

“For a World Without Oppressors:”

U.S. Anarchism from the Palmer Raids to the Sixties

by

Andrew Cornell

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Social and Cultural Analysis

Program in American Studies

New York University

January, 2011

---

Andrew Ross

© Andrew Cornell

All Rights Reserved, 2011



“I am undertaking something which may turn out to be a resume of the English speaking anarchist movement in America and I am appalled at the little I know about it after my twenty years of association with anarchists both here and abroad.”

-W.S. Van Valkenburgh, Letter to Agnes Inglis, 1932

“The difficulty in finding perspective is related to the general American lack of a historical consciousness... Many young white activists still act as though they have nothing to learn from their sisters and brothers who struggled before them.”

-George Lakey, *Strategy for a Living Revolution*, 1971

“From the start, anarchism was an open political philosophy, always transforming itself in theory and practice... Yet when people are introduced to anarchism today, that openness, combined with a cultural propensity to forget the past, can make it seem a recent invention—without an elastic tradition, filled with debates, lessons, and experiments to build on.”

-Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*, 2010

“Librarians have an ‘academic’ sense, and can’t bare to throw anything away! Even things they don’t approve of. They acquire a historic sense. At the time a hand-bill may be very ‘bad’! But the following day it becomes ‘historic.’”

-Agnes Inglis, Letter to Highlander Folk School, 1944

“To keep on repeating the same attempts without an intelligent appraisal of all the numerous failures in the past is not to uphold the right to experiment, but to insist upon one’s right to escape the hard facts of social struggle into the world of wishful belief. We grant such a right to the weak, the infirm, to the tired radical, to the escapist. But we do deny such a right to the revolutionary whose main weapon is an unflagging will and an unblunted sense of reality.”

-*Vanguard: A Libertarian Communist Journal*, 1934

## **DEDICATION**

To my mother, who introduced me to non-violent direct action at two years of age when we blocked the bulldozers attempting to demolish my daycare center.

To my father who watched the MC5 play at the White Panther Party house, and waited until the dissertation was half complete to ask, “So when did Murray Bookchin get so into environmentalism? He sounded like an old fashioned socialist when I heard him lecture in '69.”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I had the privilege of working with a stellar dissertation committee. Each member—Lisa Duggan, Randy Martin, Nikhil Pal Singh, and Stephen Duncombe—encouraged and informed this project from the start. My advisor, Andrew Ross, has providing a towering example of a scholar-activist who writes prolifically *and* accessibly while also finding time for his family, students, and political commitments.

The dissertation was also shaped by members of the American Studies Dissertation Writing Group: Kerwin Kaye, Miabi Chatterji, Dawn Peterson, Miles Grier, Rich Blint, and André Carrington. I deeply appreciate the friendship and ideas I've shared with many other members of the NYU Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, including Emma Kreyche, Zach Schwartz-Weinstein, Johanna Londoño, Dacia Mitchel, Rana Jaleel, Ariana Ochoa, Steve Fletcher, Neil Brenner, Alfonso Gonzales, Madala Hilliare, Betsy Brown, and Marty Correa. I also want to thank all the archivists that assisted me throughout the project, especially Julie Herrada.

I've received ideas and other forms of assistance from a huge number of scholars, activists, and friends. I shared a number of archival resources with Ed D'Angelo, Spencer Sunshine, and Jesse Cohn; the project is better because of it. The Institute for Anarchist Studies provided me with a small grant that was hugely

encouraging. I productively chewed on ideas with Chris Dixon, Harjit Gill, Cindy Milstein, Maia Ramnath, Joshua Stephens, Josh MacPhee, Dara Greenwald, Kristin Campbell, Malav Kanuga, Dana Burnett, the *Left Turn* crew, members of Organization for a Free Society, and many many more.

A number of old friends have kept me sane throughout by encouraging me to do and think about things other than anarchism from time to time. Thanks especially to Adam Kuthe, Rich Miles, Dusty Morris, and Andrea Koch.

My parents, Jo Wiley and Peter Cornell, and my sister, Kerstin Cornell, have provided love, funds, and a sounding board for ideas for years. Dan Berger has been my closest friend and thinking partner for many years, and has assisted and inspired me in countless ways. Finally, my life-partner Jessica Harbaugh has been an endless source of humor, support, and happiness. I love her dearly and thank her deeply.

## ABSTRACT

In the past decade, anarchism has reemerged as an inspirational tradition and a set of guiding principles for social justice activists throughout the world. Yet the history of anarchist ideas and movements since the early 20th century remains woefully under-researched. In this dissertation, I draw on radical periodicals, memoirs, archival collections, and oral history interviews to analyze changes in the political theory, strategies, and demographics of anarchist movements in the United States between WWI and the end of the Vietnam War. Whereas previous accounts have suggested that anarchism was all but stamped out in 1919 and only reemerged at the tail end of the 1960s, I demonstrate that an unbroken line of anarchist publications, organizations, and activities existed throughout those years.

Though the suppression of anarchist-oriented labor unions and the deportation of skilled propagandists took their toll, racializing representations of radicals during the Red Scare helped secure new immigration restrictions which reshuffled the U.S. working-class, racially and ideologically, in a manner to which anarchists were unprepared to respond. During the inter-war years, domestic organizing challenges were compounded by the priority that U.S. anarchists placed on supporting European comrades threatened by fascists and communists. However, a new generation of anarchists, of mixed class origins, cohered around commitments to pacifism, poetry, and prefigurative strategies during the Second World War. Later, anarchist-pacifists

supplied tactics and organizing principles to the civil rights movement while black freedom struggles pushed them to abandon theories narrowly focused on class struggle. Meanwhile, anarchists of the Beat Generation synthesized European avant-garde traditions with the hip culture and urban insurrectional activity of African-Americans to infuse the 1960s counter-culture with an eclectic doctrine of anti-authoritarian politics.

By tracing these developments, I explain how anarchism experienced upward mobility—evolving from an ideology of the immigrant working class to one that today appeals primarily to middle class youth. In doing so, I demonstrate that anarchism has been a deeply trans-national, cultural and political project. Internally variegated, it has both shaped and been shaped by major events and social movements of the 20th century, always in pursuit of a world free from social domination.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATON	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
ABSTRACT	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER 1: Surviving the Black and Red Scare, 1917-1920	30
CHAPTER 2: “A Movement of Emergency, of Defense”: Regrouping While Encircled, 1921-1932	143
CHAPTER 3: The Unpopular Front: Insurrectionist and Mass Anarchism during the Great Depression, 1932-1939	247
CHAPTER 4: “Daily Acts of Life”: Pacifism, Poetry, and the New Anarchism, 1940-1954	320
CHAPTER 5: Libertarian Socialism, Civil Rights, and National Liberation, 1954-1965	409
CHAPTER 6: “White Skin, Black Masks”: Beats, Anarchists, and the New Left, 1955-1970	501
CONCLUSION	589
APPENDIX: U.S. Anarchism in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century: An Historical Note	603
BIBLIOGRAPY	622

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: M. Steimer, A. Berkman, E. Eckstein, M. Rucker, and R. Rucker	37
Figure 2: Genealogy Chart 1	45
Figure 3: Ellis Island Weekly	129
Figure 4: Rose Pesotta	198
Figure 5: Free Society Group of Chicago	212
Figure 6: Lecture Advertisement, <i>The Road to Freedom</i>	224
Figure 7: <i>Cronaca Sovversiva</i> and <i>Man!</i> Mastheads	254
Figure 8: Author at Sunrise Farm	275
Figure 9: Anarchist-Communism vs. Anarcho-Syndicalism Chart	288
Figure 10: Spanish Revolution Event leaflet	303
Figure 11: Genealogy Chart 2	323
Figure 12: David Wieck	492
Figure 13: Anti-Conscription Event leaflet	422
Figure 14: Black Mask	545
Figure 15: Peter Werbe, Pun and Genie Plamondon, Jerry Rubin	565

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Anarchist Births and Death

597

## INTRODUCTION

Dennis Danver's 2002 novel *The Watch* opens with Peter Kropotkin, perhaps the best known anarchist of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, languishing on his death bed. Time stops for a moment, and a man claiming to be from the future appears and makes Kropotkin an offer: "By scientific means, I'll restore your body to what it was in younger and healthier days, then transport you to a different time and place, where you may live out the balance of a new life."<sup>1</sup> Kropotkin takes a chance and suddenly finds himself on an airplane bound for Richmond, Virginia, in 1999. After gaining his bearings, the old Russian rebel—now inhabiting the body of a 30 year-old—is invited to dinner by a group of pierced and tattooed young people living collectively near the local university. Kropotkin learns that his new friends are vegans who garden in their backyard when they aren't playing in political punk bands or creating agit-prop theatre about the human costs of "free trade." Following a quick meeting using a consensus-based decision-making process, Kropotkin is invited to join the housing cooperative. With his new comrades he embarks on a project of feeding homeless people with food that would have otherwise been thrown away.

Danver's novel was one of the most inventive, if underappreciated, ruminations on the state of anarchist political culture to appear in the wake of the infamous "Battle of Seattle," now more than a decade behind us and already the stuff

---

<sup>1</sup> Dennis Danvers, *The Watch* (New York: EOS/HaperCollins, 2002), 8.

of legends for more than one new cohort of young anarchists. Yet the main conceit of Danvers' novel—that anarchism and anarchists in the contemporary world differ in almost every way from the nineteenth century figures and ideas most often associated with the term—would hold just as true if the book fictionalized the lives of the environmental activists arrested in the “Green Scare” of the mid-2000s, the “RNC 8” defendants charged with conspiracy to disrupt John McCain’s nomination in Minneapolis, or the participants in the Greek rebellion of 2008.

Throughout the decade, popular media reports on anarchist activism have dismissively represented anarchists as subcultural youth, eager to break windows and more inclined to make fashion statements than political statements. *The Washington Post*, to cite one particularly obnoxious example, opened its coverage of the April 2000 protests against the International Monetary Fund by describing participants in this way:

In the alley that served as the chow line for the revolution, hundreds of aluminum TV trays were piled with cruelty-free rice, beans, fruit, salad and bread. Leather-clad, buzz-cut anarchists squatted and ate with natural-fiber dreadlocked reformers. Clean-cut Ivy League leftists chatted and chewed with skateboard “punx,” while gray-haired hippies broke bread with rainbow-haired hippies.<sup>2</sup>

In 1886, when anarchists first gained notoriety in the United States after being accused of throwing a bomb that killed police officers in the Haymarket section of Chicago, they were widely portrayed as lunatics, vermin, and evil incarnate, while given little

---

<sup>2</sup> David Montgomery, “Demonstrators Are United By Zeal for ‘Globl Justice,’” *Washington Post*, April 16, 2000, A1 quoted in Jules Boykoff, *Beyond Bullets: The Suppression of Dissent in the United States* (Oakland: AK Press, 2007), 231.

opportunity to speak for themselves, or explain their ideas and their goals. If recent news stories allow anarchists little more voice than their late 19<sup>th</sup> century counterparts, the caricatured images with which anarchists are portrayed have undergone a dramatic makeover. From the Haymarket affair to the First World War, journalists, political cartoonists, and politicians portrayed the anarchist (an individual, never part of a political movement) with numbing regularity as “a ragged, unwashed, long-haired, wild-eyed fiend, armed with smoking revolver and bomb—to say nothing of the dagger he sometimes carries between his teeth,” in the words of historian Henry David.<sup>3</sup> From such renderings, viewers and readers understood anarchists to be recent immigrants, typically of eastern or southern European extraction, middle-aged or older, and of peasant or working-class origins. Fast-forward to the present day: when their ubiquitous black masks and hoods are stripped away, contemporary anarchists appear almost universally, in journalistic and pop cultural renderings, as middle-class white youths, maladjusted perhaps, but not criminally insane.<sup>4</sup> Such recent

---

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in William Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 26.

<sup>4</sup> The Charlize Theron movie *The Battle of Seattle* presents the most obvious example, but Jon Stewart has contributed to this pattern as well. In reporting on the police use of “long-range acoustical devices”—less-lethal weapons that temporarily disable protestors with painful soundwaves—Stewart joked (I paraphrase), “Please! Do you know what kind of music these kids listen to?” Stuart Townsend, *The Battle in Seattle* DVD, (Los Angeles: Redwood Palms Pictures, 2008). For a discussion of conflicts over how to represent anarchists and other activists in making the film, see David Solnit and Rebecca Solnit, *The Battle of the Story of the “Battle of Seattle”* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009). On policing and representations of global justice activists in the United States, see Luis Fernandez, *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-*

representations, I would argue, rely on a complex—and contradictory—symbolic logic that seeks to dismiss anarchists as impetuous, privileged youth, while simultaneously exaggerating the threat they collectively pose as an inscrutable and random force of disorder. The first aspect denies the need to engage the movement’s ideas and demands while the second justifies increased allocation for law enforcement agencies and bolsters the country’s post-9/11 culture of fear.

In contrast, a growing number of scholars, social theorists, community organizers, and left-wing political leaders have acknowledged the growing relevance and influence of anarchist ideas and strategies in recent years. In 2005 the noted sociologist Manuel Castells announced in Spain’s *La Vanguardia* newspaper, that “neo-anarchism is an instrument of struggle that appears commensurate with the needs of the twenty-first century social revolt.”<sup>5</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, among the most noted social theorists of the decade, advocate a brand of anti-vanguardist Marxism closely related to anarchism.<sup>6</sup> The U.S. Social Forum, though organized

---

*Globalization Movement* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008); Boykoff, *Beyond Bullets*.

<sup>5</sup> Manuel Castells, “Neo-Anarchism,” *La Vanguardia*, May 21, 2005. Trans. Chuck Morse. Available at: <http://www.negations.net/neo-anarchism-by-manuel-castells> (accessed August 9, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Michael Hardt and Antonio, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Commonwealth* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009). On autonomist Marxism and anarchism see, Heather Gautney, “Between Anarchism and Autonomist Marxism,” *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12 (September 2009): 467-487; Omar Hamad, “Lessons from Defeat: Antonio Negri, Autonomist Marxism and Anarcho-syndicalism from Seventies Italy to Today,” *LibCom.org*, July 10, 2009,

primarily by radicals with roots in third world marxist traditions, has adopted horizontal and networked organizing styles pioneered by anarchists. Meanwhile, the self-managed factories of Argentina, the autonomous communities of Zapatista-controlled Mexico, and the neighborhood councils of Bolivia indicate the vitality of the old anarchist ideas of political decentralization and worker self-management under present-day conditions in Latin America.

While both the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> century stereotypes of anarchists are glaringly reductive, the evolution of this type of politically-loaded imagery raises many profound and interesting questions about the ways in which anarchism, as a political philosophy and social movement, has developed in the United States over the past hundred and thirty years. It is true that today many anarchists, both in the United States and abroad, are young and involved in the international punk counter-culture, just as it was true in the 1880s that the majority of anarchists in the United States were European immigrants.<sup>7</sup> What factors account for the underlying reality on which these intentionally distorted images are based?

---

<http://libcom.org/library/lessons-defeat-antonio-negri-autonomist-Marxism-anarcho-syndicalism-seventies-italy-toda>, (accessed August 10, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Uri Gordon writes, “The punk movement has been the most significant hotbed for anarchists throughout the last two decades, due to its oppositional attitude to mainstream society and close affiliation with anarchist symbolism, and the presence of its aesthetic in many anarchist spaces is unmistakable.” Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 19. Activists from other sectors of the left have repeatedly criticized the discomfort they’ve felt at the subcultural aesthetics, behaviors, and hygienic practices they’ve encountered when entering anarchist-organized spaces and events. Most famously, Elizabeth (Betita) Martinez, “Where was the Color in Seattle? Looking for Reasons

Danvers, the sci-fi novelist, poses a similar set of questions by juxtaposing, through the fictional conceit of time travel, one of the most iconic figures of the 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist movement with the anarchist-punks that comprise a significant portion of the contemporary anarchist milieu. Namely, what relationship does contemporary anarchism have to the classical variety which had its hey-day in the years between 1880 and 1920? Do the commitments of contemporary anarchists to ecology, feminism, and non-alienated cultural forms represent natural outgrowths of, or substantial breaks with, the class-based concerns of the classical anarchists? What accounts for the apparent class mobility of the political project itself—how did anarchism shift from an ideology that was once the preserve of working class immigrants to one that today primarily appeals to young, native-born, middle-class people? And what of differences in tactics, given how frequently anarchism has been defined, by both detractors and practitioners, in terms of the means anarchists employ in pursuit of their vision? While only implicit in Danvers' novel, these questions are the driving concerns addressed explicitly, and at considerable length, in this dissertation.

---

why the Great Battle was so White,” *Monthly Review* 52, no. 3 (July-August 2000): 141-149. It is a significant contradiction that while anarchist ideas stimulate innovations in high philosophy and drive nation-shaking social movements, the anarchist movement in the United States has often functioned as a revolving door of young activists who regularly reinvent political wheels and make similar mistakes as those that preceded them by only a few years. I would suggest that one factor contributing to this pattern is the lack of accessible accounts of recent anarchist history.

*Newsweek* proposed a similar research agenda in its coverage of the Seattle demonstrations by running a photo-montage consisting of the pre-eminent early 20<sup>th</sup> century anarchist Emma Goldman surrounded by foreign policy critic Noam Chomsky, the “punk” band Rage Against the Machine, prominent anarchist-primitivist John Zerzan, and the “Unabomber,” Ted Kaczynski.<sup>8</sup> If this was a crude rendering of important influences on the “new anarchists” (as the Seattle generation was frequently tagged), responsibility for the shallowness of genealogies of contemporary anarchism can not be placed entirely on the shoulders of hack reporters. The history of the anarchist movement in the 20<sup>th</sup> century United States remains scandalously understudied. The inadequacy of current historiography is freely acknowledged by scholar-activists with commitments to left-libertarian politics. (The terms left-libertarian and libertarian socialism have frequently been used as synonyms for anarchism, but are also used to indicate a slightly broader political milieu which includes traditions such as council communism.)<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Michael Elliott, “The New Radicals,” *Newsweek*, December 13, 1999, 36.

<sup>9</sup> Historian David Goodway characterizes anarchism as “the most extreme form libertarian socialism,” distinguishing it from syndicalism, council communism, and other anti-capitalist perspectives that critique liberal democratic forms but may not reject the state or authority in absolute terms. The commonality of such ideologies, he notes, lies in the fact that they each combine a “socialist critique of capitalism with a liberal critique of socialism.” David Goodway, ed., *For Anarchism: History, Theory, Practice* (London: Routledge, 1989), 1. However, as Chapters 3 and 4 indicate, in the 1930s and 1940s social anarchists used the term “libertarian socialism” as a synonym for anarchism that was less freighted with violent associations. In the 1960s some individuals and organizations discussed herein—the British group Solidarity, for example—deployed the term libertarian socialist to distinguish their politics from those of Stalinists, social democrats, and anarchists alike. Therefore, when *libertarian*

Economist Robin Hahnel notes in his *Economic Justice and Democracy* that “lacking a comprehensive history of libertarian socialism, we are at a disadvantage in trying to learn what contributed to its demise in the middle third of the [20<sup>th</sup>] century.”<sup>10</sup> Although Hahnel sketches a theory of the movement’s decline, he admits that he does not find his conclusions “completely satisfying.”<sup>11</sup> While the reasons anarchism tapered off after World War I remain obscure, so do the conditions of its recent resurgence. Civil rights activist and labor lawyer Staughton Lynd acknowledged in 2008 that we are witnessing a “revival of libertarian socialist thinking all over the world.” He noted, however, that “how those currents of thought and idealism survived or reached the United States from abroad is a story yet to be told...I for one perceive the emergence of a new movement as a great mystery for which we who went before can only be deeply grateful.”<sup>12</sup> This dissertation is intended as one contribution toward writing the “comprehensive history” and solving the “great mystery” that Hahnel and Lynd, respectively, call for.

Lynd’s comments regarding the revival of anarchist and libertarian socialist thought in recent years echo those of scholars responsible for a flood of books about anarchism published in the wake of the global uprisings of 1968. Paul Berman’s 1972

---

*socialism* arises in the text, I attempt to indicate the manner in which the term is being used.

<sup>10</sup> Robin Hahnel, *Economic Justice and Democracy: From Competition to Cooperation* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 147.

<sup>11</sup> Hahnel, *Economic Justice*, 137.

<sup>12</sup> Staughton Lynd and Andrej Grubacic, *Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism, and Radical History* (Oakland: PM Press, 2008), 19.

collection *Quotations from the Anarchists* touted a “revival of anarchism” evident in the “contemporary youth movement” and in “anti-authoritarian action and agitation by yippie types and others with neo-Anarchist tendencies.”<sup>13</sup> Introducing a collection of Emma Goldman’s writings also released in 1972, Alix Kates Shulman explained, “Until somewhere toward the end of the 1960s, anarchism and feminism seemed irrelevant anachronisms to most Americans... Now, as everyone knows, things have changed.”<sup>14</sup> Assertions such as these, alongside lengthier accounts by reputable scholars such as Paul Avrich and James Joll, have had the cumulative effect of establishing a rough chronology of the international anarchist movement that compartmentalizes it into two distinct segments: a “classical” period stretching from the 1870s to either the First World War or the end of the Spanish Civil War (accounts vary), and a “contemporary” period launched in May of 1968 and continuing to the present day.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> Paul Berman, “Introduction” in Paul Berman, ed., *Quotations from the Anarchists* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 3, 23, 24. In a similar vein, see Corinne Jucker, *The Black Flag of Anarchy: Antistatistism in the United States* (New York, Scribners, 1968), which transitions indelicately from the Sacco-Vanzetti Trial to the hippies of San Francisco.

<sup>14</sup> Alix Kates Shulman, ed., *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman* (New York: Random House, 1972), 1. Likewise, Terry Perlin wrote, “The anarchist challenge to authority and the anarchist promise of freedom and peace did not die with [Alexander] Berkman. It resurfaced, in America and Europe, during the 1960s and early 1970s.” Terry Perlin, ed., *Contemporary Anarchism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1979), no page.

<sup>15</sup> For example, Roderick Kedward claims, “The great age of the anarchists in Europe and America lay between 1880 and 1914,” while James Joll ends his widely read account by discussing “the repeated failures of anarchism in action, culminating in the tragedy of the Spanish Civil War.” Roderick Kedward, *The Anarchists: The Men who*

Along similar lines, two British scholars of contemporary anarchism, Jonathon Purkis and James Bowen, recently suggested that those trying to make sense of recent anarchist initiatives would do well to recognize 1968 as the jumping off point for a “paradigm shift” in anarchist politics. They claim, “[T]he events in France and beyond seemed to act as a lens for a number of emerging movements which, in addition to existing official anarchist movements, have given anarchism a new lease on life.” Purkis and Bowen link the emergence of this new paradigm to the more recent uptick noted by Lynd by suggesting “the logic of many of these [1960s] discourses only realized their potential in *the late 1990s*” with the flowering of the global justice movement and related efforts.<sup>16</sup>

This periodization has the benefit of acknowledging that during the 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s anarchist movements the world over faced a precipitous decline in participation and attracted very little public attention. Moreover, it indicates that recent forms of anarchist politics depart in many respects from those of the classical period. Yet such a periodization also implies that anarchism was totally dormant and that individuals with anarchist beliefs made no contributions to political or cultural life during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Such an impression can easily lead one to assume that the new paradigm of anarchist politics operative today emerged *sui*

---

*Shocked an Era* (New York: American Heritage Press, 1971), 5; James Joll, *The Anarchists* (New York: Grossett and Dunlap, 1964), 275.

