of the Street Stencil* was published by Soft Skull Press in June 2004. McPhee was awarded \$1,000 in February 2003.

**Andrés Pérez** and **Felipe del Solar** have completed a preliminary version of their book *Chile: Anarchist Practices Under Pinochet*. The study spans Pinochet's reign by tracing the social expression, organizational relationships, and political contributions of anarchists. The authors expect a final version, complete with a prologue and a substantial appendix of relevant documents, to be published in 2005. Pérez and del Solar were awarded \$2,000 in January 2001.

**Marina Sitrin** has completed a draft of the Spanish manuscript of her project *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina*. This collection of interviews with different activists involved in Argentinean autonomous social movements will help represent the movements to an international audience while contributing to an ongoing and international conversation about methods of resistance. The Spanish manuscript is currently being reviewed by participants of the autonomous social movements and will be ready for printing at Chilavert, an occupied printing press in Buenos Aires, by early fall of 2004. Once published, it will be used as a tool for Argentinean activists to meet and dialogue with other movements across the Americas. The English version of the book will be published later in 2004. Sitrin was awarded \$2,000 in July 2003.

# The IAS's 2004 Fundraising Campaign

## *Promoting Critical Scholarship on Social Domination and Radical Social Reconstruction*

SINCE THE IAS's inception in the spring of 1996 we have worked hard to support radical, anti-authoritarian scholarship on contemporary social contradictions and the possibilities of meaningful social transformation. Although the anti-authoritarian Left has become an increasingly important presence on the streets, radical theoretical work is just as important now as it was eight years ago. We need to clarify the anarchist alternative, deepen our critique of the present society, and study the victories and dilemmas of our movement if we are to build upon its accomplishments. The IAS is a means toward this goal.

Although there certainly are many organizations doing much needed and important work, the IAS makes contributions that are not made by any other organization on any continent. We really are unique. Our grants are an invaluable source of support for radical writers around the world and there is no other organization, anywhere, devoted to supporting dissident authors.

Over these past eight years we have supported over forty projects by writers from around the world, including authors from South Africa, Nigeria, Argentina, Uruguay, Mexico, the United States, and Canada. We have funded movement research, translations, historical studies, and even a play. Many of these projects would not have been completed without our assistance.

The IAS has been able to support this important work for all these years thanks to the generosity of our comrades and allies around the world and we need to ask for your assistance once again. Specifically, we must raise \$24,000 by January 2005 in order to keep awarding grants to radical writers, develop our publishing efforts, and cover administrative expenses.

Your contribution will help the IAS meet its 2004 fundraising goal and thus help us make the following contributions to the development of anarchist studies:

- The IAS will award \$8,500 in grants to writers struggling with some of the most pressing questions in radical social theory today. IAS grants help radical authors take time off work, hire childcare, purchase research materials, pay for travel expenses, and other things necessary to produce serious works of social criticism.
- The IAS will publish *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, our biannual magazine. *Perspectives* is a unique source of interviews, publishing news, reviews, and commentary pertaining to anarchism. It helps keep people informed about anarchist scholarship and encourages dialogue among those interested in this work.
- The IAS will support the study of Latin American anarchism through its Latin American Archives Project and the discussion of radical alternatives at the Renewing the Anarchist Tradition conference.
- The IAS will strengthen its web presence so that it becomes a more valuable resource to the milieus that we serve.

In appreciation for your support of the IAS, we are offering book gifts care of the good people at Raven Books of Amherst, Massachusetts. All IAS donors giving \$25 or more are entitled to receive at least one great book from their collection as well as a year long subscription to *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*.

It has been a great eight years and we are excited about the future of our work! Please help make this work possible by making a donation today. ✨



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**Thank you for your support!**

# Latin American Archives Project Update

In the winter of 2004 the IAS launched the Latin American Archives Project. The goal of this initiative is to encourage the study of Latin America's rich anarchist history by making important documents from that history available on-line in a searchable, multilingual website. It is a collaborative effort of the IAS and the Biblioteca Archivo de Estudios Libertarios and the Biblioteca Popular José Ingenieros (both of Buenos Aires).