<sup>16</sup> Jonathon Purkis and James Bowen, “Introduction” in Jonathon Purkis and James Bowen, eds., *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 5. Uri Gordon likewise acknowledges this “paradigm shift.” Gordon, *Anarchy*, 6.

*generis* on the streets of Paris in 1968, and that features of contemporary anarchism can only be traced back that far. In the chapters that follow I demonstrate that these interpretations are inaccurate. In actuality, an unbroken line of anarchist groups, periodicals, and initiatives has existed in the United States from before World War I to the present day. Moreover, many of the defining features of contemporary anarchism—such as the adoption of non-violent direct action tactics, the commitment to “prefiguring” the movements’ goals in the methods it uses, and the growing number of middle-class participants—became prominent not in the late 1960s, but as early as 1942.

Anarchism was not extinguished during the Red Scare of 1917-1920. However, the First World War marked the beginning of a long decline for the “classical” phase of the movement, which had its base in the working-class and centered its critique on economic exploitation. During the interwar years U.S. anarchists became increasingly estranged from the U.S. working class due to a complex array of factors. In the early 1940s a new generation of anarchists began rethinking many of the philosophical and strategic tenets of classical anarchism, initiating a long process by which anarchism increasingly appealed to a middle-class constituency. Although anarchism was a tiny and marginal political current during the 1940s and 1950s, it was not at all static. Rather, anarchists spent these years developing new analyses, strategies, and aesthetics which fundamentally shaped the forms anarchism took when it again gained wider currency in the late 1960s and the

1970s. Moreover, mid-century anarchism influenced the civil rights movement, the 1960s counter-culture, and the New Left, in ways that historians have yet to fully understand or acknowledge.

### **Definitions**

Since I am concerned with the changing character of anarchist thought and activity in this dissertation, it would be counter-productive to introduce a unitary and static definition of the term. However, it is possible to narrow-in on general principles, which can serve to orient the reader, by examining a variety of definitions of anarchism articulated by movement participants at different historical moments.

Perhaps the most widely circulated sympathetic definition of anarchism at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was that provided by Peter Kropotkin in an article for the 1905 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*:

Anarchism is the name given to a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government—harmony in such a society being obtained, not by submission to law, or by obedience to any authority, but by free agreements concluded between the various groups, territorial and professional, freely constituted for the sake of production and consumption, as also for the satisfaction of the infinite variety of needs and aspirations of a civilized being.<sup>17</sup>

In 1917, the Russian-American anarchist Emma Goldman defined anarchism in a similar, if more compact, way:

ANARCHISM:--The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government

---

<sup>17</sup> Roger Baldwin, ed., *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets* (New York: Dover, 1970 [1927]), 284.

rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary.

Goldman immediately went on to note that “the new social order rests, of course, on the materialistic basis of life; but while all anarchists agree that the main evil today is an economic one, they maintain that the solution of that evil can be brought about only through the consideration of every phase of life.”<sup>18</sup> In both definitions, anarchism calls for a society that can satisfy the economic and spiritual needs of all members, and is achieved through the replacement of currently-constituted political authority with new forms of social relations. As late as 1938, U.S. anarchists adopted Goldman’s definition of anarchism almost word-for-word.<sup>19</sup>

In the 1950s, the labor-movement-oriented anarchists of the Libertarian League presented a definition of their beliefs that emphasized the tension between freedom and equality latent in anarchist politics:

The exploitative societies of today must be replaced by a new libertarian world which will proclaim—Equal freedom for all in a free socialist society. “Freedom” without socialism leads to privilege and injustice; “Socialism” without freedom is totalitarian. The monopoly of power which is the state must be replaced by a world-wide federation of free communities, labor councils, and/or co-operatives operating according to the principles of free agreement.<sup>20</sup>

---

<sup>18</sup> Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Dover, 1969 [1917]), 50.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> “What We Stand For,” *Views and Comments*, No. 8, October, 1955.

During the same period, a variety of anarchists began to articulate a perspective that didn't relegate the practice of anarchism to a post-revolutionary world. In an influential statement, British anarchist Colin Ward argued,

an anarchist society, a society which organizes itself without authority, is always in existence, like seed beneath the snow, buried under the weight of the state and its bureaucracy, capitalism and its waste, privilege and its injustices, nationalism and its suicidal loyalties, religious differences and their superstitious separatism.<sup>21</sup>

The U.S. American Paul Goodman added the rudiments of a strategy to this conception of anarchism. "A free society," he asserted, "cannot be the substitution of a 'new order' for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they make up most of the social life."<sup>22</sup>

Recent anarchist theorists have attempted to combine these understandings by articulating an anarchism that prefigures its goals as much as possible in the present, but simultaneously fights for far-reaching transformation. In 2010 the influential U.S. anarchist Cindy Milstein succinctly defined contemporary anarchism as consisting of a "dual project: the abolition of domination and hierarchical forms of social organization, or power-over social relations, and their replacement with horizontal

---

<sup>21</sup> Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 2008 [1973]), 23. Ward began advocating this conception of anarchism as editor of the British magazine *Anarchy* in the 1960s. See David Goodway, *Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

<sup>22</sup> Paul Goodman, *Drawing the Line Once Again: Paul Goodman's Anarchist Writings*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (Oakland: PM Press, 2010), 25.

versions, or power-together and in common—a free society of free individuals.”<sup>23</sup>

The contemporary South African scholar-activists Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt would agree with Milstein’s characterization, but reiterate that, historically, a central aim of anarchism’s dual project has been the achievement of social equality. They maintain that “anarchism was against social and economic hierarchy as well as inequality” and strove for “a self-managed, socialist, and stateless order.” In such a society, “individual freedom would be harmonized with communal obligations through cooperation, democratic decision-making, and social and economic equality.”<sup>24</sup>

In summary, a long line of activists have conceived of anarchism as a radical social movement tradition opposed to all forms of social domination and in pursuit of a freedom of human action premised on self-governance and assured material well-being. In the chapters that follow, I track evolving conceptions of anarchism in greater detail and differentiate between various, sometimes incompatible, tendencies such as anarcho-syndicalism, insurrectionary anarchism, and anarchist pacifism. In the remainder of this introduction I offer a few words about method and summarize the dissertation’s six chapters.

---

<sup>23</sup> Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations* (Institute for Anarchist Studies and AK Press, 2010), 13.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 71-72.

## Method

In 1925 Hippolyte Havel, editor of the anarchist newspaper *The Road to Freedom*, explained, “The history of Anarchist publications is an index of the philosophy they expound. They are ephemeral, reflect temporary conditions and conclusions, conclusions that are subject to change as readily as the conditions that created them.”<sup>25</sup> Paul Avrich estimated that “approximately five hundred anarchist newspapers were published in the United States between 1870 and 1940, in a dozen or more different languages,” not to speak of the “flood of books and pamphlets [that] rolled off the presses.”<sup>26</sup> Most anarchist newspapers combined journalistic accounts of contemporary events (labor strikes and the trials of imprisoned comrades) with excerpts of theoretical works by major figures of the movement, sketches of historical events (the Paris Commune, the Haymarket Affair), personal musings, and other material. Beyond the content of their articles, anarchist publications also offer important glimpses into the size of the movement and the weekly activities of militants in different parts of the country. Since anarchist organizations have historically been informal and loose, periodicals have served as the movements’ most important institutions, stitching together participants across long distances. Editors regularly conducted movement business in small type on the back pages of anarchist periodicals; they noted donations received, tabulated monthly expenses, and advertised

---

<sup>25</sup> Hippolyte Havel, no title, *The Road to Freedom*, March, 1925, 5.

<sup>26</sup> Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 54.

weekly forums, fundraising “entertainments,” and upcoming lecture tours. When national conferences were held during this period, anarchist newspapers printed proposed agendas ahead of time and shared minutes from the proceedings afterward. Anarchist periodicals also indexed the state of anarchist thought at a given time through the literature mail order catalogues they published. For all of these reasons, historic anarchist newspapers serve as the most important primary sources for this study.

Movement literature can only tell part of the story, however. I also constructed this history by examining the personal papers of important anarchists of the period. The collections of Abe Bluestein, Dachine Rainer, David Wieck, and others include fascinating correspondence, journals, photographs, and other documents which provided insight into their authors’ lives and the political community in which they belonged. I conducted original oral history interviews with three generations of anarchists and I have also made use of interviews conducted with anarchists by a variety of other scholars. I am especially indebted for material in the first chapter to the oral history interviews Paul Avrich conducted with aging anarchists in the 1970s.

My reliance on this autobiographical information has shaped my argument and the way I tell the story. In an attempt to make a complicated and often arcane history engaging and accessible, I have personalized and pushed the story forward by narrating the lives of approximately a dozen anarchists who were prominent within their own circles, but who remain virtually unknown in the wider world today, even

amongst many contemporary anarchists. There is an additional reason, beyond readability, that I made this choice. During much of the period I explore, when U.S. anarchism consisted of tiny circles of embattled individuals, the story of how anarchist ideas and practices developed and were transmitted from generation to generation actually did often come down to personal friendships and collaborations between very few people. There are, of course, shortcomings to this method. My account does not draw on the methods of social history in order to provide a composite picture of the many anarchists who left few archival traces, for example. Among these, especially, are the uncounted number of immigrant anarchists who remained active primarily within their own ethnic communities up through the 1950s (or even the 1970s in the case of the Jewish anarchists). The account I present is clearly limited by my inability to read Yiddish, Russian, Italian, and by my limited Spanish. Rather than aspiring to comprehensiveness, I have sought to focus on developments crucial for understanding how anarchism developed into its *contemporary* forms. My primary objective has been to provide a plausible account of the evolution of anarchism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century where one has not yet existed. For this reason, I have attempted to use English-language sources to analyze developments within foreign-language-speaking anarchist groups that seem to have had a direct bearing on future iterations of anarchism in the United States. Still, studies of the Italian, Russian, Yiddish, and Spanish sectors of the U.S. anarchist movement in the post-WWI period by those fluent in the relevant

languages would be of great value. When they are written, they will surely fill out and complicate the story I tell here—perhaps even overturn it.

In addition to the need to be fluent in many languages and familiar with the histories of multiple ethnic groups, writing about anarchism in the United States presents a number of other challenges to the historian. Anarchists frequently organized only in informal groups which didn't leave membership lists, minutes of meetings, position papers, and other documents that historians have typically relied on to tell the stories of other political movements. Anarchists were frequently divided on matters of philosophy and strategy that seem arcane due to the movement's marginal status but were portentous of significant political differences and have had broader consequences. As a movement opposed to the imposition of authority, however, many of these disputes were left to stand rather than ironed out into official positions and policies, which are easier to record and analyze.

Anarchist history has also been limited by the tendency of many scholars to ignore the anarchist contributions to newer movements and to deny the anarchism of many important activists outright. Even as insightful a scholar as Angela Davis has contributed to this trend. In the chapter "Communist Women" in her classic *Women, Race, and Class*, Davis claims Lucy Parsons for the Communist camp. Davis summarily dismisses Parson's anarchism, claiming, "Her political development ranged from her youthful advocacy of anarchism to her membership in the Communist party

during her mature years.”<sup>27</sup> In fact, Parsons, the wife of Haymarket defendant Albert Parsons and a talented organizer in her own right, was a respected anarchist militant for decades, and joined the Communist Party only in her final years.<sup>28</sup> Other scholars enact slightly different forms of erasure of the anarchist tradition in their work. The Argentinian political philosopher Enrique Dussel, to cite another scholar whose work I otherwise find exemplary, discusses Marxism and socialism as dynamic political traditions with many important recent contributions, while his treatment of anarchist thought appears to begin and end with the work of Mikhail Bakunin.<sup>29</sup>

During the course of researching this dissertation I have come to recognize that, owing to shortcomings of the existing historiography as well as the brief lifespan of many anarchist organizations, anarchist political activity in a given moment has predominantly been conditioned by that of the period immediately preceding it and still existing in living memory. Rather than study comprehensive accounts of the tradition’s longer history, activists often learn of previous iterations of anarchist activity in something approaching an oral tradition and then combine those received practices with new elements of social theory and creative culture in inventive ways. Because of this process, historians can’t look for a straight trajectory from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Rather, we have to examine anarchist history as a series of relays.

---

<sup>27</sup> Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (New York: Vintage, 1984), 152.

<sup>28</sup> Gale Ahrens, ed. *Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality, and Solidarity* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2004).

<sup>29</sup> Enrique Dussel, *20 Theses on Politics*, trans. George Ciccariello-Maher (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).

Anarchism at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century bears little resemblance to that at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup>. However, it is fairly easy to understand anarchism in the 1990s if one understands anarchist developments of the 1970s and 1980s. Nineteen seventies anarchism is the anarchism of the 1940s and 1950s affected by the innovations, successes, and defeats of the 1960s, and so on. This backward looking approach requires exploring the history of organizations and individuals that sometimes did not identify themselves as anarchists but that have come to have an enduring impact on later organizations which did self-identify that way. For that reason, this dissertation considers the impact of political formations such as the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the White Panther Party on anarchist activities which followed them.

The aforementioned organizations, in a way, lead us back to the novel, *The Watch*, discussed at the outset. In the story, Peter Kropotkin encounters Jonah, a fictional participant in the slave revolt led by Gabriel Prosser that attempted to lay siege to Richmond, Virginia, in 1780. Jonah finds himself living in the Richmond of 1999 by the same fantastical means Kropotkin wound up there; eventually he allies with the Russian anarchist and the local punks in a struggle against institutions of authority tied to the city's Confederate past. By writing Prosser's slave revolt into his story, Danvers implicitly argues that it is impossible to understand the relevance and history of an egalitarian philosophy such as anarchism in the United States, then or now, without investigating its relationship to the freedom struggles of people of color.

As the mysterious man from the future tells Kropotkin, “You learn quickly: All issues are race issues here.” Early in Danvers’ narrative, young men present themselves as the most knowledgeable and committed proponents of anarchist politics to curry favor with Kropotkin, while women take a back seat. In the end, however, it is the women who step up at crucial moments while the young men are revealed to have compromised motives and to have taken up more space than they deserved. In these ways, also, I believe Danvers’ concerns and approach presage my own.

Throughout the dissertation I have attempted to highlight the life and work of women such as Mollie Steimer, Rose Pesotta, Audrey Goodfriend, and Penelope Rosemont who have rarely been acknowledged for the important contributions they made to U.S. anarchism. Though I have also highlighted the work of a few anarchists of color, including Glen Carrington and Bill Sutherland, anarchism remained an overwhelmingly European, and later “white,” movement from the 1920s to the 1960s. This, of course, does not mean that anarchism was unaffected by the U.S. racial order or by struggles against it. As Danvers is aware, it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which a political movement dedicated to achieving the linked objectives of equality and freedom for all people could *not* be structured by race, racism, and resistance to it when operating in a settler colonial racial state such as the U.S.A. Therefore, throughout the dissertation I have attempted to deploy race and gender as linked analytical concepts that provide crucial insights into the forms anti-anarchist repression took; the changing nature of anarchist critiques of power and domination;

the ways in which anarchists contributed to anti-racist and feminist struggles (or missed opportunities to do so); and the many ways anarchists were inspired, challenged, and learned from feminist and anti-racist organizers.

## **Chapters**

As its title suggests, this dissertation analyzes the development of anarchist ideas and practices in the United States from the period of repression culminating in the Palmer Raids of 1919 and 1920 to the end of what is frequently termed the “long 1960s.” I begin my account with the WWI-era because it is the point at which many histories of U.S. anarchism tend to conclude.<sup>30</sup> When first envisioning the project in 2003, I planned to extend the narrative through the moment in which anarchists took center stage as an important sector of the global justice movement in 2000. After embarking on my research, however, I discovered that the history of U.S. anarchism between 1920 and 1968 was much richer than I had been capable of imagining, and could not be easily summarized. The present work ends with the cresting of the world-historic movements of 1960s, then, not because of any drop in activity, but because anarchism bloomed in so many directions and separated into so many overlapping and competing tendencies during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s that the post-1960s period deserves and requires a history of its own. I hope to contribute to that project in a future study.

---

<sup>30</sup> This owes significantly to the fact that the history of anarchism in the United States has frequently been told in autobiographies and biographies of major figures, such as Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, who were deported from the country in 1919.

The dissertation is divided into two sections. In the three chapters which comprise Part One, I trace the complex combination of factors which lead to the long decline of the classic phase of U.S. anarchism between the outbreak of the First and Second World Wars. I begin Chapter 1 by providing a snapshot of anarchism in the United States at its peak, just prior to World War I. At that time anarchism was primarily an immigrant working-class phenomenon, focused on economic issues, but with a growing interest in the arts, education, and feminism. It also had an expanding base of native-born middle-class supporters. In the second half of the chapter, I recount the mass repression visited on anarchists and other radicals during the Red Scare period of 1917-1920, linking it to the violent treatment of African Americans during the same period. I argue that this violence, alongside racializing and gendered characterizations of radical immigrants, established the climate in which sweeping immigration legislation was approved in 1924, allowing for a thoroughgoing reshuffling of the U.S. working class in the following decades.

Chapter 2 describes the ways anarchists tried to recover from the repression of the previous years. Many turned to co-operative living, libertarian techniques for educating their children, and artistic expression as less confrontational means to promote their values. However, anarchists also spent the decade raising funds and building political support for the prisoners Sacco and Vanzetti as well as the anarchist victims of fascist and Bolshevik persecution in Europe. Jewish anarchists, the only group with a significant presence in organized labor during the 1920s, successfully

battled a Communist takeover of the garment unions, despite little support from other anarchists. *The Road to Freedom*, an English-language anarchist periodical established in 1924, expressed the ambivalence towards union organizing and the general strategic confusion the movement faced throughout the decade.

Chapter 3 explains that while distinct insurrectionist and syndicalist wings of anarchism reemerged in the 1930s, neither group was able to leverage the crisis conditions of the Depression years to return the movement to its pre-war size and influence. Participants continued to prioritize co-operative ventures and solidarity with beleaguered comrades overseas, especially those on the front lines of the Spanish Civil War. In so doing, anarchists missed or dismissed opportunities to participate in Popular Front initiatives and the establishment of the Congress of Industrial Organization, further distancing themselves from working-class constituencies and struggles. The defeat of the Spanish Revolution sunk the hopes of U.S. anarchists; their small numbers were further splintered over acrimonious debates regarding the anarchist position regarding World War II. Though a few stalwarts of the 1900-1939 period soldiered on in the 1940s and '50s, the coming of the Second World War marked a turning point in the theory, strategy, and demographics of U.S. anarchism.

The final three chapters, which comprise the second section of the dissertation, analyze the development of new anarchist ideas and strategies in the period between 1940 and the early 1970s. In Chapter 4 I examine a new generation of anarchists that looked to radical pacifism and the cultural avant-garde to renew and reinvent the

libertarian socialist tradition. During World War II anarchist draft resisters and Gandhian pacifists jailed together in federal penitentiaries mutually influenced one another while collaboratively resisting racial segregation. Upon being released, anarchist-pacifists pushed institutions such as the War Resisters League in a radical direction while collaborating with the “Christian anarchists” of the Catholic Worker movement. Anarchists on both coasts sought alternatives to the numbing effects of post-war culture by immersing themselves in avant-garde cultural production, especially poetry, establishing an important seedbed for the emergence of the Beat Generation in the process.

Chapter 5 focuses on the ways anarchists interpreted and contributed to the movement for African American civil rights in the United States and national liberation movements abroad. In it, I contrast the approach of a loose grouping of anarchist-pacifists with that of a small organization of anarcho-syndicalists. I demonstrate that anarchists contributed non-violent direct action tactics and anti-statist strategies of social transformation to the black freedom movement and found they shared much common ground with the approach of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in its early years. These experiences challenged anarchists’ residual focus on class antagonisms and pushed them to reconsider how revolution might come about. Anarchists disagreed about how to relate to the new post-colonial states of Africa, and their conflicting views regarding the character of

revolutionary Cuba lead to a falling out that left them divided as the new movements of the 1960s began to erupt.

Chapter 6, the dissertation's last, tracks the many manifestations of anarchist politics that contributed to, or were born of, the counter-culture, student, and anti-war movements of the 1960s. I illustrate the defining influence anarchist writers exerted on the Beat Generation cultural revolt of the late 1950s and early 1960s, and indicate how beat preoccupations with mysticism and non-Western cultures, the natural environment, and sexual liberty became important aspects of late-20<sup>th</sup> century anarchism. Anarchists of this generation synthesized European avant-garde traditions, such as Surrealism and Situationism, with the hip culture and urban insurrectional activity of African-Americans to infuse the 1960s counter-culture with an eclectic doctrine of anti-authoritarian politics. Simultaneously, Students for a Democratic Society advanced the concept of *participatory democracy* to describe the aspects of SNCC's program that anarchists most admired. Accordingly, students influenced by figures such as Murray Bookchin and Noam Chomsky tried to lead SDS in a libertarian socialist direction, but were thwarted by better organized factions of students enamored with Marxist-Leninism. As the movements of the 1960s subsided, then, U.S. anarchism consisted of a cacophonous array of ideas and influences which activists—primarily middle-class veterans of the white student movement and counter-culture—would take in very different directions during the 1970s.

\*\*\*

As a politically engaged researcher with affinities to movements that that are challenging social domination today, I attempt in this history to draw lessons from earlier periods of social contestation that may prove useful to ongoing struggles for freedom and equality. By tracing the anarchist movement through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, a time when many new traditions of radical thought—including anti-colonialism, post-structuralism, radical ecology, and anti-racist feminism—were developing, I hope to encourage further consideration of the various ways new forms of anarchism simultaneously contributed to and were shaped by these important political projects. Historical movements such as these provide systems of thought and repertoires of action likely to be foundational to any new liberatory project of historical significance. With this in mind, I did not write the dissertation to advance what seems to me the backward-looking notion that future struggles should be formed in the mold of the historical anarchist movement. Rather, I suggest that many contemporary radical struggles already make use of contributions (ideas, tactics, forms of organization) drawn from a variety of *anarchisms*, and that future movements will be better equipped for coalition-building and strategic innovation if they more consciously study, evaluate, and appreciate the contributions of various 20<sup>th</sup> century anarchist movements alongside the those of other vital revolutionary traditions. I offer the dissertation, therefore, as a contribution to movements that are today fighting for a

world without oppressors. In 1919, during the height of the Red Scare, a twenty-two year old anarchist from New York City named Mollie Steimer signed off her letters from prison, “Yours for a world without oppressors.” It was a promise she kept throughout her life. It is to Mollie Steimer’s story that we first turn.

Note: The reader unfamiliar with the history of individualist and social anarchism in the 19<sup>th</sup> century may want to turn first to the brief historical summary I’ve included as Appendix 1.

## Chapter 1: Surviving the (Black and) Red Scare, 1917-1920

For more years than I can count, Anarchists were identified with bomb-throwing until it seemed that they had a monopoly of that form of activity. Then a war came along and the dropping of bombs, designed to kill not just one person, but great numbers of people became respectable and legitimate. Some time in 1919, a friend told me that his daughter's husband had just returned from Army service abroad. When I inquired casually what the young man did in the Army he said his son-in-law was a bomb-thrower. -Harry Kelly

Mollie Steimer had only been active in the anarchist movement a few brief years when it began to cave in around her. Having immigrated with her family from Russia to New York City in 1913, the bright-eyed, curly-haired fifteen year old immediately went to work as a machine operator in a dress factory. As the long, dull hours of work and the crowded tenement neighborhood where she resided began to wear on the young woman's restive personality, she began exploring visions of a more expansive, more fulfilling world in the radical literature that blanketed the working-class neighborhoods of Progressive Era New York. In Peter Kropotkin's *The Conquest of Bread*, Steimer discovered a vision of an egalitarian and self-managed world that went by the name *anarchism*.<sup>1</sup> She was elated to learn that her new city functioned as the de facto center for the country's anarchist movement—a movement

---

<sup>1</sup> Mollie Steimer's life is documented in Richard Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987); Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 214-226; Abe Bluestein, ed., *Fighters for Anarchism: Mollie Steimer and Senya Fleshin: A Memorial Volume* (Minneapolis: Libertarian Publications, 1983).

larger and more influential in the 1910s than it had been at anytime since the Haymarket Affair of 1886.

Orienting oneself in the labyrinthine world of U.S. anarchism—with its “circles,” meetings, and newspapers in half a dozen languages, its splits, personality conflicts, and sub-tendencies—was not an easy task, but Steimer appears to have undertaken it with aplomb. With anarchists serving as organizers and agitators in massive strikes rocking the textile and mining industries; captivating figures like Emma Goldman leading the fight for birth control and sexual freedom; and the nearby Ferrer Center offering weeknight classes on modern art and Sunday afternoon picnics for revolutionaries, it wasn’t long before Mollie counted herself amongst the anarchists’ ranks. She found that she shared much in common with the majority of her new comrades. In the mid-1910s, the largest groupings of anarchists in the United States were Russian, Jewish, and Italian immigrant workers, many of them recent arrivals like herself. These radical laborers were steadily organizing themselves in a variety of unions—most notably, the Industrial Workers of the World, the Union of Russian Workers, and the International Ladies Garment Workers Union—and engaging in a rolling series of militant strikes, many of them successful. At the same time, anarchists were broadening their activities beyond their traditional sphere of labor politics to advocate for civil liberties, sexual liberation, and liberatory new developments in the worlds of modern literature, art, and pedagogy. This wider purview, paired with the emergence of first-rate propagandists fluent in English, was

bringing significant numbers of native-born workers and middle class intellectuals into the movement for the first time.

Through her anarchist activities, Mollie Steimer learned of the wider labor, radical, and progressive movements which were collectively challenging the economic and social foundations of the deeply segregated and increasingly imperialist country to which she had emigrated. Steimer became socially conscious at a time when struggles between working people and financial elites regularly erupted into open warfare. Famously, the Colorado National Guard killed eleven children and nine adults when it assaulted an encampment of striking mine workers in 1914. Two years later, businessmen deputized by the sheriff of Everett, Washington, opened fire on a boatload of Wobblies—members of the revolutionary union the Industrial Workers of the World—arriving from Seattle to picket with striking shingle makers. In response to employer intransigence and violence, workers carried out a series of bombings, primarily against industrial machinery and corporate property, but occasionally targeting business owners, police, and state militias.<sup>2</sup> To organize this class, anarchists competed with the liberal American Federation of Labor, the Socialist Labor Party, and the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party polled nearly a million votes for its candidate, the charismatic railroad union organizer Eugene Debs, in the 1912

---

<sup>2</sup> On the increasingly violent nature of labor struggles in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, see Louis Adamic, *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2008 [1931]); Sidney Lens, *The Labor Wars: From the Molly McGuires to the Sit Downs* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2008 [1973]); Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 44-121.

presidential elections, while the party's 300 plus newspapers reached a combined weekly readership in the millions. After 1915, black-owned newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier* also rapidly expanded their circulation as they encouraged African Americans to resist white supremacist violence by a variety of methods, including migrating to northern industrial cities. Campaigns to expand the rights of women were simultaneously on the rise, with Margaret Sanger opening the country's first birth-control clinic in 1916 and women's suffrage organizations building the organizational strength needed to win passage of the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment by the end of the decade.<sup>3</sup>

The entrance of the United States into the European war in April 1917, however, provided federal, state, and local authorities a pretext to suppress these increasingly powerful movements for the redistribution of power and wealth. Anarchists, known for their vehement anti-militarism and anti-nationalism, were especially targeted. On June 15 President Wilson signed the Espionage Act, the first of many new laws that made interference with the conduct of the war a felony offence, legalized the suppression of dissident periodicals, and further restricted the political beliefs immigrants were allowed to espouse. As U.S. American soldiers departed for the trenches, the government's campaign of suppression was complimented by a

---

<sup>3</sup> Paul Buhle, "Socialist Party," in Paul Buhle, Mari Jo Buhle, Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 767-774; William G. Jordan, *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001); Linda Gordon, *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America*, 2nd ed. (New York: Penguin, 1990).

growing nativist and anti-radical hysteria promoted by mainstream newspaper editors, vigilante groups, and demagogues. The raids and arrests reached down from the movement's unofficial leaders to its grassroots. "Throughout the country," writes historian Paul Avrich, "anarchist clubhouses were raided, men and women beaten, equipment smashed, libraries and files seized and destroyed."<sup>4</sup> The attacks only intensified when the Russian Revolution of October 1917 established what appeared to be the first workers' state the world had ever seen.

With one after another of the anarchist movement's publications suppressed under the Espionage Act and its leading lights imprisoned on charges of wartime sedition, the most committed of the movement's younger cadre felt the need to take emergency measures. In 1917 Mollie Steimer teamed up with Mary Abrams, a survivor of the infamous Triangle Shirtwaist fire, Mary's husband Jacob, and a handful of other young Jewish anarchists to continue the movement's work on a "strictly underground" basis.<sup>5</sup> From a shared apartment in East Harlem, the group covertly edited and distributed a Yiddish language newspaper, first named *Der Shturm* (The Storm), and later called *Frayhayt* (Freedom).<sup>6</sup> After managing to elude the various local, state, and federal agencies seeking their capture for most of the war, the group was arrested shortly before the armistice when they were caught distributing a call for a general strike to prevent the United States from assisting counter-

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 94.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 36.

<sup>6</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 214-215.

revolutionary forces in Russia. In a case that became a landmark of civil rights jurisprudence, Steimer was found guilty of sedition and sentenced to fifteen years in prison, while the men of the Frayhayt Group received twenty. Released on bail while the case was appealed to the Supreme Court, Steimer brazenly returned to her political work. Over the next year she was arrested no less than eight additional times; in each instance, she launched into agitational activities as soon as supporters from labor and civil liberties organizations posted bail on her behalf.<sup>7</sup> In April 1920 the Frayhayt Group's conviction for distributing seditious literature was upheld by the Supreme Court and Steimer was sent to the federal women's penitentiary in Jefferson City, Missouri. After spending 18 months in prison, following a deal brokered by their lawyer, Steimer and the other *Frayhayt* editors were released on condition that they immediately depart for Russia.

Arriving in Moscow in December of 1921, Steimer witnessed first hand the extent to which the Bolsheviks had turned on their former anarchist allies once they had assumed power. Maintaining her politics resolutely, Steimer set to work aiding the growing numbers of anarchists imprisoned by the Bolshevik government. In Moscow she met her life partner, Senya Fleshin, an anarchist who had spent six years in the United States before returning to Russia to take part in the October revolution. Steimer and Fleshin were themselves jailed multiple times and then expelled from

---

<sup>7</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 219.

Russia in September, 1923.<sup>8</sup> The couple settled in Paris where they continued their relief work on behalf of anarchist prisoners in the Soviet Union. In 1929 they moved to Berlin for Fleshin to pursue a career in photography, but as Hitler came to power the Jewish anarchist couple faced further repression at the hands of fascists, forcing a return to Paris. There they organized support for the Spanish anarchists during that country's Civil War and hosted numerous comrades visiting from the United States and the rest of the world. During the Nazi occupation of France early in the Second World War, Steimer was captured and sent to an internment camp for foreigners and dissidents. Uncageable as ever, she managed to escape, and the couple was reunited and spirited out of the country through the efforts of their friends abroad.<sup>9</sup> Hounded by agents of the liberal democracies, the Communist state, and the fascists, they lived the rest of their lives as politic refugees in Mexico City and Cuernavaca.

---

<sup>8</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 223.

<sup>9</sup> Mollie Steimer to Millentka, Rudolfkt, August 9, 1940, enclosed with letter from Milly Rocker to Abe Bluestien, September 12, 1940, Abe Bluestein Papers, Box 1, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (hereafter LC).



**Figure 1:** Mollie Steimer (upper right) with (clockwise): Millie Rocker, Emmy Eckstein, Rudolf Rocker, and Alexander Berkman. Date and location unknown, but likely Berlin, late 1920s. Image used courtesy of Pacific Street Films Photographs Collection, Tamiment Library, New York University.

Chased from country to country by each of the major political powers in a world convulsed by war, dedicating her energies to supporting those in even more dangerous situations, Mollie Steimer's life was emblematic of the multiple, and eventually unbearable, pressures that befell the international anarchist movement in

the years between the beginning of the first and the second World Wars. I explore each of these obstacles and the various ways anarchists responded to them in detail throughout the first half of this dissertation. In this chapter I first draw on existing scholarship to provide a portrait of the complex and differentiated field of anarchist politics in the United States as it existed in 1916 and 1917—those prewar years in which figures such as Mollie Steimer found it so appealing. Secondly, I argue that the political crisis of the WWI-era Red Scare years should be viewed as a conflict between a broad front of egalitarian movements and a coalition of conservative forces in which anarchist ideals, practices, and violence played important roles. I demonstrate that anti-radical vigilantism, Red Summer attacks on African-Americans, the Palmer Raids, and the Johnson-Reed Act immigration reforms of 1924 constituted a continuum of repressive activities linked by a common logic. As a reaction to the collective advances of pre-war struggles for equality, they destroyed the previous racial, gender, national, and ideological composition of the U.S. working class through physical violence and legal repression linked by a gendered racial discourse. I conclude that in addition to incapacitating movement institutions and demobilizing many of the most capable anarchists in the United States, this right-wing attack prepared the ground for a new racial and class order in which anarchists were not adequately prepared to organize.

## **U.S. Anarchism before WWI—Syndicalism and Insurrectionism**

On July 11<sup>th</sup>, 1914, an estimated 5,000 to 12,000 New Yorkers packed into Union Square to listen to a brass band play revolutionary anthems and to hear a series of speakers affirm their belief in anarchism.<sup>10</sup> This wasn't a crowd of striking workers or a mass rally against the war breaking out at that moment across the Atlantic. Rather it was a memorial service for three young anarchists who, a week earlier, had incinerated their own bodies and destroyed a Lexington Avenue townhouse while manufacturing a bomb intended for John D. Rockefeller—the man they held responsible for the massacre of striking miners in Ludlow, Colorado, three months earlier. Individuals in the sea of demonstrators held banners reading, “We Mourn the Loss of Our Comrades,” while speakers on the dais expressed no sympathy for the bomb's intended target and reiterated that in their struggle for social equality they would “use violence whenever it is necessary to use it.” Alexander Berkman, organizer of the memorial meeting and one of the country's most notorious anarchists, considered this public display of sympathy for young workers consumed by their own

---

<sup>10</sup> Laurence Veysey provides the figures 5,000 to 12,000 people present. Laurence Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 105. Harry Kelly estimates 25,000 were present. Harry Kelly, “Roll Back the Years,” manuscript, Chap. 23, pg. 2, John Nicholas Beffel Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University (hereafter TL). Kelly's manuscript pages are not consecutively numbered, so I provide chapter and page references here and in future citations.

militancy as marking the “high point of anarchist influence in New York.”<sup>11</sup> Indeed, the years stretching from 1906, when Berkman was released from prison for an assassination attempt of his own, to the suppression of the anarchist movement in 1917, represent a period of exceptional growth for the movement throughout the country—both in terms of numbers and ideas. The founding of the Industrial Workers of the World and other revolutionary syndicalist unions, the blossoming of a feminist and artistic bohemian culture, and the emergence of English-speaking propagandists coalesced in the first decade of the new century to offer the movement a way out of its decades long marginalization.

Yet behind the public display of unity and hard nosed support for political violence voiced at the Union Square rally, the anarchist movement was internally divided over matters of strategy, especially the use of terrorist tactics. It was also conflicted over which issues and social groups it should prioritize addressing and it suffered from insufficient communication and coordination of efforts between its constituent ethnic groups. Though anarchists held a range of opinions about the benefits and drawbacks of different forms of political association, as we will see shortly, they were generally opposed to establishing parties or other centralized political organizations that would attempt to unify their forces under a single political line and strategy.

---

<sup>11</sup> Gage, *Day Wall Street*, 101-102, 149.

For these reasons, it is misleading to refer to a single, unified anarchist movement at all. In fact, the tendency of politicians, federal agents, and judges to conflate the complex array of anarchist positions, tendencies, and groupings into a singular political formation—and to further lump anarchists with other organizations of the Left—facilitated their practices of sweeping repression and collective punishment.<sup>12</sup> It is more accurate to talk about an array of continuously evolving, sometimes overlapping, sometimes conflicting, *anarchisms* or anarchist tendencies. Therefore, when I employ the singular term “the anarchist movement” hereafter, I mean to refer to the complex and differentiated field of anarchist activity in total, without implying that it constitutes a coherent and coordinated effort.

When Alexander Berkman was imprisoned in 1892 for attempting to assassinate the steel magnate Henry Clay Frick, the anarchist movement in the United States was based almost entirely in immigrant communities and was strategically focused on sparking a mass uprising of the poor by committing bold attacks on individuals who symbolized wealth and political authority.<sup>13</sup> After the Haymarket Affair of 1886, anarchists in the United States had struggled to develop a means of

---

<sup>12</sup> For their part, anarchists frequently viewed their stated enemies—“the state,” “the capitalist class,” “clergy,” etc.—as well as “the working-class” in a similarly reductive fashion.

<sup>13</sup> Frick served as the manager of Andrew Carnegie’s massive Homestead Steel Works, near Pittsburgh. During a steelworker strike, private detectives under Frick’s employ shot and killed strikers, prompting Berkman to retaliate in their name. Alexander Berkman, *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist* (New York: NYRB Classics, 1999 [1912]); Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 43-50.

spreading their ideas without betraying their principles. The revolutionary union movement developing in Chicago and other cities was crushed in the Red Scare touched off by the Haymarket explosion, and most anarchists chose to boycott the craft-based American Federation of Labor unions that gained ascendancy in the late 1880s because of their exclusionary and pro-capitalist character. Viewing electoral politics at any level as anathema to their vision of voluntary self-rule, anarchists had devoted their energies primarily to “propaganda of the word”—publishing newspapers and pamphlets, organizing public lectures—and to advocacy of “propaganda of the deed.” Though portrayed as a nihilistic obsession with violence for its own sake, propaganda of the deed was, at base, a strategy of social change built on natural law theory and an Enlightenment-era understanding of human nature. Its exponents believed that human beings were essentially cooperative creatures with an instinct for resisting domination and inequality. In this view, the state, the church, and capitalism hindered people’s ability to live in a state of positive freedom, guided by the dictates of natural law.<sup>14</sup> From these premises anarchists derived a “demolition” strategy of change: they argued that expropriations, bombings, and assassinations of politicians and economic elites by anarchist militants would not only destabilize dominant institutions, but also encourage broader sections of the population to take

---

<sup>14</sup> George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994); Saul Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001).

revolutionary action against their oppressors. Though such “deeds” were rare in the United States, European anarchists carried out a series of devastating attacks on monarchs, heads of state, and random members of the bourgeoisie in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries which were widely publicized in the United States, severely limiting the ideology’s appeal despite the dramatic inequalities on display at the height of the Gilded Age.<sup>15</sup>

At the time Berkman emerged from a Pittsburgh prison in 1906, after serving a fourteen year sentence, the landscape of the extreme left had shifted. While some anarchists still advocated propaganda of the deed, many had grown to prioritize public education and the building of revolutionary unions similar to those established by “Chicago Idea” anarchists prior to the Haymarket affair. When leading anarchist thinkers of Europe such as Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta compared the political gains attributable to the strategy of assassination and insurrection to the successes of the new style syndicalist unions active in France and Spain since 1895, they found their old methods lacking. France’s Confederacion General du Travail (CGT) was building a membership of hundreds of thousands of manual workers by developing counter-institutions that directly served their needs and organizing those members to fight in their workplaces for immediate improvements in living conditions. Such struggles, the CGT leadership insisted, were central to the process of

---

<sup>15</sup> Alex Butterworth, *The World that Never Was: A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists, and Secret Agents* (New York Pantheon, 2010); James Joll, *The Anarchists* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 117-148.

preparing workers, in due course, to overthrow capitalism and manage production for themselves. Always closely linked to its European counterparts, the anarchist movement in the United States began to digest these strategic shifts after 1905.<sup>16</sup> The public disgust and political suppression directed at the movement in the wake of the 1901 assassination of President William McKinley by Leon Czolgosz, a man who claimed he was motivated by anarchist teachings, also convinced many anarchists that individual acts of political violence, far from hastening the revolution, were incredibly detrimental to their movement.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, in 1906 the notorious anarchist Johann Most passed away. Although he had repudiated propaganda by deed as early as 1892 (when he famously denounced Berkman's attempt to assassinate Frick), Most remained the bomb-throwing anarchist incarnate in eyes of many U.S. Americans. His passing allowed

---

<sup>16</sup> On syndicalism and the CGT, see Darrow Shecter, *The History of the Left from Marx to Present: Theoretical Perspectives* (New York: Continuum), 108-120; Dave Berry, *The History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 23-26. On the shift from propaganda by deed to syndicalism amongst anarchists, see Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, trans. Paul Sharkey (San Francisco: AK Press, 2002), 94-100; Caroline Cahm, *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 231-269.

<sup>17</sup> On the assassination of McKinley, see Eric Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003). On the anarchist reaction, see Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America* (Boston: Beacon, 1984), 100-112.

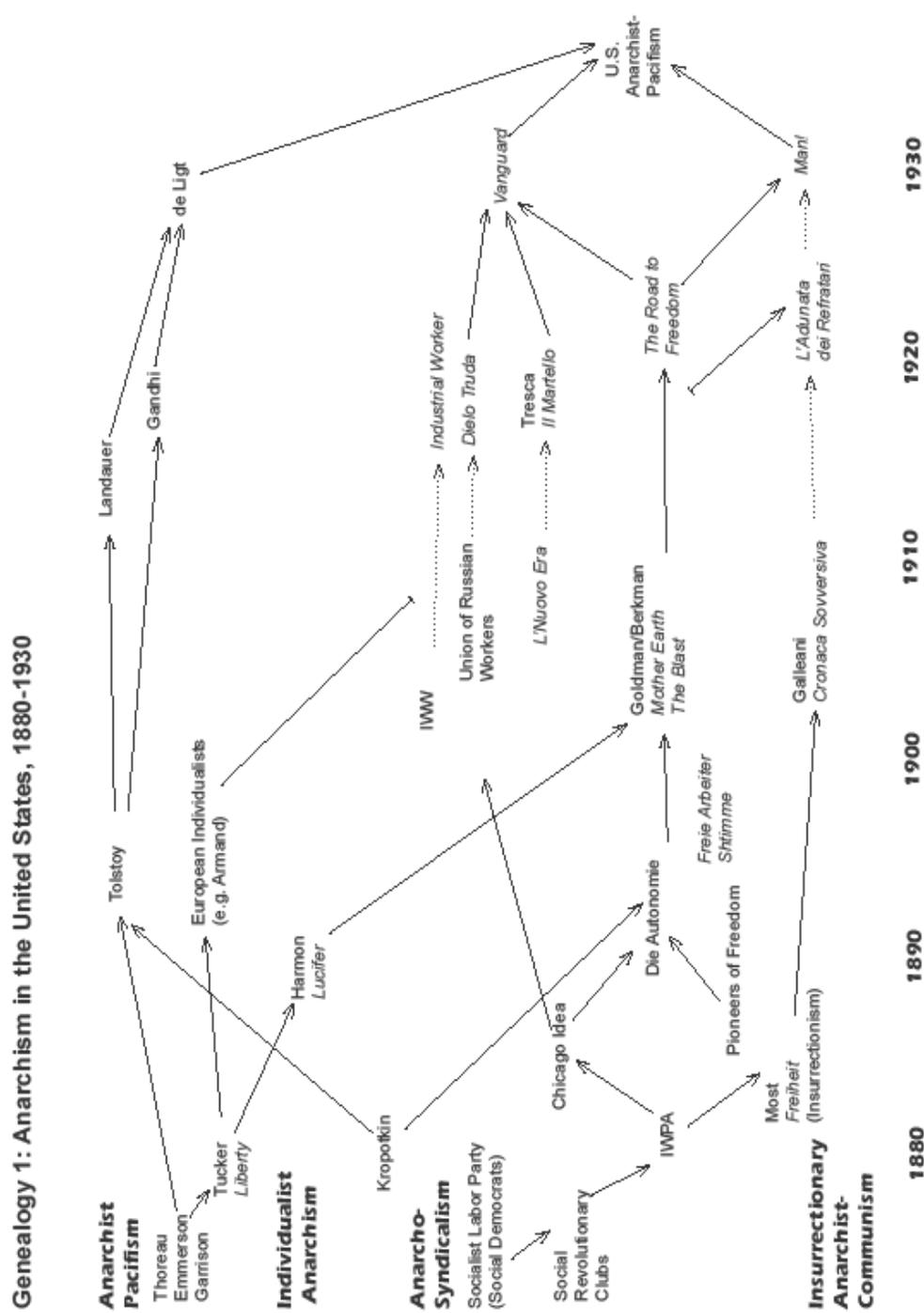


Figure 2

younger anarchists to take a higher profile in the movement and attempt to attach new meanings to the term anarchism.