We have already made important progress in the first phase of this project.

- This spring the IAS signed an agreement with the University of Michigan, who will generously host the Latin American Archive Project's website as well as provide Opti-

cal Character Recognition for all the documents we submit. In practical terms, this means that individual scans will be viewable as images and as ordinary text which, in turn, will render the archive searchable by keyword.

- The comrades in Buenos Aires have been hard at work scanning key documents and publications from their archives. They presently have 16,000 individual scans and we are in the process of transferring those scans to our computer and organizing them into a user-friendly, online archive.

We plan to launch the site this fall and believe it will provide an invaluable resource for anyone interested in investigating the history of anti-authoritarian movements in the Americas. ✨



Zapatista support members celebrate the first anniversary of the founding of the *Caracoles*, cultural centers of resistance, and the formation of the Councils of Good Governments in the highlands village Oventic. Photo by Tim Russo.

# The IAS's 2004 Fundraising Campaign

## Great Books for IAS Donors

Raven Books of Amherst, Massachusetts has generously made the following books available to contributors to the IAS's 2004 fundraising campaign. Please help us meet our \$24,000 fundraising goal so we can continue awarding grants to radical writers, publishing *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, supporting our other vital programs, and building a community of people interested in strengthening the anarchist vision.

- For a \$25 USD donation to the IAS, we will mail you any one of the following books & an annual subscription to *Perspectives*.
- For a \$50 USD donation, we will send you any two & an annual subscription to *Perspectives*.
- For \$100 USD, you get five of these great books & an annual subscription to *Perspectives*.
- For \$500 USD, you get all of them & an annual subscription to *Perspectives*!

Books will be delivered to US and Canadian destinations free of charge. Other destinations will require that the donor pay for shipping expenses.

David Barsamian, *The Decline and Fall of Public Broadcasting* (South End, paper, 2002, 99 pp., \$8.00)

Jens Bjorneboe, *Moment of Freedom* (Dufour, paper, 1999, 217 pp., \$15.00)

Jens Bjorneboe, *Powderhouse* (Dufour, paper, 2000, 201 pp., \$15.00)

Jens Bjorneboe, *The Silence: An Anti-Novel and Absolutely the Very Last Protocol* (Dufour, paper, 2000, 195 pp., \$15.00)

Jeremy Brecher, et.al, *Globalization from Below: The Power of Solidarity* (South End, paper, 2000, 164 pp., \$13.00)

Jeremy Brecher, *Strike!* (South End, paper, 1997, 421 pp., \$22.00)

Wendy Chapkis, *Beauty Secrets: Women and the Politics of Appearance* (South End, paper, 1986, 212 pp., \$15.00)

Noam Chomsky, *Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies* (South End, paper, 1989, 422 pp., \$22.00)

Noam Chomsky, *Propaganda and the Public Mind: Interviews with David Barsamian* (South End, paper, 2001, 247 pp., \$16.00)

Ward Churchill, *From a Native Son: Selected Essays on Indigenism, 1985 - 1995* (South End, paper, 1996, 588 pp., \$22.00)

Gene Desfor (ed.), *Just Doing It: Popular collective Action in the Americas* (Black Rose Books, paper, 204 pp., \$24.95)

Martin Duberman, *Left Out: The Politics of Exclusion: Essays 1964 - 2002* (South End, paper, 2002, 504 pp., \$22.00)

Martin Espada, *Zapata's Disciple: Essays* (South End, paper, 1998, 143 pp., \$14.00)

Richard Fenn, *The Spirit of Revolt: Anarchism and the Cult of Authority* (Rowman and Littlefield, cloth, 1986, 179 pp., \$55.00)

Daniel Fischline and Martha Nandorfy, *Eduardo Galeano: Through the Looking Glass* (Black Rose Books, 228 pp., paper, \$24.95)