Anarchism was given a significant boost with the founding of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) in 1905. Composed of radical workers from a wide variety of trades and political perspectives, the IWW dedicated itself to organizing working people into “one big union” and using “direct action”—rather than electoral power—to improve conditions and eventually wrest control of production away from business owners. Unlike the majority of AFL unions, the IWW took the then radical position of organizing workers across lines of race, nationality, gender, and skill. Like the European syndicalist unions, it sought to replace the existing government with a federation of unions that would coordinate production. The IWW’s founders famously expressed these fundamentals of revolutionary unionism in the preamble to the organization’s constitution in this way:

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.<sup>18</sup>

As the historian Salvatore Salerno has argued, “The nature of the influence of anarchist principles and tactics on the industrial union movement was complex and

---

<sup>18</sup> Fred W. Thompson and Jon Bekken, *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years, 1905-2005* (Cincinnati: IWW, 2006), iv.

ubiquitous.”<sup>19</sup> Both native born and immigrant anarchists attended the IWW founding convention. Some, such as Al Klemensic, explicitly linked the new organization’s strategy to the “Chicago Idea” of radical industrial unionism promoted by Midwestern anarchists prior to the Haymarket affair. Though they built an organization geared to the specific needs and goals of U.S. American workers—especially itinerant laborers working in resource extraction industries of the West—the delegates also drew explicitly on the ideas and experiences of European syndicalist unions, notably the French CGT, which were themselves influenced by Michael Bakunin’s followers in the First International.<sup>20</sup> However, anarchist Wobblies (as members of the IWW were known) shared the organization with members of the Socialist Party, Marxists who would later become leading Communists, and a variety of other labor organizers with less precise ideological commitments.

While the IWW is best known for its use of workplace sabotage, frequent works-stoppages, and advocacy of the general strike tactic, the Wobblies also constituted a vibrant cultural movement of their own.<sup>21</sup> Wobbly songs—most famously, “Solidarity Forever”—became anthems of the U.S. American labor

---

<sup>19</sup> Salvatore Salerno, *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), 90.

<sup>20</sup> Salerno, *Red November*, 93-115; Saku Pinta, “Anarchism, Marxism, and the Ideological Composition of the Chicago Idea,” *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12 (September 2009), 421-450; Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 149-160.

<sup>21</sup> See Franklin Rosemont, *Joe Hill and the Making of a Revolutionary Working-Class Counter Culture* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003); Salerno, *Red November*, 119-140.

movement, but members also produced plays, poetry, and other noteworthy contributions to proletarian literature. IWW newspapers brimmed with cartoons lambasting the wealthy and with iconic images of working-class male virility.<sup>22</sup> Wobblies engaged in a series of “free speech fights” throughout the U.S. West between 1908 and 1918 that had reverberations in broader struggles to expand freedom of expression.<sup>23</sup> More generally, Wobblies established a loose set of values based on self-reliance and an attitude of hostility towards sanctimonious authority figures—be they foremen, bankers, politicians, or preachers—highly influential amongst itinerant and industrial workers living in hobo camps and working-class districts like Chicago’s Towertown neighborhood.<sup>24</sup> The IWW’s creation of a working class counter-culture as a concomitant part of its struggle against capitalism had clear precedents in radical immigrant communities of the 1880s and 1890s. Beginning in the early 1880s German anarchists in Chicago and New York developed dense networks of cultural organizations, including singing societies, theatre troupes,

---

<sup>22</sup> Archie Green et al., eds., *The Big Red Songbook* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007); Joyce Kornblugh, ed., *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964).

<sup>23</sup> Wobblies descended en masse on towns and cities that arrested members for soapboxing, offering themselves up for collective incarceration until their numbers taxed the municipalities’ legal system to such an extent that officials were persuaded to rescind regulations prohibiting public speaking. Melvin Dubovsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969), 173-197; Thompson and Bekken, *The IWW*, 40-42.

<sup>24</sup> On the IWW influence in the Towertown neighborhood, where the union’s International Headquarters was located, see Frank O. Beck, *Hobohemia: Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons, Ben Reitman, and other Agitators/Outsiders in 1920s/30s Chicago* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2000).

and “Education and Self-Defense Leagues” that regularly hosted pageants, concerts, parades, picnics, and plays.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, beginning in the 1890s Italian radicals in United States constituted a distinct community of *sovversivi*, whose anti-capitalist, internationalist, and anti-militarist values and cultural productions cut across radical ideological divisions, while clearly differentiating them from the larger Italian-American population.<sup>26</sup> This shared impetuosity to create joyous expressions of new values and ways of living may have been one reason many organizations and circles of syndicalist-minded immigrant anarchists decided to affiliate with the IWW shortly after its formation.

Leading groups of Italian anarchists and socialists living in the United States adopted syndicalist tactics in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example, members of the Gruppo Diritto all’Esistenza (Right to Exist Group) of Patterson, New Jersey, a center of Italian anarchism since 1895, actively organized unions amongst silk workers, cigar makers, and longshoremen; some even travelled west in order to provide assistance to the Western Federation of Miners. The group published *La Questione Sociale* (The Social Question), which advocated a form of revolutionary syndicalism it called “anarcho-socialism.” In March of 1906, the Paterson anarchists

---

<sup>25</sup> See Bruce Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs: A Social History of Chicago’s Anarchists, 1870-1900* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 127-152; Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 2007), 168-182.

<sup>26</sup> Marcella Bencivenni, “Italian American Radical Culture in New York City: The Politics and Arts of the *Sovversivi*, 1890-1940,” PhD Dissertation, City University of New York, 2003.

affiliated with the IWW, and the *La Questione Sociale* placed the IWW logo on its masthead. This collaboration led the IWW to launch twenty-four strikes in Patterson that year alone, preparing the ground for the famous Paterson garment worker's strike of 1913. After *La Questione Sociale* was suppressed by the U.S. Justice Department in 1908, it was quickly revived under the title *L'Nuovo Era* (The New Era), becoming a leading voice for union-oriented Italian anarchists, with a circulation of approximately 3,000 copies per issue—a third of them read by supporters in the Paterson area.<sup>27</sup>

In 1902 organizers from the Italian Socialist Party established the Federazione Socialista Italiano to coordinate the activities of groups of radical Italian immigrants who had settled in cities and mining towns throughout the United States. In 1904, Carlo Tresca, the new editor of the organization's newspaper, *Il Proletario*, began publishing articles describing the principles of syndicalism and advocating direct action by workers. In 1906 the FSI voted to affiliate with the IWW after syndicalists became the dominant faction within the federation.<sup>28</sup> Tresca parted ways with the FSI the same year, but remained a legendary organizer amongst Italian laborers for the next forty years. Although he worked closely with the IWW on some of its most

---

<sup>27</sup> Salvatore Salerno, "No God, No Master: Italian Anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World," in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 171-187; Nunzio Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca: Life of a Rebel* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 64-65.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Miller Topp, *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 35-7.

decisive strikes, including the Lawrence textile strike of 1912 and the Mesabi Range miners strike of 1916, Tresca retained his independence, declaring himself an anarcho-syndicalist in 1914.<sup>29</sup> Tresca's newspaper, *L'Avvenire* (The Future), complemented *L'Nuovo Era* as a prominent mouthpiece for revolutionary unionism, reaching a circulation of approximately 4,000 copies per issue prior to World War I.<sup>30</sup>

Anarchists from Russia also embraced syndicalism in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Anarchists played key roles in the aborted 1905 revolution against Russian tsarism and were prime targets of the brutal repression meted out in its wake, prompting a new wave of immigration to Western Europe and the United States.<sup>31</sup> The Russian anarchists who settled in Detroit, Chicago, New York, and other U.S. cities moved quickly to organize an international Anarchist Red Cross that sent material necessities to prisoners in Russia while coordinating a pressure campaign calling for their release. In 1908, they founded the Union of Russian Workers of the United States and Canada (URW).<sup>32</sup> Initially "oriented, like the early Russian movement, toward open, armed warfare against the state and capitalism in both the U.S. and Russia," by 1912 the URW had pronounced itself an anarcho-syndicalist organization that sought to organize Russian laborers throughout North America. In its eleven years of existence,

---

<sup>29</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 78.

<sup>30</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, "War among the Italian Anarchists: The Galleanisti's Campaign against Carlo Tresca," in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 77-97.

<sup>31</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005 [1967])

<sup>32</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 79.

the URW grew to an estimated 4,000-10,000 members distributed across more than 50 locals. Beginning in 1911 the union published a monthly newspaper, *Golos Truda* (The Voice of Labor).<sup>33</sup> Like the Italian syndicalists, the Union of Russian Workers quickly developed close ties with the IWW, and leading figures such as Vladimir “Bill” Shatoff sought to bring workers into both organizations.

The Jewish anarchist movement in the United States also grew and was energized by the influx of revolutionary workers fleeing anti-Semitic pogroms and political repression in Russia and Eastern Europe. While many Russian Jews affiliated with the URW, others identified primarily with the Yiddish-speaking movement centered since 1890 around the New York-based weekly newspaper *Der Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* (The Free Voice of Labor).<sup>34</sup> Although many were ardent followers of Johann Most in the early years, *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* editor Saul Yanofsky led the majority of the Jewish anarchists in the United States to oppose insurrectionary tactics in favor of trade union, educational, and cooperative activity after the turn of

---

<sup>33</sup> Kenyon Zimmer, “A Slice of Pittsburgh Anarchist History: The Union of Russian Workers,” *Steel City Revolt*, Spring 2009. Kenyon Zimmer, “Anarchist Periodical Circulation Figures, 1880-1940,” Kate Sharpley Library, <http://katesharpleylibrary.pbworks.com/Anarchist+newspaper+circulation> (accessed February 9, 2010). However, Paul Avrich claims *Golos Truda* only became an “avowedly Anarcho-Syndicalist publication” when Maksim Raevskii became editor “during World War I.” Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 115;

<sup>34</sup> See Steven Fischler and Joel Sucher, *The Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists*, DVD (Oakland: AK Press Films, 2006).

the century.<sup>35</sup> In Philadelphia Chaim Weinberg, Joseph Cohen, and others organized a Radical Library which hosted regular lectures, debates, and community dinners, while New York was home to the Kropotkin Literary Society which published and distributed Yiddish translations of the writings of Kropotkin, Marx, Stirner, and other radical theorists.<sup>36</sup> Anarchists played important roles alongside socialists in organizing the first union of Jewish workers, the United Hebrew Trades, beginning in 1888.<sup>37</sup> Later, anarchists helped build trade unions in bookbinding, cigar making, and other fields. In the 1890s they led the United Brotherhood of Cloak Makers, which merged with the socialist Progressive Cloak Makers to form the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) in 1901. This willingness to participate in labor unions of mixed political character, including those affiliated with the American Federation of Labor, distinguished Jewish anarchists from those of other nationalities organizing in the United States. Though frequently criticized by other anarchists for collaborating with reformist trade unions, Jewish anarchists continuously fought for more militancy and against bureaucratizing tendencies in the ILGWU and other AFL affiliates. This pragmatic strategy proved attractive to large numbers of Yiddish-speaking immigrants during the first two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—years in which

---

<sup>35</sup> Herman Frank, “Anarchism and the Jews,” in *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People*, ed. Basil J. Vlavianos and Feliks Gross (New York: Arts, Inc., no date [1953]), 281; Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 189.

<sup>36</sup> See Chaim Leib Weinberg, *Forty Years in the Struggle: The Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist*, ed. Robert P. Helms, trans. Naomi Cohen (Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009); Frank, “Anarchism and the Jews,” 283.

<sup>37</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 180.

New York City was home to at least ten distinct Jewish anarchist groups and the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* reached a circulation of more than 20,000 copies per week.<sup>38</sup>

While the Italian, Russian, and Yiddish-speaking sectors of the movement were concentrated in industrial cities and mining towns of the Northeast and Midwest, Spanish speaking anarchists developed a different geography. Pedro Esteve, who hailed from Barcelona, worked closely with Il Gruppo Diritto all'Esistenza in New Jersey before moving south to organize Spanish-speakers in Florida in the late 1890s. In Tampa and Ybor City, Esteve worked with cigar rollers who circulated between Spain, Cuba, Florida, and New York. He edited an anarchist newspaper there until he was attacked by vigilantes and forced to return to the Northeast. Back in New York, Esteve brought Spanish and Italian-speaking dockworkers into the IWW while editing the anarchist monthly *Cultura Oberera* (Working Culture).<sup>39</sup>

A much larger insurgency developed in Northern Mexico and the southwest of the United States. During the Mexican revolution of 1910, revolutionary cells located in towns on both sides of the border staged armed uprisings with the goal of launching an anarchist-communist social order in Mexico, rather than merely replacing the old dictatorship with a democracy dominated by the wealthy.<sup>40</sup> These groups of farm

---

<sup>38</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 188.

<sup>39</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 391-393; Salerno, "No God, No Master," 182.

<sup>40</sup> Chaz Bufe and Mitchel Cowen Verter, eds., *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005); James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); Ward S. Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magon and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992).

laborers, miners, and other poor Mexicans were coordinated by the Organizing Junta of the Partido Liberal de Mexico (PLM). The PLM had been founded in the United States five years earlier by Ricardo and Enrique Flores Magón, Librado Rivera, and other Mexican liberals who fled across the border after the dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz outlawed their activities in Mexico. The PLM's newspaper, *Regeneración* (Regeneration), edited by the Magón brothers and read by upwards of 30,000 subscribers, demanded the ouster of the Diaz regime, but went beyond demands of other liberals to voice strong support for workers rights, women's rights, and the redistribution of land to poor farmers. During their exile in the United States, the Magón brothers built strong connections to the U.S. labor, socialist, and anarchist movements, and their politics moved swiftly to the left. In 1906 and 1908 the PLM attempted to launch revolutionary uprisings in numerous Mexican states and raids from border towns in Arizona and Texas, but both attempts were disrupted by spying and repression on the part of U.S. and Mexican government officials. Some PLM cells were raided before they took any action; others successfully deposed municipal governments but were soon ousted by the Mexican army.

In 1907 Ricardo Flores Magón was captured in Los Angeles, tried for violating a U.S. "neutrality law" for organizing cross-border military campaigns from U.S. soil. While in prison he encouraged further uprisings against the Diaz government, but wrote to his brother and close comrade Praxedis Guerrero that the uprisings should strive to institute an anarchist-communist society while still functioning under the

guise of liberalism. After completing their sentences in August 1910, Magon and other PLM leaders restarted *Regeneración*, using its pages to openly advocate anarchist politics and to call for international working-class revolution. When the Mexican Revolution broke out in November under the leadership of Magon's former ally Francisco Madero, PLM cells were in relative disarray from the years of repression. However, some launched rebellions to support the revolution nonetheless. Most notably, Ricardo Flores Magón organized a force of Mexicans, American unionists, Spanish and Italian anarchists, and a variety of others supporters who took control of the cities of Mexicali, Tecate, and Tijuana in Baja California in an attempt to establish anarchist-communist communes in accordance with the vision elaborated in Peter Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*. Paul Avrich notes that "the ranks of the Liberal army in Baja California included hundreds of American anarchists and Wobblies, among them Frank Little and Joe Hill, the most celebrated martyrs to the IWW cause."<sup>41</sup> Despite its military victories, many local residents saw the non-Mexican PLM fighters as foreign colonizers, and many of the Magóns' own supporters were surprised by the radicalism of their vision, since they had cloaked it in the discourse of liberalism for so long. Before such tensions came to a head, however, Diaz abdicated and Madero sent federal troops to reclaim Baja California as Mexican, rather than anarchist, territory. Following their defeat, the Magón brothers continued publishing *Regeneración* from Los Angeles, nurturing an anarchist movement

---

<sup>41</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 209.

amongst ethnic Mexicans in both countries, despite a continuous campaign of repression carried out against them by the U.S. government.

The strategy promoted by the Magón brothers synthesized syndicalist and insurrectionary tactics to suit the highly repressive conditions the PLM faced. PLM members built militant unions on both sides of the border, and the group launched its 1906 campaign after a massive strike by copper miners in Cananea, Mexico, brought tensions to a boiling point. However, PLM leaders recognized that they opposed an absolutist state and had the support of a significant portion of the population who felt so dispossessed that they were willing to take up arms. In this sense, Mexico of 1910 shared conditions similar to those of 1870s Russia and Italy, where anarchists first developed the strategy of deposing governments through small bands of armed combatants. Although distinctly different conditions obtained in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century United States, the fast growing syndicalist school of anarchism never fully displaced the country's insurrectionary tradition.

Insurrectionary anarchism was most eloquently and forcefully promoted after the turn of the century by a network of Italian immigrants who contributed and subscribed to the monthly newspaper *Cronaca Sovversiva* (Subversive Chronicle). *Cronaca Sovversiva* was founded in 1903 in Barre, Vermont, by Luigi Galleani, a respected Italian anarchist militant trained as a lawyer, who fled to the United States in 1901. More than any other figure in North America, Galleani upheld the insurrectionary anarchist strategies that Johann Most and the East Coast sections of the

International Working People's Association (IWPA) had promoted in the 1880s.<sup>42</sup>

Galleani was an anarchist-communist who believed that freedom and economic equality could only come through a violent uprising of oppressed people. He spurned the strategy of helping workers win immediate improvements in their lives, claiming these improvements would be short-lived and would only stabilize the system. In a major statement of his politics, Galleani wrote,

Since the anarchists value reforms for what they are—the ballast the bourgeoisie throws overboard to lighten its old boat in the hope of saving the sad cargo of its privileges from sinking in the revolutionary storm—they have no particular interest in them except to discredit their dangerous mirages, for they are sure that social reforms will come anyway, faster, more often and more radically, as attacks against the existing social institutions become more forceful and violent.<sup>43</sup>

Galleani also rejected formal, long-term organizations of anarchists, arguing that they would establish hierarchies of their own and were sure to attract police infiltration and repression. Whereas syndicalists saw their unions as embryonic institutions of the new society, Galleani asserted that adequate and non-authoritarian forms of social organization would arise after the revolution, but revolutionaries could not and should predict what form these social relations would take prior to the destruction of capitalism and the state.<sup>44</sup> These principles lead Galleani to extol workers to commit

---

<sup>42</sup> Galleani differed from Most, however, on questions of organization. Where Most was known as a strong proponent of a unified, well-organized movement of anarchist militants, Galleani rejected the need for formal organizations. See the historical note that comprises Appendix 1.

<sup>43</sup> Luigi Galleani, *The End of Anarchism?* (Orkney, UK: Cienfuegos Press, 1982), 13.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter 3 for a more detailed consideration of the origins and theoretical underpinnings of Galleani's anti-organizational anarchism.

propaganda of the deed, retributive attacks on authority figures, and acts of banditry and individual expropriation. Such attacks on the bourgeois order, he believed, served to destabilize the current order and inspire the oppressed to carry out a general strike and revolutionary uprisings when the time was ripe.

Galleani attracted a significant following amongst Italian immigrants in the United States. *Cronaca Sovversiva* reached a circulation of approximately 5,000 (although many subscribers lived in Europe and South America), and “scores of autonomous groups of ‘Galleanisti’ sprang up around the country.”<sup>45</sup> Despite eschewing formal organization, the Italian insurrectionists formed tight knit communities that developed their own revolutionary counter-culture and proved nearly impossible for police and government agents to infiltrate or extract information from.<sup>46</sup> In these communities Galleani was treated with extreme reverence, a relationship he reinforced by harshly criticizing those who disagreed with him. With these considerations in mind, it is useful to clarify that “anti-organizational” anarchists did not reject inter-personal collaborations as such. Rather, they promoted the utility of self-selected groups of individuals and spurned the process of proactively organizing large numbers of individuals into formal “mass” organizations, such as unions, which officially designated positions such as chairperson, organizer, or

---

<sup>45</sup> Rudolf Vecoli, “Luigi Galleani,” in Paul Buhle, Mari Jo Buhle, Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 253.

<sup>46</sup> Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*; Nunzio Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani and Italian Anarchist Terrorism in the United States,” *Studi Emigrazione/Etudes Migrations* 30, no. 111 (1993): 469-489.

secretary-treasurer. As a result, the Galleanisti both benefited and suffered from consequences of the small group model: increased internal security on the one hand, and challenges associated with unofficial leadership on the other.

Syndicalism and insurrectionism, then, shared considerable intellectual common ground while clearly parting ways on matters of strategy and organization. Both focused on the class oppression of working people, both saw the liberal state as an unredeemable instrument controlled by the capitalist class, and both viewed revolution as a singular temporal event in which workers collectively took control of the means of production. Syndicalists believed small victories buoyed the energy of workers to struggle and that organizations were needed to wage such struggles and to prepare workers for the task of self-management. Insurrectionists, in contrast, held that reforms co-opted worker militancy while mass organizations recreated positions of individual authority—the very thing they understood anarchism to be fighting against. Furthermore, while insurrectionists advocated proactive violence against enemies, syndicalists generally only endorsed violence against people as a means of self defense. This was a distinction lost on many non-anarchists (and some anarchists as well).<sup>47</sup> While differences between syndicalist and insurrectionist tendencies occasionally erupted into internecine fighting, members of both camps frequently worked together against common enemies, such as when members of the FSI and

---

<sup>47</sup> This section is indebted to the conceptual distinction between “mass anarchism” and “insurrectionist anarchism” articulated in Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 123-147.

*Cronaca Sovversiva* militants simultaneously descended on Lawrence, Massachusetts in 1912 to support striking textile workers.<sup>48</sup>

Agitating for direct action and organizing workers into revolutionary unions were not the only means by which anarchists spread their vision during the Progressive Era, however. The advent, in Alexander Berkman and especially Emma Goldman, of propagandists adept at writing and speaking in English, and interested in applying anarchist ideas to questions of sexuality, literature, art, and other subjects beyond class conflict, began to win anarchists increasing numbers of allies and sympathizers in the American-born middle class in the decade before the war. Goldman and Berkman were both Russian Jews who immigrated to the United States in the 1880s. First joining the Yiddish speaking Pioneers of Liberty and aligning themselves with the groups organized around Johann Most's *Freiheit*, in 1890 the couple moved into the "autonomist" camp of Most's rival, Joseph Peukert. Goldman first gained a measure of renown within anarchist circles for her staunch defense of Berkman's attempted assassination of Frick (an attack she helped plan). Her notoriety amongst the broader public, however, stemmed from an early speech in which she urged workers made hungry by the economic slump of 1893 to take the food they needed from stores if authorities refused to provide work or relief funds—an encouragement which earned her a year of jail time for inciting to riot.<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Pernicone, "War Among the Italian Anarchists," 80-81.

<sup>49</sup> Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 74-79.

Goldman was sharply rebuked by comrades and the public alike when in 1901 she adamantly defended Leon Czolgoz, the assassin of President William McKinley. However, she was able to leverage post-assassination repression into a means of building broader support for anarchist activities than had even existed in the United States. The aftermath of McKinley's killing saw the passage of the 1903 Immigration Act, which prohibited individuals who held anarchists beliefs from entering the United States. When John Turner, a respected British anarchist and unionist, was refused entrance under the new policy, Goldman organized a Free Speech League to fight on his behalf and contest the 1903 Act as a violation of basic civil liberties. Goldman successfully drew a variety of respected progressives to the campaign, including the famous defense attorney Clarence Darrow. Though Turner was eventually deported, the case provided grounds for Goldman to begin building relationships with many American-born and middle-class liberals and political reformers.<sup>50</sup> Concurrently, Goldman managed a touring Russian theatre troupe, a position which simultaneously deepened her appreciation of the political potential of modern drama and established connections with important figures in the world of the arts.<sup>51</sup> Financial support offered by the troupe's director also made it possible for Goldman to launch her famed monthly journal *Mother Earth* in 1906.

---

<sup>50</sup> Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 117-120; Richard Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1961), 87-94.

<sup>51</sup> Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 120-121.

*Mother Earth* combined reportage and analysis of contemporary events, cultural criticism, and lengthy essays on matters of anarchist philosophy. Although the journal never achieved the literary standards set by such publications as *The Masses*, it gave the anarchists a “little magazine” of their own, and established Goldman and her collaborators as significant players in the radical intellectual and artistic scene that blossomed in New York and Chicago in the 1910s. While building ties to the broader left, *Mother Earth* helped to cohere an English-speaking anarchist movement in its home base of New York and throughout the country. Upon being released from prison in May of 1906, Alexander Berkman joined Goldman and a circle of other comrades—including the American-born anarchists such as Leonard Abbott and Harry Kelly—that carried out the work of writing, editing, and distributing the journal. To keep *Mother Earth* afloat financially, Goldman spent nearly half of every year outside of New York, lecturing to audiences across the country on a variety of topics. The U.S. anarchist movement began to expand beyond its strongholds in the industrial cities of the Northeast due in large measure to Goldman’s long, annual speaking tours. Peter Glassgold, drawing on figures published in *Mother Earth*, gives a sense of Goldman’s reach:

1910: 120 lectures in 37 cities in 25 states, before a total of 40,000 people, selling 10,000 pieces of literature, distributing 5,000 free, netting over \$5,300 in sales, magazine subscriptions, and paid admissions. 1911: 150 lectures in 50 cities in 18 states, before audiences of up to 1,500 people, a total of 50,000 to 60,000 at the

tour's end. 1915: 321 lectures. By her own accounting, Goldman spoke before 50,000 to 75,000 people a year.<sup>52</sup>

Goldman's annual tours helped sustain anarchist activities outside of the major cities. As biographer Alice Wexler notes, "Typically she would recruit members of local anarchist groups to do some of the advance work [preparing for her lectures]; her presence in a town often revived the flagging energies of these groups and became the catalyst for organizing new ones." The pages of *Mother Earth* also served as a switchboard for the movement, with anarchists throughout the country filling each issue with reports of their local activities. Goldman witnessed a growing interest in anarchist ideas outside the ranks of the working class while on tour. She recalled, for example, that at a 1911 tour stop in Lincoln, Nebraska, "The law students, usually among the most conservative, invited me to speak before them and showed genuine interest in the question of law, crime, punishment, etc....that law students will stand for Anarchistic ideas is a significant sign of the times."<sup>53</sup>

Emma Goldman began advocating revolutionary syndicalist ideas in the United States as early as 1900, upon returning from an anarchist congress in Paris. She actively supported the IWW although she, like many other anarchists, expressed

---

<sup>52</sup> Peter Glassgold, "Introduction: The Life and Death of *Mother Earth*," in Peter Glassgold, ed. *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001), xxvi.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Glassgold, "Introduction," xxv.

concerns about the influence of the parliamentary socialists involved.<sup>54</sup> (The skepticism cut both ways; Eugene Debs once noted, “The IWW is an anarchist organization in all except name and this is the cause of all the trouble.”)<sup>55</sup> After his release from prison Berkman also acknowledged that labor union activity held the greatest promise for the anarchist movement, though he never fully repudiated the use of proactive attacks on authority figures. Despite their concerns, Goldman and the *Mother Earth* circle believed the IWW to be “a great improvement” upon the trade unionism of the AFL.<sup>56</sup> However, while continuing to vigorously denounce capitalism and the state mechanisms that upheld it, they also took up the politics of birth control, homosexuality, and white supremacy during the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **Anarchist Sexual and Racial Politics**

In the 1910s Goldman served as the most prominent anarchist critic of sexual and gender oppression in the United States. The sexual liberation of women had been a central component of Goldman’s political work since the 1890s, when she helped elaborate an anarchist politics of sex and gender alongside figures such as Moses and Lillian Harmon, Mary and Abe Isaak, and Voltairine de Cleyre. Goldman took an early interest in early European sexological literature on homosexuality and became an outspoken defender of same-sex love, lecturing regularly on the topic in 1915 and

---

<sup>54</sup> Emma Goldman, “Syndicalism: Its Principles and Methods,” in Alix Kates Schulman, ed., *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader* (New York: Schocken, 1983), 87-100.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Salerno, *Red November*, 78.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Salerno, *Red November*, 85.

1916.<sup>57</sup> After attending a birth control conference held in Paris in 1900, Goldman began lecturing on the importance of the right to practice “family limitation” for women who felt they couldn’t afford to raise additional children. Goldman and her anarchist comrades provided both inspiration and logistical support for Margaret Sanger, a young nurse who emerged in the 1910s as the country’s leading advocate of birth control. When Sanger was arrested for her work, Goldman began publicly disseminating birth-control information, resulting in a short jail-term after a highly publicized trial that gave national visibility to the cause.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>57</sup> Terrence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland: AK Press, 2008), 133-138.

<sup>58</sup> Sanger arranged to be trained in birth control methods in France by Goldman’s anarchist friend Victor Dave. Moreover, Bill Shatoff of the Union of Russian Workers and the IWW secretly printed Sanger’s pamphlet “Family Limitation” when commercial printers refused out of fear of prosecution. Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 169-170. As is well known, Margaret Sanger’s politics developed in a decidedly conservative direction after World War I. Breaking with the anarchist movement and attempting, in her autobiography and elsewhere, to play down her earlier collaborations with figures like Goldman, Sanger developed new collaborative relationships with conservative elements of a variety of social reform movements. In the 1920s she began advocating explicitly eugenic programs that called for involuntary sterilization of poor women from ethnic groups that were perceived to give birth to more offspring than they could support. Margaret Sanger, *The Autobiography of Margaret Sanger* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004 [1938]); Gordon, *Woman’s Body*. Emma Goldman devoted little attention to issues of reproduction after her deportation from the United States. As the following chapters indicate, the U.S. anarchist movement retreated from its consideration of the politics of birth control, and gender and sexual politics as a whole. However, anarchists were not immune to some of the political pitfalls of a politics that focused on regulating reproduction as a solution to social and economic inequalities. See, for example the favorable discussion of “neo-Malthusian theory” in V. Kravchuck, “The Contents of the Anarchist’s Bomb,” *The Road to Freedom*, May 1928.

Goldman's gender politics were famously iconoclastic, alienating her from many feminists at the same time they turned off a good number of anarchists. As an anarchist-communist she rejected categorically the suffragist argument that obtaining the right to vote would lead to the liberation of women. Although her own experiences taught her that economic independence was necessary for women to control their own lives, she was clear that performing wage labor in a capitalist work environment was a half-measure at best.<sup>59</sup> Goldman argued that above and beyond the political and economic spheres, women must denounce moralistic controls over their sexuality, reject the institution of the patriarchal family, and develop their personal capacities. At times this led her to promote seemingly individualistic approaches to subverting oppressive sexual relations, prompting criticism from some comrades. She wrote, for example, that "woman's development, her freedom, her independence, must come from and through herself." This she could do by asserting her personality, "refusing the right to anyone over her body" and "by freeing herself from the fear of public opinion and condemnation."<sup>60</sup> At the same time that she pointed to the limits of mainstream feminist strategies, Goldman openly criticized male anarchists who

---

<sup>59</sup> Goldman's essays on gender and sexuality are collected in Shulman, *Red Emma Speaks*. Also see Penny A. Weiss and Loretta Kensinger, *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007); Candace Falk, *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1984); Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 188-208; Kissack, *Free Comrades*. For her place in the anarchist-feminist pantheon, see Dark Star, ed., *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader* (San Francisco: AK Press and Dark Star, 2002).

<sup>60</sup> Quoted in Alix Kates Schulman, "Emma Goldman's Feminism: A Reappraisal," in *Red Emma Speaks An Emma Goldman Reader* (New York: Schocken, 1983), 11.

focused narrowly on the class struggle or saw the sexual oppression of women as rooted wholly in the desire of the capitalist class to establish a hyper-exploited low-wage workforce. Interpreting Goldman for a later generation of feminists in the 1980s, Alix Kates Shulman observed that Goldman persistently opposed “the tyrannies of capitalism, patriarchy, church, and state. Though she understood the pressures and conditions under which women uniquely suffered...she saw all those tyrannies as mutually supporting, and none really the kingpin.”<sup>61</sup> As Shulman notes, this insistence on gender as a primary category of oppression marks Goldman’s most enduring contribution to anarchist theory.<sup>62</sup>

Although Goldman was the most visible anarchist critic of women’s oppression during the Progressive Era, she certainly wasn’t alone. Beginning in 1896 female members of *Il Gruppo Diritto all’Esistenza* launched *Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna* (Emancipation of Women Group) in Patterson, with the aim of organizing female workers, discussing and analyzing their experiences of gender oppression, and pushing male anarchists to incorporate the struggle for equality between men and women into their personal relationships, union organizing, and other political campaigns. Women in *Gruppo Emancipazione della Donna* helped establish a network of similar “gruppi femminili di propaganda” in the major east coast cities as well as in small mining towns where Italian radicals lived. Group members, including Ernestina Cravello, Maria Barbieri, Caterina Sebastiani, and Maria Boda regularly

---

<sup>61</sup> Shulman, “Emma Goldman’s Feminism,” 17.

<sup>62</sup> Shulman, “Emma Goldman’s Feminism,” 36.

contributed articles to *La Questione Sociale* and other Italian anarchist periodicals. The Spring Valley, Illinois, Gruppo Femminile wrote in the journal *L'Aurora*, “For the emancipation of women, together with those struggles that must occur in order to attain the rights that all of oppressed humanity demand, a woman must struggle with great zeal to emancipate herself from the tyranny and prejudice of men, and from those who foolishly consider women inferior and often treat her like a slave.”<sup>63</sup> Goldman associated with these Italian working class feminists and their perspectives likely provided additional grounding for her criticisms of the middle class, American-born feminists with whom she both criticized and collaborated.

While Goldman served as an important bridge between feminist initiatives and the tradition of immigrant anarchism, her vision was not as far reaching in relation to the efforts of people of color to combat the ways in which white supremacy structured and limited their lives. Like other anarchists of the pre-war period Goldman intermittently denounced lynchings of African Americans and occasionally noted the racist treatment of Chinese and Japanese immigrants living in the United States. However, she did not offer a specific analysis of the character, motivations, and outcomes of racial oppression, viewing it primarily through the framework of Russian anti-Semitism. Whereas she saw women and working people as potential agents of

---

<sup>63</sup> Jennifer Guglielmo, “Donne Ribelli: Recovering the History of Italian Women’s Radicalism in the United States” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 113-141. Also see Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Salerno, “No Gods, No Masters.”

change, Goldman frequently depicted African Americans as helpless victims.<sup>64</sup> While Goldman's minimal consideration of racial oppression appears to have been the norm among English-speaking anarchists, other sectors of the movement proved more attuned to the importance of an anti-racist analysis for egalitarian politics. Italian anarcho-syndicalists regularly articulated strident anti-racist and anti-colonial critiques. In 1909, for example, *L'Nuovo Era* published "Crimes of the White Race," an article that argued, "The discovery of America marks the beginning of a period of destruction, which lasts even today for the shame of humanity. The white race continues its systematic destruction of the races of color. When it cannot succeed with violence, it adopts corruption, hunger, alcohol, opium, syphilis, tuberculosis—all weapons as good as guns and cannons." The article closed with an acknowledgment of the centrality of racial oppression to the structure of U.S. American society, and hinted at the transformative potential of black freedom struggles: "We believe that within a short time what they call the Negro Problem will give more trouble to the

---

<sup>64</sup> At the International Anarchist Congress of 1907 in Amsterdam, in what may be her most direct recorded discussion of the matter, Goldman briefly addressed racial oppression in the United States. Speaking of African-Americans, she noted, "The persecution, suffering, and injustice to which this much-hated race is being constantly subjected can be compared only to the brutal treatment of the Jews in Russia." Kathy E. Ferguson, "A Present Absence: Emma Goldman on Race," paper delivered at the Western Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, 2004, All Academic, [http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/0/8/8/3/9/p88396\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/8/8/3/9/p88396_index.html) (accessed February 3, 2010).

United States, more than they have already had from any other serious issue, even bigger than the Civil War.”<sup>65</sup>

Spanish speaking anarchists also focused considerable attention on combating racism. Given that their primary U.S. readership consisted of a racialized national minority that had steadily been dispossessed of its land since the end of the Mexican-American War, it is not surprising that the Magón brothers regularly denounced the racist treatment of Mexican-Americans. Placing the 1910 lynching of a Mexican man in a broader context of structural racism, Ricardo Flores Magón cleverly highlighted the constructed character of the idea of savagery. “Mexicans are not admitted to hotels, restaurants, and other public establishments in Texas,” he asserted. “North American semi-savages take target practice on Mexicans. How many men of our race have died because a white-skinned savage decided to prove his ability with firearms by shooting at us?—and without having any dispute with us!”<sup>66</sup> Beyond their written analyses, anarchists’ most concrete contributions to combating structural racism may have lay in their work, especially under the auspices of the IWW, building interracial unions opposed to exclusionary hiring practices and racist wage differentials.

In the 1910s even those anarchists who denounced the structural and personal violence of the “white race” were unprepared to fully articulate the ways they, as

---

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Salvatore Salerno, “*I Delitti Della Razza Bianca* (Crimes of the White Race): Italian Anarchists’ Racial Discourse as Crime,” in *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*, eds. Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (New York: Routledge, 2003), 121.

<sup>66</sup> Ricardo Flores Magón, “The Repercussions of a Lynching” *Regeneración*, November 12, 1910, reprinted in *Dreams of Freedom*.

anarchists, were implicated in the larger racial system that structured all aspects of life in the United States. From the 1840s until the 1920s, the massive influx of poor immigrants—first from Ireland, and later from southern and eastern European empires and nations—led U.S. Americans to create a complex, graduated racial system that placed the recent arrivals in an intermediary position between native-born whites and peoples of color. As Jewish, Russian, and Italian immigrants, the majority of anarchists in the United States were considered part of these “inbetween people.”<sup>67</sup> As anarchists, in fact, they had an inadvertent but significant hand in the establishment of such a racial category in the first place. From the 1880s through the First World War, the political violence and the sexual non-conformism practiced by some, as well as the anti-authoritarian ideas promoted by all anarchists served as the grist of attempts by nativist activists and conservative journalists to represent the new immigrants, as a whole, as unfit for U.S. citizenship and undeserving of equal protection under its laws. Such representational practices functioned as part of a larger process of “racialization” in which inegalitarian social structures and demeaning cultural depictions of social groups developed in a mutually reinforcing manner.<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> James Barret and David Roediger, “Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the ‘New Immigrant’ Working Class,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (Spring 1997): 3-34; David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America’s Immigrants Became White*, (Boston: Basic, 2005); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998).

<sup>68</sup> The term racialization derives from the theory of Michael Omi and Howard Winant. In their highly influential formulation, Michael Omi and Howard Winant argue that “race is a concept which signifies and symbolizes social conflicts and interests by

The view of anarchists as European immigrants with a congenital proclivity to violence became a common trope during the Red Scare that followed the Haymarket Affair of 1886.<sup>69</sup> The capitalist-owned press promoted an image of the anarchist as “a ragged, unwashed, long-haired, wild-eyed fiend, armed with smoking revolver and bomb—to say nothing of the dagger he sometimes carries between his teeth,” in the words of historian Henry David.<sup>70</sup> Newspaper reporters and editors regularly described anarchists as animals, infectious pests, and as tools of the devil. The Louisville *Courier-Journal* referred to anarchists as “blatant cattle” who needed to be “strung up” while the Chicago *Herald* called them “rag-tag add bob-tail cutthroats of

---

referring to different types of human bodies.” The meanings of race and the ways the concept functions, they argue, are “constantly being transformed by political struggle.” This helps account for the fact that in certain times and places individuals are recognized as members of one “race” and privileged or deprived accordingly, whereas in another period or location they are grouped differently. Omi and Winant urge us to view these ongoing transformations as the process of *racial formation*: “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed.” The authors argue that “race is a matter of both social structure and cultural representation.” Political struggles involving or centered on race—or racial projects—link the symbolic realm of defining and attributing meaning to race with the realm of institutions, policies, and patterns of behavior that collectively constitute the structure of a society. “A racial project is simultaneously an interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources along particular racial lines, Omi and Winant argue. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 53-61.

<sup>69</sup> Franklin Rosemont, “A Bomb-Toting, Long-Haired, Wild-Eyed Fiend: The Image of the Anarchist in Popular Culture,” in *Haymarket Scrapbook*, ed. Dave Roediger and Franklin Rosemont (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1986).

<sup>70</sup> Henry David quoted in William Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 26.

Beelzebub from the Rhine, the Danube, the Vistula and the Elbe.”<sup>71</sup> In addition to written commentary, anarchists were represented in hundreds of political cartoons and other images in newspapers, magazines, and the covers of dime novels. The cover of the September 1886 *Puck* magazine depicted anarchism as a rabid dog about to be drowned by a constable, while the *New York Daily Graphic* illustrated the Haymarket defendants as black crows strung up from nooses.<sup>72</sup> Often, however, artists gave anarchists human—or almost human—forms. Typically, such images portrayed anarchists as having long hair and scraggly beards, with a hunched posture and bulging eyes.<sup>73</sup> Franklin Rosemont suggests that artists intended such eyes to indicate insanity.<sup>74</sup> However, when combined with the dark tones regularly used to depict anarchists’ complexion, they also appear conspicuously similar to iconic racist depictions of African Americans common in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This imagery

---

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 217, 219. See also James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 201-202.

<sup>72</sup> Reproduced in Roediger and Rosemont, eds., *Haymarket Scrapbook*, 112, 93.

<sup>73</sup> The image of anarchists as long-haired and bearded was based in large measure on Johann Most, the aging, bearded editor of *Freiheit*, who is never known to have committed an act of violence himself, but who explicitly promoted violent attacks on politicians and the wealthy in his newspaper and his pamphlet “The Science of Revolutionary Warfare.” Most grew his beard long to partially cover his heavily scarred face, the result of a botched operation as a child, which served as an enduring embarrassment to him. That the image of anarchists as unkempt, mentally ill, and foreign grew in part from this bodily condition is of interest from the perspective of disability studies, which examines the relationships between the discriminatory treatment of people with non-normative bodies and that of queer and racialized peoples. See Robert McCruer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).

<sup>74</sup> Rosemont, “Bomb-Toting,” 203.

became so ubiquitous that when Illinois Governor John Altgeld exonerated the three living Haymarket martyrs in 1894, *Judge* magazine drew him as a crouched, diminutive, dark-skinned man with bulging white eyes.<sup>75</sup> One of the foremost artists responsible for crafting the anarchist caricature was Thomas Nast, the political cartoonist famous for his racializing depictions of Irish immigrants as wild and simian like. The April 1887 cover of *Puck* pictured anarchism as a snake with a human head that shared the features of Nast's primitive Irishmen.<sup>76</sup>

Such cartoonish representations of anarchists were rehashed in 1892 after Alexander Berkman's attempt to assassinate steel magnate Henry Clay Frick, and again in 1901 after the successful assassination of President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz. Although Czolgosz was born in Detroit (to Polish parents), he was nonetheless visually depicted as foreign and unsound. In the reaction to such attacks, the incidence of a threat originating within a group (poor southern and eastern European immigrants) became generalized to an intrinsic quality of the whole, whether assumed to be based on biology or on culture, leading to what William Preston, Jr. has described as "a fateful and erroneous identification of alien and radical" that would endure for decades.<sup>77</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Reproduced in Roediger and Rosemont, eds., *Haymarket Scrapbook*, 169.

<sup>76</sup> Rosemont, "Bomb-Toting," 206-206; Roediger and Rosemont, eds., *Haymarket Scrapbook*, 128. On Thomas Nast see, Morton Keller, *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).

<sup>77</sup> Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 4.

Commentary on Czolgosz' assassination of McKinley also demonstrated the threat to social norms posed by anarchist sexual politics. While being interrogated by police, Czolgosz indicated that he had been inspired by lectures delivered by Emma Goldman. Goldman was promptly arrested, and though she was released for lack of any evidence tying her to the crime, the press continued to represent her as the mastermind behind the assassination. In some political cartoons Goldman was represented as a devil, while others depicted her as a seductress that had lured the young man to commit the crime in exchange for sexual favors.<sup>78</sup> Such imagery found its basis in Goldman's notoriety as an outspoken supporter of women's right to have sex out of marriage and with as many partners as they desired. Sexual practices have long formed a primary means by which Europeans, and later "white" U.S. Americans have evaluated and ranked the level of civilization of other peoples. When deemed as departing from middle-class Christian norms they have been considered clear evidence of racial difference, thereby serving as an enduring justification for differential treatment based on "race."<sup>79</sup> Nayan Shah has shown, to cite just one instance, that the practice of male Chinese laborers rooming together was used as evidence of the relative barbarism of their "race," and was one basis on which immigration politics

---

<sup>78</sup> Rauchway, *Murdering McKinley*, 110.

<sup>79</sup> Maria Lugones, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial-Modern Gender System," *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 186-209; Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995); Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

that excluded Chinese laborers from the entering the United States gained political support.<sup>80</sup> As anarchists focused increasing attention on issues of sexual freedom over the following decades, racializing anti-radical rhetoric emphasized anarchist sexual practices as a central reason they—and, by extension, other southern and eastern Europeans—should be denied entrance to, and deported from, the United States.

As John Higham wrote over 50 years ago, “the anti-radical tradition remained a major nativist attitude, picturing the foreigner as steeped in anarchism or at least as an incendiary menace to that orderly freedom which Americans alone could supposedly preserve.”<sup>81</sup> More specifically, the trope depicted southern and eastern European immigrants as anarchistic in the years before the Russian revolution. Based on this association, “anarchist” functioned as a racializing term that held significant power during a period when the racial status of “new immigrants” to the U.S. was uncertain.<sup>82</sup> The cultural production of anarchists as inherently violent, mentally

---

<sup>80</sup> Nayan Shah, *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*, (Berkeley: U. of California Press, 2001). Such arguments were based on a developmentalist understanding of racial difference, that saw all racial groups developing towards a Western European ideal civilization. The form that a racial group's kinship and sexual relations took served as primary means of evaluating a racial group's position on this teleological path.

<sup>81</sup> John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New York: Atheneum, 1970 [1955]), 78.

<sup>82</sup> Mathew Frye Jacobson has described this intermediate social position as “probationary whiteness.” Jacobson demonstrates that beginning in the 1860s the native-born U.S. Americans argued for the exclusion of or the refusal to naturalize many immigrants on the basis of the principles of republican self-government. If immigrants could not demonstrate the virtues of self-control—independence from the influence of others or the dictates of their own passions—they were unfit for citizenship. Such logic appears ironic when used as a justification for excluding

unsound, and sexually immoral helped transform the outcry against the assassination of McKinley into federal legislation that established limits on the immigration of Europeans for the first time. In the preceding decade, Supreme Court rulings in cases involving Chinese and Japanese immigrants to California upheld the right of Congress to legislate the deportation of all aliens, or any group of them, for any reason and at any point after they entered the country. The Court also ruled that deportation of aliens was an administrative matter to be carried out by delegated officials and was not subject to judicial review.<sup>83</sup> The 1903 Immigration Act built on these rulings to specifically exclude anarchist immigrants as a designated class. It declared that immigrants should be denied entry from entering the United States if they believed in or advocated the violent overthrow of U.S. government, opposed government in general, or supported the assassination of public officials. The act also ordered the deportation of immigrants who were discovered, within three years of entering the country, to have secretly held such beliefs or to have adopted them after arriving.<sup>84</sup> Although the 1903 Immigration legislation did not ban a specific national or “racial” group from residing in the United States, it did serve to legally differentiate the political status of the southern and eastern European immigrants primarily affected by

---

anarchists, since anarchist political activism was based on the notion that humans had the natural capacity to rule themselves according to the principles of natural law, and that capitalism and political states served as the primary impediments to this practice of egalitarian self-governance. Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 22-31.