Al Gedicks, *New Resource Wars: Native and Environmental Struggles Against Multinational Corporations* (South End, paper, 270 pp., \$18.00)

Dale Hathaway, *Allies Across the Border: Mexico's "Authentic Labor Front" and Global Solidarity* (South End, paper, 2000, 267 pp., \$19.00)

Chaia Heller, *Ecology of Everyday Life: Rethinking the Desire for Nature* (Black Rose Books, paper, 204 pp., \$19.99)

bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (South End, paper, 202 pp., \$15.00)

bell hooks, *Black Looks: Race and Representation* (South End, paper, 200 pp., \$15.00)

M. Annette Jaimes (ed.), *The State of Native America: Genocide, Colonization and Resistance* (South End, paper, 1992, 450 pp., \$20.00)

Joao Freire, *Freedom Fighters: Anarchist Intellectuals, Workers, and Soldiers in Portugal's History* (Black Rose Books, 216pp., paper, \$24.95)

Ken Knabb, *Public Secrets: Collected Skirmishes: 1970 - 1997* (Bureau of Public Secrets, paper, 1997, 408 pp., \$15.00)

Etienne de La Boetie, *The Politics of Obedience: The Discourse of Voluntary Servitude* (Black Rose Books, paper, \$15.99)

Manning Marable, *Black Liberation in Conservative America* (South End, paper, 1997, 285 pp., \$16.00)

Elizabeth Martinez, *De Colores Means All of Us: Latina Views for a Multi-Colored Century* (South End, paper, 1998, 264 pp., \$18.00)

NACLA, *Haiti: Dangerous Crossroads* (South End, paper, 1995, 256 pp., \$15.00)

John Pilger, *Heroes* (South End, paper, 2001, 628 pp., \$16.00)

Holly Sklar (ed.), *Trilateralism: The Trilateral Commission and Elite Planning for World Management* (South End, paper, 1980, 599 pp., \$22.00)

Virginia Smith, *Reshaping the World for the 21st Century: Society and Growth* (Black Rose Books, paper, 2001, 216 pp., \$19.99)

Brian Tokar, *Earth for Sale: Reclaiming Ecology in the Age of Corporate Greenwash* (South End, paper, 1997, 269 pp., \$18.00)

Gore Vidal, *The American Presidency* (Odonian, paper, 1998, 91 pp., \$8.00)

Mark Zepezauer, *The CIA's Greatest Hits* (Odonian, paper, 1994, 93 pp., \$8.00)

Howard Zinn, *Marx in Soho: A Play* (South End, paper, 1999, 55 pp., \$12.00)

Howard Zinn, *The Southern Mystique* (South End, paper, 1967/2002, 267 pp., \$15.00)

Howard Zinn, *Vietnam: The Logic of Withdrawal* (South End, paper, 1967/2002, 131 pp., \$15.00)

# Contributors

**Kazembe Balagoon** is a black/queer/writer/educator engaged in the ancient art of revolutionary Afro-hermeneutics. He studied Philosophy/Africana studies from Hunter College, where he was a member of the Student Liberation Action Movement. He is a member of Estación Libre, a people of color organization in solidarity with the people of Chiapas. Currently he teaches at the Brecht Forum/New York Marxist School and is at work on *Queering the X: James Baldwin, Malcolm X and the Third World*.

**Eric Drooker's** paintings are seen on covers of *The New Yorker*, *The Progressive*, *The Village Voice*, the cover of this magazine, and numerous other magazines, as well as books and music albums (Rage Against the Machine). He is the author of *Flood! A Novel in Pictures, Illuminated Poems* (with Allen Ginsberg), *Street Posters & Ballads*, and *Blood Song: A Silent Ballad*. He gives slide lectures at schools and cultural centers worldwide. [www.Drooker.com](http://www.Drooker.com)

**John Jordan** is artist and activist who spends his time trying to find a space where the imagination of art and the social engagement of politics can be brought together. Since 1994 he has worked in the direct action movements, principally with Reclaim the Streets (1995-2001). He has written and lectured extensively about the anticapitalist movement and was a senior lecturer in fine art at Sheffield Hallam University (1994-2003). He lives in London and mixes his time between trying to creatively overthrow capitalism and looking after his son Jack.

**Michael Glavin** has been an active part of various anarchist projects over the years including the Youth Greens, *Free Society*, and the Anarchist Black Cross. He currently lives and thinks in Brooklyn, New York.

**Uri Gordon** is an Israeli activist currently based in Oxford, UK. He juggles his time between working at Corporate Watch ([www.corporatewatch.org](http://www.corporatewatch.org)), building solidarity with Israeli resistance movements, and writing a PhD about contemporary anarchist debates.

**Josh MacPhee** is a street artist, designer, curator, and activist. A street stenciler and

poster maker for over a decade, he also runs a radical art distribution project, justseeds.org, as a way to develop and distribute t-shirts, posters, and stickers with revolutionary content. He organizes the Celebrate People's History Poster Project, an ongoing poster series in which different artists create posters to document and remember moments in radical history. He also collectively organizes agit-prop cultural actions with ad-hoc groups of artists under various organizational names such as "Department of Space and Land Reclamation" and "Street.Rec."

**Chuck Morse** lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**Andrew Hedden** is an undergraduate student in Bellingham, Washington. His current focuses include a study of local developments around the economy, law enforcement, and incarceration, as well as a local history of anarchism.

**Nicolas Lampert** is an artist and a musician whose focus is merging art and radical political thought. He views art as a way to build a community of resistance culture. Recently, he co-organized the group art show Drawing Resistance, a traveling political art show. Nicolas teaches in the Liberal Studies Department at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. Examples of his collage art can be seen at [www.machineanimalcollages.com](http://www.machineanimalcollages.com).

**Saul Newman** is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow and Lecturer in Politics at the University of Western Australia. His research is in the area of radical political and social theory, particularly that which is informed by perspectives such as poststructuralism, discourse analysis and psychoanalytic theory. He has written extensively on post-anarchist theory and anti-authoritarian politics generally—including *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (Lexington Books, 2001); and *Unstable Universalities: Poststructuralism and Radical Politics* (forthcoming, 2005).

**Ramor Ryan** is an Irish anarchist writer living between Chiapas, Mexico and New York City. In Chiapas he works with an international organization serving Zapatista

communities. He has written for a wide variety of radical newspapers, magazines, and books. His forthcoming book, *Streets, Seas, and Plots: Tales of Rebellion and Resistance from Across the Globe* will be published later this year.

**Tim Russo** is an independent photo-journalist, radio reporter, and media activist based in Chiapas, Mexico. Tim has worked extensively in Latin America and covered international conflicts and struggle from Palestine to Prague to Argentina for a little over a decade. He is a co-founder of Chiapas Indymedia, and the COMPPA (Coalition of Popular Communicators for Autonomy) projects. For more information about these projects visit <http://www.comppa.org>.

**Marina Sitrin** is an anti-authoritarian activist, writer and dreamer. Over the past 17 years Marina has been searching for, and engaged with, various efforts to end capitalism and create a new society. Most recently she has worked with the Direct Action Network, the People's Law Collective, and worker's struggles. Marina is currently finishing an oral history in Spanish and English on the autonomous social movements in Argentina titled *Horizontalidad: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina*.

**Andrew Stern** is a media activist and documentary photographer whose work focuses on social and political issues around the world. The fusion of art and politics is a primary goal in anything he does, along with collecting and sharing stories that are not normally told. His work has been shown in galleries throughout the world and can be found on various Indymedia web sites as well as in the many different publications he works with. [www.AndrewStern.net](http://www.AndrewStern.net)

**Astrid Wessels** lives in Buenos Aires and is active in the Federación Libertaria Argentina and its archive, Biblioteca Archivo de Estudios Libertarios. She is currently working on cataloging documents from the Spanish Revolution for the archive's forthcoming catalog of its collection of Spanish periodicals, pamphlets, and documents.