<sup>83</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 155-6. Erika Lee, *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

<sup>84</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 156-7.

the legislation by regulating their actions and the beliefs they were allowed to hold in a manner to which citizens were not subject. As we will see, however, the 1903 immigration policy was greatly expanded during and after World War I, and its limitations on political belief and speech were eventually extended to citizens as well. This was accomplished, in part, through the resuscitation of racializing imagery of anarchists and its adaptation to fit Wobblies, Bolsheviks, and other emergent “foreign” radical threats.

### **Art, Education, and Bohemian Anarchism**

As propaganda of the deed was displaced by a renewed focus on propaganda of the word during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, audiences could hear anarchists lecturing on “modern education,” on literature, and on scientific matters in weekly or monthly forums held in cities like New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago, and San Francisco. In New York City, mainstays of the *Mother Earth* circle, such as Harry Kelly and Leonard Abbot, bolstered anarchist educational and cultural efforts by founding the Francisco Ferrer Association in 1910. Kelly was born in St. Charles, Missouri in 1871, the son of an English father and American mother. Working as a printer in Boston as a young man, he was inspired by a speech delivered by the touring British anarchist C.W. Mowbray. Kelly spent three months under the tutelage of Peter Kropotkin and the Freedom Press group in London before returning to work with the movement in the United States. Abbot, seven years younger than Kelly, was raised in a prosperous and respected New England family. Influenced by the ideas of William

Morris and Edward Carpenter he worked as an editor and was active in the Socialist Party before becoming an anarchist around 1907.<sup>85</sup>

Named after a progressive educator executed by the government of Spain in 1909, the Ferrer Association established a radical social center that hosted evening and weekend class for adults as well as a day school for the children of radical workers. After two years on the Lower East Side (first on St. Marks Place, than on E. 12<sup>th</sup> Street) the Ferrer Center moved to a three-story row house on 107<sup>th</sup> Street in East Harlem, at that time a neighborhood of Jewish and Italian working-class immigrants. The Center served as a meeting ground in which the city's many ethnically defined anarchists groups interacted with one another. In an unpublished memoir, Kelly noted, "Nationalities as such did not exist for us, and if any one had been foolhardy enough to emphasize his race as being superior to others he would have been hooted down. Numerically the Jews predominated, but there were Frenchmen, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Englishmen, Irishmen, Russians, Roumanians, Negroes, Asiatics, and visitors from various other ethnic groups, in addition to native-born Americans."<sup>86</sup>

The Ferrer Association excelled at broadening its offerings beyond the speeches of anarchist movement regulars. Will Durant lectured on history and philosophy, Moritz Jagendorf organized a Free Theatre troupe, and the black radical

---

<sup>85</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Oakland, AK Press, 2006 [1980]), 183-196; Blaine McKinley, "Quagmires of Necessity': American Anarchists and Dilemmas of Vocation," *American Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (Winter, 1982): 503-523.

<sup>86</sup> Harry Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 20, pgs. 1-2, unpublished manuscript, John Nicholas Beffel Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

Hubert Harrison was a regular speaker and audience member. These and other events attracted non-anarchist audience members, providing anarchists with a practical means of spreading their ideas beyond their often isolated circles. “The place seethed,” Kelly recalled, “with animation and debate of vital issues, and no cause was too poor nor too radical or delicate to be denied a hearing...Among subjects threshed out were economics, politics, sex, psychology, psychoanalysis, literature, art, drama, the Single Tax, Socialism, Guild Socialism, Anarchism, and Syndicalism.”<sup>87</sup> On Friday nights working people and intellectuals packed the Center’s hall to listen to talks delivered by highly respected progressive and radical figures such Clarence Darrow and the muckraking journalist Lincoln Steffens.<sup>88</sup>

Goldman, more than any other anarchist of the period, worked to cultivate relationships between industrial workers and bohemian artists and intellectuals. Her work with the latter in free speech and birth control campaigns, as well as the significant donations they began making to *Mother Earth* and Goldman’s own legal defense campaigns, convinced her of the benefits of collaborating with middle-class progressives. In a 1914 *Mother Earth* essay she argued that professionals were, at base, “intellectual proletarians” who had the ability to make important contributions to the social struggle if they choose to do so. “It is through the cooperation of the intellectual proletarians, who try to find expression, and the revolutionary proletarians who seek to remold life,” she wrote, “that we in America will establish a real unity

---

<sup>87</sup> Kelly, “Roll Back the Years,” Chap. 20, pg. 2.

<sup>88</sup> Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 77-81.

and by means of it wage a successful war against present society.”<sup>89</sup> After 1910 Goldman consciously began tailoring some of her lectures to appeal to middle class audiences. She spoke frequently on the political “morals” of modern drama, explaining to her comrades that while workers are moved to radical politics by the injustices of their own lives, drama served as an important means of helping more privileged intellectuals understand social conditions and reconsider their “relation to the people, to the social unrest permeating the atmosphere.” Comments such as these indicate Goldman was cultivating an incipient understanding of the hegemonic nature of politics. She saw culture as a tool that could move people in a variety of social positions to take collective action by helping them view reality in a new light. While Goldman provided the rationale, the Ferrer Center served as the primary institutional link between the U.S. anarchist movement and the modern art movement during the 1910s.

In the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century a growing coterie of American artists worked to break the hold traditional academies of art held over the content and style of

---

<sup>89</sup> Emma Goldman, “Intellectual Proletarians” reprinted in Schulman, *Red Emma Speaks*, 222-231. Goldman cites journalists, professors, teachers, writers, musicians, bookkeepers, actresses, and nurses as examples of intellectual proletarians. While acknowledging that employees in such positions may “enjoy material comfort and social position” Goldman asserts that they remain “slavishly dependent... upon those who make the price and dictate the terms of intellectual activities.” Goldman’s argument predates by more than 80 years recent theorizations of commonalities between knowledge workers and service workers. See Andrew Ross, *Nice Work if You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times* (New York: NYU Press, 2009); Edu-Factory Collective, *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, The Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory* (New York: Autonomedia, 2009).

work deemed acceptable.<sup>90</sup> Whereas the academies emphasized technique to create realistic representation and subject matter that celebrated traditional Western values, the new artists sought to depict a much wider subject matter, including the lives of common people, and saw artistic style or form as an expression of the artist's perspective or identity. Challenging the academies required artists to create new spaces and traditions for displaying art, since the academies had also monopolized gallery space and organized exhibits through juries that ranked submissions on narrowly defined criteria. One of the leading critics of academic art in the United States was Robert Henri, a painter who had been influenced as a student in France by the artists who illustrated Emile Pouget's scandalous anarcho-syndicalist journal, *Pere Peinard*.<sup>91</sup> After meeting Emma Goldman, Henri lent the Ferrer Center reproductions of famous paintings "to help create a love of the beautiful" and began teaching a course on art there in November, 1911. Henri would continue teaching at the Ferrer Center for nearly seven years, until it closed during the First World War. According

---

<sup>90</sup> On the interrelations of the anarchist movement and avant-garde art before World War I, see Alan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2001); Alan Antliff, *Art and Anarchy: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall* (Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp, 2007); Avrich, *Modern School*, especially 121-182; Lawrence Veysey, *The Communal Experience*.

<sup>91</sup> *Pere Peinard* presented an attitude and visual style similar to the British anarchist tabloid *Class War*, produced a century later. Both displayed an utter contempt for the ruling class and regularly featured images and writing that encouraged individual acts of (often violent) retribution by workers against their bosses and the rich in general. On *Pere Peinard*, see Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 17-21. On *Class War*, see Class War Federation, *Unfinished Business: The Politics of Class War* (San Francisco: AK Press, 2001) and Ian Bone, *Bash the Rich: True Confessions of an Anarchist in the U.K.* (Bristol: Tangent, 2007).

to Kelly, “His lectures, delivered twice a week, were delightful as well as instructive, and naturally brought within our doors many listeners who otherwise would not have come.”<sup>92</sup> George Bellows, a founding figure of the “Ashcan School” of artists, assisted Henri during his Ferrer Center classes. Their students included individuals that would make names for themselves after the war, including Ben Benn, Adolf Wolff, Rockwell Kent, and Robert Minor.<sup>93</sup> Ferrer Center art classes had a defining impact on the life and work of Man Ray, the artist recognized as the leading U.S. American contributor to the Dada movement. In 1914 Man Ray provided striking anti-war images for the covers of two issues of *Mother Earth* and issued a small publication of his own which paid tribute to the anarchists who died in the Lexington Avenue townhouse explosion.<sup>94</sup>

Collaborations between avant-garde artists and working-class revolutionary anarchists of the sort that developed at the Ferrer Center were not unique to the U.S. American context. A growing literature documents the deep interconnections that existed between anarchists and artists in France, Spain, and other parts of Europe, stretching back to the 1880s. Pablo Picasso, Camille Pissarro, Marcel Duchamp, and other canonical modernists were influenced by anarchist critiques of growing inequalities of wealth and the despoliation of nature caused by rapid

---

<sup>92</sup> Kelly, “Roll Back the Years,” Chap. 20, pg. 14.

<sup>93</sup> Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 26-27.

<sup>94</sup> Francis M. Naumann, “Man Ray and the Ferrer Center: Art and Anarchy in the Pre-Dada Period,” *Drunken Boat 2* (1994).

industrialization.<sup>95</sup> Their interactions set the stage for the emergence of radical avant-garde movements—Dada, Surrealism, Situationism—throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The simultaneous expansion of anarchist politics in the labor movement and in the world of high culture was not simply coincidental, but a development which participants understood as linked. Many pre-war bohemians explicitly aligned themselves with syndicalist labor struggles, contributing financial, moral, and other forms of support. Most famously, perhaps, they helped to stage the Patterson Pageant, a play in which striking silk workers from Patterson, New Jersey, staged a dramatization of their struggle before a capacity crowd in Madison Square Garden. Max Weber, a Ferrer Center artist and early proponent of Futurist and Cubist techniques, encouraged his fellow students at the center to “take time off from the life-[drawing] class, and “go out among the people who toil in the mills and shops, go to scenes of bridge construction, foundries, excavation” to capture in their work the zeitgeist of the times.<sup>96</sup> In 1912, the anarchist journalist Hutchins Hapgood interviewed Arthur Dove, the painter credited with producing the earliest examples of abstraction in the canon of U.S. American modernism. In a discussion of the recent organizing successes of the IWW, Dove noted, “in politics and art, advanced workers

---

<sup>95</sup> Richard Sonn, *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); Patricia Leighton, “Reveil Anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art,” in Josh MacPhee and Erik Reuland, eds., *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority* (Oakland: AK press, 2007), 26-41; Patricia Leighton, *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989); Antliff, *Anarchy and Art*, 37-70.

<sup>96</sup> Quoted in Naumann, “Man Ray,” 74.

are trying to reduce things to the simplest.” As artists turned to formalism, the militant workers attempted to “simplify the conception of the classes.” To Dove’s mind, an artist could not “cut himself [sic] away from labor or other movements” and still present avant-garde work. Though the connections Dove drew were strained, art historian Alan Antliff points to the importance of such thinking: “An artist, not a critic, conjoined formalism with the values of individualism, freedom of expression, and anti-academicism to forge a single front from Henri’s expressionism to the most extreme abstraction yet seen in the United States.”<sup>97</sup> As Hapgood himself put it, “Whether in literature, plastic art, the labor movement...we find an instinct to loosen up the old forms and traditions, to dynamite the baked and hardened earth so that fresh flowers can grow.”<sup>98</sup>

Critics allied with the traditional art world were also quick to draw connections between the new art and anarchism. Reviewing the infamous Armory Show of 1913, which brought many leading European modernists to the United States for the first time, the respected critic Kenyon Cox asserted, “The men who would make art merely expressive of their personal whim, make it speak in a special language only understood by themselves, are as truly anarchists as those who would overthrow all

---

<sup>97</sup> Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 37-38.

<sup>98</sup> Hutchins Hapgood, “Art and Unrest,” *New York Globe and Commercial Advertiser*, Jan. 27, 1913, quoted in Christine Stansell, *American Moderns: Bohemian New York City and the Creation of New Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 2.

social laws.”<sup>99</sup> It is telling that critics frequently denounced modern art shows using the same racial language of degeneration and threats to civilization that circulated widely in nativist campaigns against eastern and southern European anarchists. Antliff notes a 1913 *Art and Progress* article which “condemned this ‘Picasso and Matisse Art’ as ‘egotistical...deteriorated soul-stuff’ resembling ‘such paintings as are found in the consultation-collections of asylums.’” The critic Adeline Adams believed the work was symptomatic of “downward and backward movements in men’s minds,” while Cox described it as “hideous and degraded...a freak of a diseased intellect.”<sup>100</sup>

While the depths of the bonds between anarchist organizers and avant-garde artists should not be overstated, the pre-war period marked the emergence in both Europe and the United States of a community of artists who identified with the libertarian, egalitarian, and anti-militaristic ethos of anarchist thinkers. Avant-garde artists provided not only a new potential demographic base of support for anarchist politics, but also brought to the table new intellectual resources, and experimental strategies for social transformation. As we will see, the complicated relationships established between artistically minded and class-struggle focused anarchists has continued to structure and animate anarchist politics in the United States and abroad to the present day.

---

<sup>99</sup> Quoted in Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 47-48.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism*, 49-50. On the turn of the century discourse on racial degeneration and threats to civilization, see Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*.

## **Individual Self-Expression and Collective Revolution**

The classic anarchist movement reached its zenith in the United States in the years from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the country entered World War I in 1917. This growth is attributable to two simultaneous developments within the movement. First, U.S. anarchists swung strategically away from insurrectionary anarchism and back towards a mass anarchist strategy with the inauguration of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905. The IWW and its affiliated unions provided anarchists with a structure and strategy for organizing working people on a national scale for the first time since the Haymarket tragedy. In the same period, some U.S. anarchists began to apply libertarian ideas to aspects of life beyond the immediate confines of the class struggle, such as sex, reproduction, civil liberties, art, and literature. The emergence of talented agitators who dealt at length with these subjects and who could write and speak in English, notably Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman, enabled anarchists to broaden the movement's appeal to other social groups, including a fraction of native-born, middle-class liberals. Anarchists expanded their ability to organize within their traditional working-class base while simultaneously building coalitions across class lines by developing a politics that acknowledged multiple vectors of social domination.

This multi-dimensional approach to politics, however, was not universally supported by movement participants and was not without its own tensions. Despite his own contributions, Harry Kelly voiced a broadly shared concern that the English-

speaking sector of the anarchist movement was growing detached from the struggle of working class anarchists to overthrow capitalism in its pursuit of freedom of expression and the ability of participants to live their lives in ways less stultifying than social expectations allowed for. Anarchism, he feared, was becoming “a movement for individual self-expression rather than collective revolution...Instead of inspiring the workers with revolutionary idea, we teach them speculative theories of liberty.”<sup>101</sup> Kelly’s comments spoke to a number of intertwined issues that anarchists were grappling with in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: philosophical debates regarding the nature of liberty and equality, arguments about the expansiveness of the anarchist vision, and strategic considerations on how to achieve that vision.

Anarchists had always fought for both social equality and the freedom of individuals to act according to their own consciences. Individualist anarchists of Benjamin Tucker’s school believed that the ability of individuals to produce and trade without the interference of government-supported monopolies would generate a rough equality able to ensure a stable, ordered society—a position summarized in Proudhon’s often repeated formulation: “Liberty, the mother, not the daughter, of order.” Anarchist-communists and anarcho-syndicalists, in contrast, believed that real freedom for individuals to develop their capacities and personalities could only develop from the state of public affluence created by an egalitarian economic system constituted on the basis of common ownership of productive property. In this sense,

---

<sup>101</sup> Harry Kelly, “Anarchism: A Plea for the Impersonal,” *Mother Earth*, February 1908, quoted in Wexler, *Emma Goldman*, 205.

the pursuit of personal freedoms from state and social coercion and the pursuit of economic and political equality existed as a consistent tension in anarchist politics.<sup>102</sup> If the class struggles waged by the syndicalists and insurrectionists emphasized the pole of egalitarianism, anarchists' growing interests in feminism, freedom of speech, and daring forms of art appeared to prioritize expanding the realms of personal freedom. While anarchists focusing their efforts on the latter believed their work led also towards achievement of social equality, anarchists who remained more deeply ensconced in a class-centered and reductionist philosophy were often skeptical.

Kelly's comments also raised the question of whether social change demanded the concerted effort of massive numbers of people acting in unison, or if it could be effected through more piecemeal efforts of lone individuals or small groups. Implicit in Kelly's advocacy of the former position, during the first decade of the century, lay an understanding of the conditions of freedom and un-freedom based in class relations under capitalism. Since it was nearly impossible for poor workers to support themselves outside of capitalist economy, a structural transformation of the economic system was viewed as their only realistic option. True freedom was seen as a possibility only after the violent overthrow of the state. Taking class conflict as the implicit model for all freedom struggles, however, ignored the possibility that struggles for other dimensions of liberty might proceed by different means or might

---

<sup>102</sup> Cindy Milstein has recently argued that this tension constitutes a defining features of the anarchist tradition. Cindy Milstein, *Anarchism and Its Aspirations* (Oakland: AK Press and the Institute for Anarchist Studies, 2010), 12-15.

offer rebels greater room for maneuverability within the confines of the current system. Emma Goldman, as we have seen, argued that individual women could improve their own lives by shrugging off the social expectations of chastity and domesticity, as she herself had done. Doing so, she believed, was as much an act of self-expression as a contribution to the struggle for social equality between men and women. Furthermore, struggles for gender equality ultimately parlayed into economic struggles by decreasing the ability of employers to pay women lower wages and forcing recognition of the value of women's unpaid reproductive labor.

Viewing feminist struggles as fundamentally about personal freedom may have led Kelly to overlook the organizing work carried out by anarchist feminists (such as the family planning organizations they developed) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and to conflate such struggles with the right to free expression demanded by artists in the same years. Problematic as it was in other respects, Kelly's critique presciently warned against the tendency, which grew later in the century, for purported anarchists to simply live their own lives in as free a fashion as their social status allowed for (as "bohemians" or "drop-outs") without investing themselves in the organized struggle to create lasting structural transformations that would increase security and liberty for the least privileged.

As anarchists began parsing out such argument and perspectives, however, the debate was hijacked by the outbreak of the First World War and the international repression of anarchist thought and activity that followed in its wake. Discussions of

art and feminism were greatly diminished in the U.S. anarchist movement during the 1920s and the 1930s, though the idea of anarchists living freely “before the revolution” developed in new directions during these decades. However, the tensions of the 1910s between individual expression and collective struggle, between prefiguring the new world and clashing with the old, resurfaced time and again after the Second World War—amongst anarchist pacifists in the 1940s, in the Surrealist influenced Beat movement of the 1950s, as a component of French Situationist thought during the late 1960s, and with the fusion of anarchism and punk music in the 1980s.

### **Anarchists and World War I**

In 1916 this anarchist movement—internally differentiated and alive with debate, but growing in numbers, self-confidence, and institutions—set itself against nearly every aspect of the social order of the United States. As the war in Europe deepened and the United States launched a campaign of “preparedness,” anarchists were among the earliest and most outspoken critics of militarism. Most anarchists, socialists, and Wobblies saw the war as a deepening of the conflict between the working and employing classes. Forced to labor in factories owned by the wealthy in order to survive prior to the war, the draft meant they would be forced to kill other working people in an army commanded by, and serving their business interests of, an elite minority. In the pages of *Mother Earth* and at a series of mass Anti-Conscription Meetings held in New York City during the spring of 1917, Emma Goldman

enunciated a critique of the war shared by many of her comrades. Urging her audiences to resist the rising tide of nationalistic rhetoric and calls for war preparedness, she argued, “The pathos of it all is that the America which is to be protected by a huge military force is not the America of the people, but that of the privileged class; the class which robs and exploits the masses, and controls their lives from the cradle to the grave.” The institutions which patriotic leagues called on Americans to defend were “the institutions which protect and sustain a handful of people in the robbery and plunder of the masses, the institutions which drain the blood of the native as well as of the foreigner, and turn it into wealth and power.” Goldman concluded by arguing that mere pacifism was insufficient. Rather, opponents of war had to undermine, through class struggle, the social order that made international conflicts inevitable:

It is this war of the classes that we must concentrate upon, and in that connection the war against false values, against evil institutions, against all social atrocities. Those who appreciate the urgent need of co-operating in great struggles must oppose military preparedness imposed by the state and capitalism for the destruction of the masses. They must organize the preparedness of the masses for the overthrow of both capitalism and the state.<sup>103</sup>

Ricardo Flores Magón, likewise, issued a series of passionate appeals for readers of *Regeneración* to refuse military service and organize against the war. “In the homes of those on the bottom,” he wrote,

---

<sup>103</sup> Emma Goldman, “Preparedness: The Road to Universal Slaughter,” *Mother Earth*, December 1915.

there are laments about a son sent off to war and the hearts grow heavy and the eyes fill with tears thinking that tomorrow, and perhaps even today, the big boy who is the life of the hovel, the youth who with his impudence and grace wraps in the colors of the rainbow the sad existence of his parents who are in their declining years, will be yanked from the loving breast of the family to go to confront, gun in hand, another youth who is, like him, the light of his home, and whom he doesn't hate and can't hate, because he doesn't even know him.<sup>104</sup>

In this single long sentence, crafted in his signature, floral prose style, Magón identified the working-class character of the militaries of both sides of the war, inveighed against nationalist hatred, and couched his anti-enlistment appeal in the needs of the working-class family.

While Goldman and Magón articulated the position of the majority of anarchists in the United States, opposition to the war was not unanimous. In 1916 the doyen of the international anarchist movement, Peter Kropotkin, shocked many of his comrades by declaring his endorsement of the Allies' military campaign. Kropotkin felt Germany's militarism and authoritarian national culture posed a serious threat to liberties won throughout other parts of Europe, and therefore urged anarchists to help defeat it. He found support from a number of influential anti-statists throughout Europe, including Jean Grave and James Guillaume.<sup>105</sup> Although it had originally editorialized against the war, the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* opened its pages to a discussion of the merits of the war, and eventually adopted Kropotkin's position. In

---

<sup>104</sup> *Regeneración*, March 16, 1918, reprinted in *Dreams of Freedom*, 145.

<sup>105</sup> George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, 2nd. ed. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Encore Editions, 2004), 180-181; Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: HarperCollins, 1992), 331-332; Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 116.

doing so it became the only major anarchist publication in the United States to support the war effort, earning considerable enmity from other anarchists in the process.<sup>106</sup>

Unlike in Europe, where the major social democratic parties famously abandoned their position of anti-militarist working-class internationalism, the major organizations of the U.S. Left, including the Socialist Party and the IWW, maintained an outspoken opposition to the war alongside the majority of the country's anarchists. They were joined by a small contingent of pacifists who, under the auspices of the newly formed War Resisters League, pledged not to fight or support the war for a variety of reasons. Many were members of peace churches such as the Quakers and Mennonites while others were motivated by feminist ideas that linked war with masculine personality traits and promoted the nurturing "nature" of women as an alternative.<sup>107</sup>

The Left's calls for human solidarity along class lines that cut across national allegiances were anathema to the patriotic sentiment that political and opinion leaders adeptly stoked when the U.S. entered the war. Government officials and newspaper editors took the anarchist, socialist, Wobbly, and pacifist opposition to the war seriously, worrying that together they could impede the process of raising an army and producing war material. Yet the war also presented the opportunity for business owners to challenge the growing militancy of labor unions. World War I is considered a jumping off point for major shifts in the organization of business and manufacturing,

---

<sup>106</sup> Avrigh, *Anarchist Portraits*, 194.

<sup>107</sup> Scott Bennett, *Radical Pacifism in America: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 1-22.

including the swift adoption of assembly line mass production, the turn to mass marketing, and the growth of management bureaucracy in large firms.<sup>108</sup> But for these post-war developments to have been possible, business owners needed to greatly reduce the demand of employees to take control of production for themselves. They accomplished this through a complex—not always coordinated—campaign of class decomposition that relied not only on their own efforts, but also on the actions of state agencies and the initiatives of other social groups who seized on wartime opportunities to further their own agendas.<sup>109</sup> If anarchists hoped to turn the war in Europe into a revolutionary struggle against the capitalist class, business owners had no compunction about using the conflict to dispose of the threat of labor radicalism. Since the United States' productive capacity was harnessed to the needs of the military during the war, factory and mine owners successfully argued that employee strikes and slow downs threatened national security and therefore justified the intervention of federal agents, military personnel, private guards, and citizens groups to defeat them.

---

<sup>108</sup> Alfred D. Chandler, *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977).

<sup>109</sup> The idea of class decomposition was developed by Italian marxists of the operaismo tradition as a means of evaluating relations of power at a given moment. For them, class composition is a measure of the extent to which workers are able to control the process of production and its rewards and to resist the direction of owners and managers. Class decomposition occurs when the capitalist class is able to weaken or destroy working class cooperation and power. The opposite, class recomposition occurs as workers find new ways to unite and increase their power. See Harry Cleaver, "The Inversion of Class Perspective in Marxian Theory: From Valorization to Self-Valorization," in *Open Marxism, Volume II: Theory and Practice*, ed. Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, and Kosmas Psychopedis (London: Pluto Press, 1992), 106-144; Nick Dyer-Witheford, *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999), 66-67.

Other institutions and social groups had their own stakes in wartime demands for national loyalty and unquestioned obedience to authority. Churches and anti-vice organizations were eager to suppress the flaunting of their codes of sexual morality by radicals, while opponents of women's suffrage saw an opportunity to link feminist demands with threats to national security.<sup>110</sup> Meanwhile some native-born and naturalized workers availed themselves of an opportunity to secure their livelihoods by reducing the influx of racialized working people—both from the South and from abroad—into their neighborhoods and places of employment. The determined anti-war stand of the Left, then, provided an opening for the administration of Woodrow Wilson—on behalf of, and in collaboration with, a variety of powerful constituencies—to reign in the activities of a union, the IWW, that was successfully organizing tens of thousands of workers across ethnic lines, feminists and pacifists who critiqued violence of all sorts, and anarchists who denounced marriage, defended homosexuality, and believed in bodily retribution for the deaths of fellow workers. The organized attack on radicals that followed has come to be seen as the nation's second Red Scare.<sup>111</sup> (The first Red Scare followed on the heels of the Haymarket Affair and the third, also known as McCarthyism, arose in the early Cold War period).

---

<sup>110</sup> Christopher Capazolla, "The Only Bedge Needed Is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America," *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1354-1382; Kim E. Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001).

<sup>111</sup> The Red Scare of the WWI era has been studied extensively. Cf. William Preston, Jr., *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933*, (New York:

The legislative and judicial aspects of this offensive lasted more than three years and were carried out under the auspices of dozens of agencies operating at the local, state, and federal levels. The radical movement was suppressed through a fine-mesh legal net comprised of federal wartime loyalty laws, restrictive postal regulations, immigration regulations, and state-level “Criminal Anarchy” and “Criminal Syndicalism” laws. Enactment of this legal net functioned in coordination with acts of mob violence and a widespread struggle over definitions and representations of “radicalism,” “anarchism,” and “bolshevism” that drew on deeply held ideas about sexuality, race, and national belonging. Against this grand legal and extra-legal campaign of repression, anarchists fought for their ideals and their own freedom and bodily safety via the written word, public demonstrations, strikes, legal maneuvering and violent attacks on agents of repression, buoyed—for a time—by the success of the October revolution in Russia.

### **The Espionage Act and 1917 Immigration Act**

On June 15, 1917, President Wilson approved the Espionage Act, which delineated punishments for spying by agents of foreign powers, but also prohibited organized resistance to the war. The act made it a crime to “willfully make or convey false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success”

---

Harper and Row, 1963); Robert K. Muray, *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964); Edwin Palmer Hoyt, *The Palmer Raids, 1919-1920: An Attempt to Suppress Dissent*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1969); *America's Reign of Terror: World War I, the Red Scare, and the Palmer Raids*, (New York: Random House, 1971). Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, and Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded*, focus on the suppression of anarchists specifically.

of United States' military forces, "to promote the success of its enemies," to "cause or attempt to cause insubordination, disloyalty, mutiny, refusal of duty, in the military," or to "willfully obstruct the recruiting or enlistment service of the United States, to the injury of the service or of the United States."<sup>112</sup> Violation of the Espionage Act carried a penalty of a \$10,000 fine and twenty years imprisonment. The Espionage Act also delegated to the Postmaster General the power to ban from the mail any issue of a publication found to violate the Act's provisions and to permanently revoke a publication's Second Class mail status, which often made mailing future issues to subscribers prohibitively expensive. Congress placed additional burdens on periodicals when it approved the Trading with the Enemy Act—a law that required periodicals to submit English translations of all materials published in a foreign language to government officials, or face loss of mailing privileges. Over the next two years, at least twenty state governments adopted "criminal syndicalist" laws which prohibited organizations which advocated the use of sabotage or other "unlawful methods," to accomplish "industrial or political reform."<sup>113</sup> These new regulations were enforced by a government apparatus expanding at all levels. The Department of Justice, headed by Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, enforced the Espionage Act at the federal level. Palmer delegated responsibility to the recently formed Bureau of

---

<sup>112</sup> "Espionage Act, June 15, 1917," First World War.com, A Multimedia History of World War I, <http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/espionageact.htm> (accessed August 7, 2010).

<sup>113</sup> Ohio Criminal Syndicalist law of 1919, quoted in Murray, *Red Scare*, 231-233. See also, Elridge F. Dowell, *A History of Criminal Syndicalism Legislation in the United States* (New York: Da Capo, 1969).

Investigation (precursor to the FBI), where responsibilities largely fell to an up-and-coming young agent named J. Edgar Hoover.<sup>114</sup> State legislatures launched their own investigations—the Rusk Committee of New York being perhaps the most notorious—while municipal police departments created or expanded “red squads” and other special investigation units.<sup>115</sup>

The same day the Espionage Act took effect, police arrested Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman on account of the anti-conscription rallies they had organized. The pair was charged with violating the Selective Service law of 1916, which, they were happy to learn, carried only a maximum two-year jail sentence, instead of the Espionage Act’s twenty.<sup>116</sup> Berkman’s agitational newspaper *The Blast* ceased publication immediately, while the staff of *Mother Earth* managed to publish one more issue before the journal was permanently banned from the mails.<sup>117</sup> The editors were quickly found guilty and shipped to federal penitentiaries in Kansas and Atlanta. Federal agents had already suppressed *L’Era Nuovo* in April, and on June 17, they raided the Lynn, Massachusetts, offices of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, arresting its editor, Luigi Galleani, and printer, Giovanni Eramo, for counseling readers to dodge the

---

<sup>114</sup> Kenneth D. Ackerman, *The Young J. Edgar: Hoover, the Red Scare, and the Assault on Civil Liberties* (New York: Carrol and Graf, 2007).

<sup>115</sup> Todd J. Pfannestiel, *Rethinking the Red Scare: The Lusk Committee and New York’s Crusade against Radicalism, 1919-1923* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

<sup>116</sup> Though timed conspicuously with the ratification of the Espionage Act, Goldman and Berkman were actually indicted under the Draft Act of May 18, 1917 for interfering with conscription. Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 188.

<sup>117</sup> Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 196.

draft.<sup>118</sup> Galleani, had, indeed, counseled readers to refuse to register. On his advice, dozens of Italian anarchists made their way to Mexico to await the outbreak of revolutions in Italy and across Europe, which they expected the war would prompt. *Cronaca Sovversiva* was, thereafter, prohibited by the U.S. Postal Service. In March of 1918 Ricardo Flores Magón published a manifesto in *Regeneracion*, calling for “anarchists of the entire world and workers in general” to resist the war and prepare for revolution. Less than a week later Magón was indicted under the Espionage Act and sentenced to twenty years in prison, where he died in 1922.<sup>119</sup> Although Carlo Tresca’s newspaper, *L’Avvenire*, was not raided, it was so often deemed unmailable by the Postmaster that Tresca found it financially impossible to continue publishing after August of 1917.<sup>120</sup> The *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* was left intact by federal authorities since, unlike other anarchist newspapers, it did not advocate war resistance. *Golos Truda*, the newspaper of the Union of Russian Workers, was not suppressed for a different reason. After the May 1917 revolution that toppled the rule of Tsar Nicholas II in Russia, leading members of the URW, including Bill Shatov and *Golos Truda* editor V.M. Eikhenbaum (known as Voline), returned to their country of birth. Seeking to aid in the reconstruction of Russian society and organize anarchists to topple the provisional liberal government headed by Kerensky, they brought *Golos*

---

<sup>118</sup> Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 95. Carlo Valdinoci, *Cronaca Sovversiva*’s publisher, was also charged with obstructing the draft, but eluded police.

<sup>119</sup> Bufe, “Biographical Sketch,” 94-99.

<sup>120</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 103.

*Truda* and their printing presses with them, reestablishing the paper in Petrograd in July 1917.<sup>121</sup>

Back in the United States, the Wobblies were subject to prosecution under the Espionage Act en masse. On September 5, 1917, Bureau of Investigation agents raided sixty-four IWW halls, seized files and arrested 166 leaders in Chicago, Sacramento, Wichita, and Omaha, and other cities.<sup>122</sup> As historian Ted Morgan notes, “This was the first Justice Department experiment in a massive, multicity raid, designed to cripple an organization by subjecting its leaders to costly and protracted court proceedings.”<sup>123</sup> It was a practice the department would hone over the next three years. Brought to trial the following April, almost one hundred IWW members were convicted of interfering with the war effort and many were sentenced to ten or twenty year prison terms. The raids and other acts of war time persecution had a devastating impact on the union. Though Wobblies regrouped over the course of the following decade, they never regained the membership, influence, or cultural cache they had enjoyed before the war.<sup>124</sup> The activities of the Socialist Party and other radical organizations were also seriously interrupted by authorities enforcing the Espionage Act. Party chairman Eugene Debs was convicted of delivering an anti-war speech in

---

<sup>121</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 137-139

<sup>122</sup> Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 118-122.

<sup>123</sup> Ted Morgan, *Reds: McCarthyism in 20<sup>th</sup> Century America* (New York: Random House, 2003), 56.

<sup>124</sup> Christopher M. Finan, *From the Palmer Raids to the Patriot Act: A History of the Fight for Free Speech in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), 1-2; Murray, *Red Scare*, 11; Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 88-117; Thompson and Bekken, *IWW*, 105-120.

Ohio in 1918 and sentenced to ten years in prison. Nearly 1,500 people eventually stood trial for violating the act, with 1,000 of those found guilty.<sup>125</sup>

From the beginning, the Justice Department sought to use the Espionage Act in tandem with new immigration legislation that expanded the scope of the 1903 anti-anarchist immigration act. In 1917 Congress passed a comprehensive immigration reform bill that altered the three year ban on associating with anarchists for new immigrants; after its passage, immigrants found to support or advocate anarchism could be deported at any point. Moreover, those discovered to have secretly been anarchists when they were given citizenship could be stripped of that status. In 1918, immigration policy was further amended to exclude supporters of the Russian Bolshevik party, and to expand the purview of deportable offenses to include mere association with any person or organization that advocated the forcible overthrow of the U.S. government.<sup>126</sup> Under the revised immigration legislation, Justice Department officials did not have to prove suspected radicals had committed a specific crime, only that they subscribed to certain beliefs or associated with other radicals. Since violation of immigration statutes was not considered a crime, the accused were not entitled to legal protections or required to stand trial. This encouraged the Justice Department to attempt to deport thousands of immigrant radicals without the costly procedure of trying them. During and after the war, the Espionage Act (and later the

---

<sup>125</sup> Roy Rosenzweig et al, *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History*, Vol. 1 (Boston: St. Martins, 2008), 310.; Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 94.

<sup>126</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 158-9.

Sedition Act) expanded the standard of what ideas and activities were considered subversive, giving federal agents virtually unlimited power to investigate and detain radicals, immigrants and citizens alike. In this manner, from 1917 to 1919 the Justice Department used the Espionage and Immigration acts in tandem, easily sweeping suspects into custody under the auspices of the former, and quickly and inexpensively dispensing with their cases via the latter.<sup>127</sup>

The federal government's efforts to suppress radicalism were greatly assisted by the activity of dozens of "vigilance" and protective committees comprised of citizens eager to support the war effort by policing the home front. After President Wilson and other political leaders publicly urged citizens to be vigilant and form "home guards" against German spies and seditious radicals, hundreds of thousands of men and women created local, state-wide, and national voluntary organizations such as the American Defense Society, the National Security League, and the American Protective League, while others revived existing organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, that had long used extra-legal means to augment official state enforcement of the social order.<sup>128</sup> The American Protective League, the largest of the wartime vigilance groups, counted 250,000 members and operated under the explicit authority of local police departments and the Justice Department.<sup>129</sup> Vigilance organizations often worked directly at the behest of business owners seeking to eliminate unionism

---

<sup>127</sup> Preston, *Aliens and Dissenters*, 99.

<sup>128</sup> Capozzola, "The Only Badge"; Murray, *Red Scare*, 84-94.

<sup>129</sup> Joan Jensen, *The Price of Vigilance* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969).

in their facilities and towns. In July 1917, for example, deputized members of the Citizen's Protective League and the Workmen's Loyalty League of Cochise County, Arizona, rounded up 1200 striking IWW and AFL miners and their families, herded them into boxcars, and shipped them to the Mexican desert, as a means of breaking up a two-week old strike.<sup>130</sup> Other citizens' initiatives were more spontaneous and built on pre-war patterns of vigilantism against African Americans, striking workers, and leftists. The ACLU counted at least fifty acts of mob violence against radicals in 1919. That year, patriotic groups attacked May Day parades in cities across the country, beating participants with their own pickets and flag poles.<sup>131</sup>

Authorities found willing allies of their campaign of suppression in a broad cross section of the nation's citizenry partially because the effort was not simply coercive, but also ideological. Conservatives played on deeply held racial and sexual fears to mobilize patriotic sentiment against radical advocates of peace, freedom, and equality. From the outset the public campaign of anti-radicalism carried out in the daily press and in the pronouncements, rallies, and parades of white citizens groups was organized around the catchphrase of "100 percent Americanism." Although voiced most frequently as a demand for commitment to the principles of republican government, calls for "100% Americanism" demanded citizens and residents renounce

---

<sup>130</sup> Capozzola, "Only Badge," 1364-1369.

<sup>131</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 181.

cultural and emotional ties to countries of birth and adopt a pure national identity which implicitly excluded non-whites from full participation.<sup>132</sup>

Government officials also used vigilante violence as an excuse to increase their own power to prosecute radicals. When a liberal Montana judge interpreted the Espionage Act narrowly in a precedent setting case that would have greatly restricted its use against anti-war radicals, the Montana state legislature quickly adopted a Criminal Syndicalism act that gave it carte blanche power to imprison any critics of the U.S. government or the war. Arguing that if the federal government did not police anti-war dissidents severely, vigilante mobs surely would, the U.S. Congress adopted the Montana Act nearly word for word in a May 1918 amendment to the Espionage Act. The revised version, known as the Sedition Act, outlawed any criticism or defamatory comments about the U.S. government or armed forces, as well as any activity that impeded the production of war material. Whereas the Espionage Act punished activity that actually impeded the drafting of an army, the Sedition Act criminalized even the intention to impede the draft or sell war bonds. It also gave the postmaster the right to fully deny use of the mail to any publication found in violation of the act, rather than simply stripping it of Second Class privileges.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>132</sup> See Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 15-38; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 1-36.

<sup>133</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 29-35.

### ***Frayhayt and the Anarchist Soviet Bulletin***

It was in this climate of repression and this vacuum of leadership in the anarchist movement that Jacob and Mary Abrams, Mollie Steimer, and others began producing *Frayhayt* in January 1918. Six of the group members shared an apartment in East Harlem, a short walk from a rented room where they had secretly installed a small hand-powered printing press, and near the former Ferrer Center, which had succumbed, like other movement institutions, to repression. Though the group members chose to print in Yiddish—perhaps because of their greater ease with the language, perhaps as a counterpoint to the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*'s pro-war position—it adorned the paper's masthead with Henry David Thoreau's famous proto-anarchist claim, "That government is best that governs not at all."<sup>134</sup> When each new issue was completed, Steimer and other members folded them tightly and delivered them by foot, undetected, to the homes of supporters. They were aided by the fact that as young Jewish women, indistinguishable from their neighbors, they bore little resemblance to the stereotypes of anarchists circulating in the press at the time.

Despite the arrests and the violent threats to radicals surrounding them, members of the Frayhayt Group found solace and resolve in the overthrow of the Russian Provisional Government by radical workers in October, 1917. In the spring and summer of 1917 Russian anarchists had found some common ground with the Bolshevik party after Lenin declared his support for a system of federated soviets, or

---

<sup>134</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 214-215.

worker's councils, to replace the parliamentary system. Though Bolsheviks predominated, anarchists eagerly took part in the ouster of Alexander Kerensky and his cabinet by thousands of armed workers, sailors, and soldiers on October 25.<sup>135</sup> In addition to letters from family members who had remained in Russia, anarchists in the United States learned of developments there through the communication of comrades who had returned after the tsar was deposed in May.

The majority of U.S. Americans, of course, did not share the anarchists' excitement for the revolution. The victory won by radical workers in eastern Europe only exacerbated anti-radicalism in the United States, especially after Russia withdrew from the war in March of 1918. Although the Russian revolution eventually shifted the focus of public fears from anarchists to Communists, most U.S. Americans lumped anarchists, Communists, Wobblies, and other radicals under the catch-all term of "reds" until the mid-1920s.<sup>136</sup> Indeed, it was the tendency to view as a unified whole the anarchists' threats of political violence, the IWW's ability to organize mass strikes, and the Communists' example of a successful revolution, that lent plausibility to claims animating the Red Scare that an American revolution was also in the offing.

Mollie Steimer and her comrades continued their activities undetected until August 1918, when the U.S. sent troops to Russia in an attempt to subvert the new

---

<sup>135</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 128-130, 158.

<sup>136</sup> See Murray, *Red Scare*, 166-167. Theodore Roosevelt, for instance, used the term Bolshevik to describe "the Germanized Socialists, the leaders of the Non-Partisan League, the professional pacifists and so-called internationalists, the I.W.W. and anarchists and bomb-throwers and dynamiters and 'direct action' men generally." Quoted in Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood*, 33.

revolutionary government. The Frayhayt Group viewed the intervention by the Western powers in the Russian civil war as a threat to the possibility that the revolution would develop in a libertarian direction. Knowing the fate their families and other working people would suffer if the White Army and its Western allies won, they pledged to do all they could to prevent the troop deployment from taking place. The group printed thousands of leaflets in English and Yiddish calling for a general strike to oppose U.S. intervention in Russia. Although they deposited some leaflets in mail slots, in a romantic flourish they also threw handfuls of the fliers off the roofs of buildings near the garment factories of the Lower East Side.

Unfortunately for the young organizers, men who caught copies of the leaflets as they fluttered to the ground outside a factory on Houston Street immediately alerted the police. When officers searched the building in question, an employee named Hyman Rosansky was discovered to have copies of the leaflets in his jacket pockets. Grilled and threatened by the police, he admitted to having distributed the fliers, and turned informant to reduce his own charges. Overnight, Steimer and Jacob Abrams, along with *Frayhayt* members Jacob Schwartz, Hyman Lachowsky and Samuel Lipman—plus an unlucky acquaintance—were captured by the police and interrogated by the chief of the Bomb Squad.<sup>137</sup> When Lachowsky refused to cooperate he was beaten so severely that the other detainees later testified that they had seen him “‘lying with his head on the desk,’ his eyes black and blue, ‘all beaten up, with some of his

---

<sup>137</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 215-216; Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 43-69.

hair on the floor.”<sup>138</sup> In October the six arrested comrades stood trial for violating the Sedition Act. Jacob Schwartz was unable to appear before the court, having died of injuries sustained during his own interrogation. After a clearly prejudicial trial, the men were sentenced to twenty years and Steimer to fifteen—this for circulating a flier encouraging a strike. The defendants were released on bail while the case was appealed to the Supreme Court.<sup>139</sup>

Despite the bloody suppression of *Frayhayt*, anarchists continued to circulate their opinions, believing resolutely in the power of the written word to move others to action. While out on bail, Steimer helped produce a new underground English language newspaper, the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*. Beginning as a one-paged broadsheet in April 1919, the newspaper was a desperate effort to call the working people of the United States to insurrection against the capitalist order and the increasingly repressive U.S. government. The *Bulletin*'s first issue responded to widespread economic dislocations that followed the Armistice and attempted to expose the administration's war rhetoric as hypocritical. “We were told by the capitalists during this countries (sic) participation in the war that we were making sacrifices for our country,” began the lead editorial, “but now when the war is over we are beginning to see, that, while most of the capitalists have made millions, we the workers by whose ACTUAL WORK THEY MADE those millions find ourselves seeking jobs in front of employment agencies, and just as poor as ever.” Nor had the

---

<sup>138</sup> Trial transcript quoted in Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 62.

<sup>139</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 218-219.

editors forgotten the intervention in Russia. They asked, “If [Germany] invading Belgium was a crime, then what is our union with the worlds reactionary forces to destroy the Russian revolution to be called?”

But a careful analysis of the post-war conjuncture was not the paper’s intent. “We are not going to waste time condemning or calling names the capitalists classes,” the editors declared. “We are out to urge ACTION!” After sketching a system of self-owned and managed workplaces, they beseeched readers to “Organize Anarchist Commune Soviets and organize them SECRETLY, as soon as our numbers grow large enough, making us so strong as to assert ourselves in the OPEN, we will DO it—by beginning to take over the FACTORIES, MINES, and FARMS of America.”<sup>140</sup> The *Bulletin* then proceeded on pure bluster, hoping that the illusion of a massive revolutionary upsurge already in progress would spur readers to take proactive steps of their own:

**San Francisco. Cal.** From our own sources, we just received word that a Soldier’s and Sailors Branch of the AMERICAN ANARCHIST FEDERATED COMMUNE SOVIETS has been organized there.  
**New York. NY.** Two branches...have been organized recently in two of the largest department stores in the city.<sup>141</sup>

Similar “reports” from South Dakota, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. followed. As the name of their publication indicated, many anarchists in the United States still identified strongly with the Russia revolutionaries in the early months of 1919. The

---

<sup>140</sup> “To the Workers, Farmers, Soldiers, and Sailors,” *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, April 1919, 1.

<sup>141</sup> “Anarchist Soviets Formed,” *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, April 1919, 1.

editors of the Bulletin clearly saw the councils of workers that the Bolsheviks called soviets as political cognates—in an urban setting—of the self-managing communes of workers extolled by Kropotkin and other anarchist theorists. Soon, however, anarchists would begin to reevaluate this position as reports from anarchists in Russia filtered back to the United States.

Steimer worked with a group of about a half-dozen others, including former *Mother Earth* mainstay Hippolyte Havel, to produce the paper, which the Union of Russian Workers helped to distribute “in the principal cities.”<sup>142</sup> Primary editorial responsibilities for the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, however, fell to Marcus Graham, a young firebrand who had relocated to New York City only recently. Graham had been born into a large orthodox Jewish family in Romania in 1893. At age fourteen he emigrated with his family to the United States, settling in Philadelphia. First as a garment cutter, and then as a student at the National Farm School, Graham was introduced to radical literature, including the weekly Yiddish anarchist newspaper, the *Freie Arbeiter Stimme*. An ad in that newspaper led him to the Radical Library, the anarchist meeting hall and reading room in Philadelphia. Joseph Cohen, a stalwart of Jewish American anarchism and the Radical Library’s driving force, took Graham under his wing, introducing him to the writings of Peter Kropotkin and Rudolf Rocker. When the United States began preparations to enter the first World War, Graham and several friends fled to Canada where he participated in anti-war activities.

---

<sup>142</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 179-189.

Graham communicated with the underground *Frayhayt* group during his sojourn, and early in 1919 he slipped back over the border and made his way to Manhattan.<sup>143</sup>

While the editors' hopes for American farmers and soldiers to spontaneously form federated soviets appear naïve in retrospect, it was not unreasonable of them to believe a mass working class upheaval was in the making during the Spring of 1919. Following the armistice, the United States was shaken by one of the largest strike waves in its history. In January, 35,000 Seattle shipyard workers struck over wages and hours. When management refused to budge, the Central Labor Council—heavily seeded with IWW militants—authorized a city-wide general strike in solidarity. Despite widespread fear-mongering by the press and city officials, 60,000 people came to the shipbuilders' aid on February 6<sup>th</sup>, before a mobilized national guard and pressure from conservative AFL officials exerted enough pressure to end the strike.<sup>144</sup> The defeat of the general strike did not dampen workers' willingness to challenge economic conditions, however. Robert K. Murray notes that, nationwide, “in March there were 175 strikes, in April, 248; May, 338; June, 303; July, 360; and August, 373.” During the summer of 1919, approximately 164,000 people were on strike in New York City alone.<sup>145</sup> In September, Boston policemen struck after being denied the right to form a union, creating an opportunity for rioting and looting amongst the

---

<sup>143</sup> Marcus Graham's life is not well documented. Even his given name is unknown, as he used multiple pseudonyms throughout his life. This account is drawn from the “Autobiographical Note” in Marcus Graham, *Man! An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas Essays, Poetry, and Commentary* (London: Cienfuegos Press, 1974), viii-xxi.

<sup>144</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 58-64.

<sup>145</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 111-112.

city's poor. In the same month, a nation-wide strike of more than 365,000 workers led by future Communist Party chairman William Z. Foster shut down the steel industry. Six weeks later, the miners went out.<sup>146</sup> Amidst this outpouring of worker solidarity and militancy, authorities feared radicals emboldened by the Russian Revolution would attempt a similar feat at home. The authors of the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* were only too happy to encourage such an insurrection.

The strikes of 1919, however, failed to coalesce into a seizure of the means of production and only deepened the authorities' desire to clamp down on radicalism. Shortly after the first issue of the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* was released, Graham was arrested in Patterson and sent to Ellis Island after police found copies of the *Bulletin* in his suitcase. He was held for a month, then released on bond while the government compiled evidence to deport him. A year later he was again arrested, beaten during a day-long interrogation, and returned to Ellis Island for another six months. He was eventually released when officials could not prove Graham's country of origin and he refused to provide the information himself.<sup>147</sup>

### **The American Anarchist Fighters**

During the same month that the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* made its debut in 1919, Italian anarchists grouped around *Cronaca Sovversiva* culminated a campaign of

---

<sup>146</sup> Melvyn Dubovsky and Foster Rhea Dulles, *Labor in American History*, Sixth Edition, (Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1999), 217-224.

<sup>147</sup> Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee, "Freedom of Thought Arraigned: Four Year Persecution of MAN!, 19 Year Persecution of Marcus Graham," Los Angeles: MGFPC, 1939, 8. Vertical File: Anarchism – Marcus, Shmuel – Arrest and Trial – Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee, Labadie Collection.

violent resistance to the repression of radical organizations and the pending deportation of many of their associates, which they had initiated at least two years earlier. In September, 1917, a group of Galleanisti interrupted a loyalty rally organized by a pastor in the Italian section of Milwaukee. When anarchists rushed the platform and tore down an American flag, police opened fire on them, killing two and wounding another. Police raided the group's clubhouse, beat members, and arrested eleven others. In another demonstration of the sexual politics of the Red Scare, the *Milwaukee Journal* noted that during the raid police seized literature in which, "The Italians were urged to resist selective service, soldiers were called upon to desert, matrimony was mocked, free love exalted and the church and state condemned."<sup>148</sup>

Outraged Italian anarchists decided to respond to this violence in kind, launching an escalating cycle of attack and counter-attack that eventually claimed nearly fifty lives and significantly intensified the repression of other sectors of the anarchist movement. A number of Galleanisti returned from Mexico and planted a large pipe bomb in the church of the pastor who organized the Milwaukee loyalty rally. The bomb was discovered and brought to a local police station where it exploded, killing ten officers. Federal agents tracking the culprits raided the *Cronaca Sovversiva* offices a second time and discovered a mailing list containing the addresses of 3,000 subscribers. The Bureau of Investigation wasted little time in raiding the homes and clubs of subscribers throughout the country, turning many

---

<sup>148</sup> *Milwaukee Journal*, December 27, 1917 quoted in Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 106. My emphasis.

Italian immigrants over to the Bureau of Immigration to initiate deportation proceedings.

The persecuted ultra-militants spent the better part of a year preparing their next move. In February, 1919, they distributed leaflets throughout New England, signed “The American Anarchists,” that announced, “Deportation will not stop the storm from reaching these shores. The storm is within and very soon will leap and crash and annihilate you in blood and fire. You have shown no pity to us! We will do likewise. And deport us! *We will dynamite you!*” True to their word, the Galleanisti prepared thirty mail bombs timed to explode on May Day, 1919. They mailed the bombs to leading industrialists, such as Nelson Rockefeller and J.P. Morgan, as well as politicians, lawyers, and judges who had taken some active role in strike breaking or deporting immigrants and radicals. The housekeeper of a Senator from Georgia lost her hands when one of the bombs exploded, but the majority of the packages were intercepted at the post office, where they had been held for insufficient postage.<sup>149</sup> News reports lead many to believe the botched conspiracy was the harbinger of an imminent revolutionary upheaval, inducing a wave of panic across the country.

Then, on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, bombs exploded almost simultaneously at the homes of political and judicial authorities in seven cities across the northeastern United States. Again, none of the explosives reached their intended targets. When Carlo Valdinoci, a close associate of Galleani, attempted to place a bomb on the porch of Attorney

---

<sup>149</sup> On the bombing campaign of the Galleanisti see Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani”; Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*; Gage, *Day Wall Street Exploded*.

General A. Mitchell Palmer's home, he tripped, detonating the device as he fell on it. Mitchell's home was damaged but he and his family survived the blast. Valdinoci wasn't so lucky—police at the scene of the explosion immediately began collecting limbs and sections of his scalp that they discovered dangling from nearby trees to use as evidence in their investigation. At other bomb sites police found leaflets similar in style and content to those discovered in February, this time signed "The Anarchist Fighters."

On June 19, 1919, Galleani, *Cronaca Sovversiva* bookkeeper Rafaele Schiavina, and eight other associates were rearrested as alien anarchists in violation of the immigration law. Five days later they were deported to Italy, before detectives had compiled enough evidence to consider questioning them regarding the explosions.<sup>150</sup> Though its perpetrators were never prosecuted, the Galleanisti "Bomb Plot," coming on the heels of the industrial strike wave, provided the rationale for Attorney General Palmer to order the government's most extensive campaign of arrests, prosecutions and deportations of radicals to date. As the Justice Department was preparing its response to both the bombings and the radical turn in the labor movement, however, yet another set of violent confrontations broke out across the country.

### **The Red Summer**

Between the months of April and November, at least 26 "race riots" occurred throughout the United States, leaving hundreds dead, thousands more injured, and

---

<sup>150</sup> Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 135.

homes and businesses in black neighborhoods ransacked and burned to the ground. Writer and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) official James Weldon Johnson deemed the warm months of 1919 the “Red Summer”—a designation evocative of the blood spilled, the flames that consumed neighborhoods, and the coincidence of this social violence with the Red Scare raging around it.<sup>151</sup> Though the riots had diverse proximate causes, they overridingly stemmed from attacks by groups of working class whites on African American individuals and families in response to perceived threats to the racial order arising from the mass migration of a half million black southerners to Northern cities and industrial work during the war years.<sup>152</sup>

The war quickly and fundamentally altered the pool of laborers from which employers could draw. The conflict in Europe cut off the flow migrants from that continent and forced the return of thousands of workers living in the United States who were drafted by the militaries of their home countries. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. citizens were themselves drafted at the same time that orders for the production of weapons, uniforms, packaged food, and other war material soared. As historian Ira Berlin explains, “Taken together, the decline of European immigration and the escalation of the draft made room for black men in Northern factories, dry docks, and railroad yards, allowing them to enter manufactories from which they had previously

---

<sup>151</sup> Jan Voogd, *Race Riots and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008), 1, 164.

<sup>152</sup> Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, From Slavery to Present* (New York: Random House, 1985), 156.

been banned.”<sup>153</sup> The mass migration of African-Americans from the South fundamentally reordered the terms of struggle between factory owners and employees in the North. In many cases workers deemed white or of the “in-between races” viewed the influx of black workers and their families as a threat to their bargaining power as well as their sense of racial superiority.

Tensions mounted steadily after 1916, exacerbated by employers who regularly recruited large numbers of African Americans to serve as strikebreakers. During the Red Summer of 1919, such conflicts erupted into a series of racially based attacks on black communities and instances of black collective self-defense that were described in popular parlance as “race riots.” In Chicago, rioting lasted five days and incurred at least 38 deaths—23 black, 15 white—and 500 injuries. Racial hostility had grown for two years prior to the riot, stoked by white imposition of residential segregation through bombing attacks on black homes, competition over jobs, and pressure for black workers to join segregated unions, as well as resentment over the tactics of local machine politicians. Fighting began when a small group of black men and women crossed into the “white” area of a Lake Michigan beach. The confrontation spread from the lakeshore to residential areas, as white mobs drove black residents out of their homes and black residents, including a large number of

---

<sup>153</sup> Ira Berlin, *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations* (New York: Viking, 2010), 158.

veterans, fought back.<sup>154</sup> In Baltimore fighting began when crowds of white people attacked blacks who had moved onto a block that had been restricted to whites until the Supreme Court struck down the city's segregation ordinance in 1918.<sup>155</sup> Not all of the riots occurred in urban industrial contexts. In Elaine, Arkansas, black tenant farmers meeting to establish a tenant union were fired on by a crowd of whites, including the sheriff. After a white private detective was killed, white mobs rounded up every black citizen they could find, imprisoning many, and executing nearly 200 of them.<sup>156</sup> In Elaine and other small towns, the growing sense of empowerment and entitlement felt by black veterans collided explosively with the expanded sense of license internalized by white citizens called upon to violently police threats to the social order during the preceding years of anti-German, anti-radical, and anti-“slacker” vigilantism.

Attorney General A. Mitchell Palmer, Bureau of Investigation director J. Edgar Hoover, and other public officials charged with suppressing radicalism immediately asserted that connections existed between radicals and these instances of racial violence and black self-defense. In June the anti-radical Lusk Committee of the New York state legislature reported that radicals wielded a growing influence over African-

---

<sup>154</sup> William M. Tuttle, Jr., *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970).

<sup>155</sup> Voogd, *Race Riots*, 43.

<sup>156</sup> Robert Whitaker, *On the Laps of Gods: The Red Summer of 1919 and the Struggle for Justice that Remade a Nation* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2008).

Americans.<sup>157</sup> Likewise, an Army Military Intelligence Division report noted, “IWW and other radical organizations, both white and black, have played their part in inciting the negroes [sic] to the recent outbreaks in Chicago and Washington. It is stated that agitators have played on the feeling of resentment against injustices or fancied injustices suffered by the negro [sic] soldiers during the war.”<sup>158</sup> In most cases, police and political figures suggested that white radicals had persuaded or pushed African-Americans to take violent action. Such a framing, of course, placed the onus of responsibility for the riots on African Americans instead of their white attackers, while it simultaneously suggested that blacks, on the whole, lacked the initiative or capacity to take such actions on their own accord.

Throughout the summer and fall, politicians and journalists rhetorically linked radical political violence to the purported violence of black rioters via a racial logic that opposed both to white citizens. In October, the *Detroit Free Press* reported that Senator Byron Patton Harrison of Mississippi introduced a bill to arm home guards with pistols, rifles, and machine guns in preparation for expected uprisings. Harrison asserted,

Articles that have appeared in certain pamphlets and periodicals edited by unwise and radical Negro leaders and Bolshevists are advocating such doctrines that might encourage the thoughtless elements to threaten the peace and safety of many peoples. It is to guard against any attempt upon the part of these dangerous elements that the law-abiding

---

<sup>157</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 178. On the Lusk Committee, see Pfeilstrom, *Rethinking the Red Scare*.

<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Salerno, “I Delitti,” 118.

*white* people should take precautionary steps to protect themselves and their communities.<sup>159</sup>

By contrasting Bolsheviks—at a time when Bolshevik, Wobbly, anarchist, and “Red” were used interchangeably—and “radical Negro leaders” with white people, the senator’s comments helped to construct an idea of whiteness that excluded those who held radical political beliefs, and to associate black leaders with leftists as a common class of “dangerous elements.” The Senator’s comments conflated the efforts of blacks to defend themselves against white rioters with the various manifestations of working-class radicalism that had emerged during the year: the non-violent general strike in Seattle, the defense of leftist meeting halls against mobs, and the targeted bombing campaign of the Galleanisti. At the same time, his comments obfuscated the ways in which the destruction of black homes and property by white vigilante mobs paralleled the mob action taken against anarchists and other radicals since the United States entered the war.

If some political leaders viewed radicals as instigators of domestic racial conflict, others believed the colonization of the land of racialized people abroad provided a potential solution to such conflict. Later in October newspapers reported, “One of the Phillipines islands would be an anarchists penal colony, to which persons convicted of attempting to overthrow the government would be deported, under a bill

---

<sup>159</sup> “Would Arm Home Guards For Reds,” *Detroit Free Press*, October 23, 1919. Newspaper clipping, Box 27, Agnes Inglis Papers, LC

by Senator McKellar, Democrat of Tennessee.”<sup>160</sup> While neither Senator Harrison’s nor Senator McKellar’s bill was enacted, both lent the authority of U.S. lawmakers to the proposition that African-Americans and anarchists posed a collective threat to the security of white citizens, a damning association that cut both ways.

An infamous incident in the history of the IWW also gives some indication of the slippage between racism and anti-radicalism that was central to the domestic violence of the post-war years. In 1918 participants in a patriotic parade in the small lumber town of Centralia, Washington broke ranks and destroyed the local IWW hall. After the Wobblies rebuilt, the American Legion and the local Citizens Protective League openly expressed their intent to repeat the attack and permanently drive the union out of town during their 1919 Armistice Day Parade. When the mob broke through the doors of the hall, Wobblies opened fire in self-defense, killing three vigilantes. One IWW member, a U.S. American-born WWI veteran named Wesley Everett, escaped out the back door and shot one more attacker before being overtaken. Everett was taken to the town jail and beaten. In the night, with the collusion of the Mayor, a lynch mob removed him from the jail, castrated him, and hung him from a bridge. The mob reeled his body up, attached a longer rope, and threw it off again two additional times before riddling it with bullets.<sup>161</sup> The attack bore many of the hallmarks of the ritualized, performative violence that characterized the lynching of

---

<sup>160</sup> “Would Banish Anarchists to Island,” *Detroit News*, October 24, 1919. Newspaper clipping, Box 27, Agnes Inglis Papers, LC.

<sup>161</sup> Thompson and Bekken, *IWW*, 125-126.

African-Americans in the same period. The emasculation, torture, and public overkill of Everett's body suggest at minimum that leading citizens of Centralia drew on a repertoire of violent responses to individuals that were seen to have violated the basic framework of the social and economic order—a repertoire comprised of techniques designed to maintain the antebellum and Jim Crow racial order of the U.S. South. In the Autumn of 1919, African-Americans believed to challenge white entitlements or the purity of white womanhood, and European-American radicals long considered congenitally violent and in violation of Christian morality, were denied the protection of law and subject to extreme levels and similar patterns of public violence.

### **The Palmer Raids**

By November of 1919 the Bureau of Investigation had determined that the May 1<sup>st</sup> and June 2<sup>nd</sup> bombs plots had almost certainly been orchestrated by anarchists, at least some of them of Italian heritage, but it still lacked the evidence to finger any specific individual or group. With the strike wave, the bomb scare, and the summer riots coalescing into a sensation of insecurity, many U.S. Americans suspected a general uprising of racialized working people was not only possible, but imminent. That autumn, calls for an all-out assault on dissidents, agitators, and anyone else who didn't qualify as "100 percent American" reached fever pitch. Sensing he had to act immediately, Attorney General Palmer ordered his Bureau of Investigation to begin preparing for a massive, nationwide round-up of radicals—the first of a series of violent, extra-legal attacks on Left organizations that became widely known as the

Palmer Raids.<sup>162</sup> The Bureau's initial target, the Union of Russian Workers, was artfully chosen if its intention was to link in public perception the various revolutionary challenges to the social and economic order at that moment. As an avowedly anarchist-syndicalist labor union comprised of Russian immigrants, the URW seemed to mark the exact political location where the anarchist bombers, Wobbly general strike organizers, and Russian Bolsheviks intersected. Justice Department agents remained indifferent to the fact that the URW fell squarely into the mass organizing, rather than the insurrectionary, camp of anarchists. Nor did they care that many of the union's most prominent members had returned to Russia where, by 1919, they were vigorously agitating against Lenin's centralization of political power while trying to avoid capture by the secret police.<sup>163</sup>

On November 7, Department of Justice agents raided the Russian People's House in New York City looking for members of the URW, which maintained offices in the building. The agents ransacked the building and attacked students and teachers attending night classes, beating some with wood torn from the building's banister and tossing them down staircases. Approximately 200 individuals were hauled to the Department's offices, where they were interrogated for membership in the union. Only thirty-nine were found to be members; the rest were released with severe injuries but with no charges lodged against them. Agents simultaneously raided URW halls and other places where Russian workers congregated in Detroit, Baltimore, and nine

---

<sup>162</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 114.

<sup>163</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*.

other cities throughout the country, detaining more than 1,000 individuals.<sup>164</sup> The federal raids on the URW were taken as a signal by state and local law enforcement agencies to carry out their own warrantless arrests of groups of alien radicals residing in their jurisdictions. On November 8, under directions from the Lusk Committee, “700 police raided seventy-three radical centers, arrested more than 500 individuals, and seized tons of literature.” The Russian People’s House was then raided a second time on November 25.<sup>165</sup>

In justifying the massive roundup of immigrant radicals he had orchestrated, Attorney General Palmer appealed not only to racial fears, but also concerns about the breakdown in gender norms. Palmer claimed in *Forum* magazine that revolution was “licking at the alters of churches, leaping into the belfry of the school bell, *crawling into the sacred corners of American homes, seeking to replace marriage vows with libertine laws*, burning up the foundations of society.”<sup>166</sup> Ole Hanson, the mayor of Seattle who claimed credit for having preventing the Seattle general strike from turning into a second Bolshevik revolution, sought to justify the repression of radicals with similar appeals to sexual order. In a hastily written book meant to stoke his own political career, Hanson asserted that, “Americanism stands for one wife and one country; Bolshevism stands for free love and no country.” He reasoned that “Bolshevists believe in destruction of nationalism, loyalty and patriotism...Loving no

---

<sup>164</sup> Finan, *From the Palmer Raids*, 1-2; Murray, *Red Scare*, 196-7.

<sup>165</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 206.

<sup>166</sup> A. Mitchell Palmer, “The Case Against the ‘Reds’,” *Forum*, February 1920, quoted in Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 174.

country, they excuse themselves by saying they love all countries alike. Polygamous men have ever used the same excuse.”<sup>167</sup>

The majority of the men and women arrested in the first Palmer Raids and related police actions were not charged with any crime. Although 35 U.S. citizens detained on November 8<sup>th</sup> were indicted for violating the New York State Criminal Anarchy statute, the foreign born workers were simply accused of violating the immigration statute that made belonging to an avowedly revolutionary group a deportable offence. As charges of the Department of Labor, which had jurisdiction over immigration in 1919, the captured anarchists were held on Ellis Island. When Berkman and Goldman were released after serving their two year sentences for violating the Selective Service law, they were quickly charged with violations of the Immigration Act and placed in custody on Ellis Island alongside URW members and other non-national radicals arrested in the course of the previous year.

### **Resistance on Ellis Island**

The determination of the anarchists to assert their ideals is indicated in the means by which the victims of the round-ups and their families resisted their deportation. A Lusk Committee agent responsible for spying on a group of Brooklyn anarchists intercepted packages of radical periodicals illegally mailed to detainees on the island.<sup>168</sup> Unable to receive material from outside, some detainees attempted to create an anarchist newspaper, *The Ellis Island Weekly*, inside the holding cells of the

---

<sup>167</sup> Quoted in Nielsen, *Un-American Womanhood*, 18.

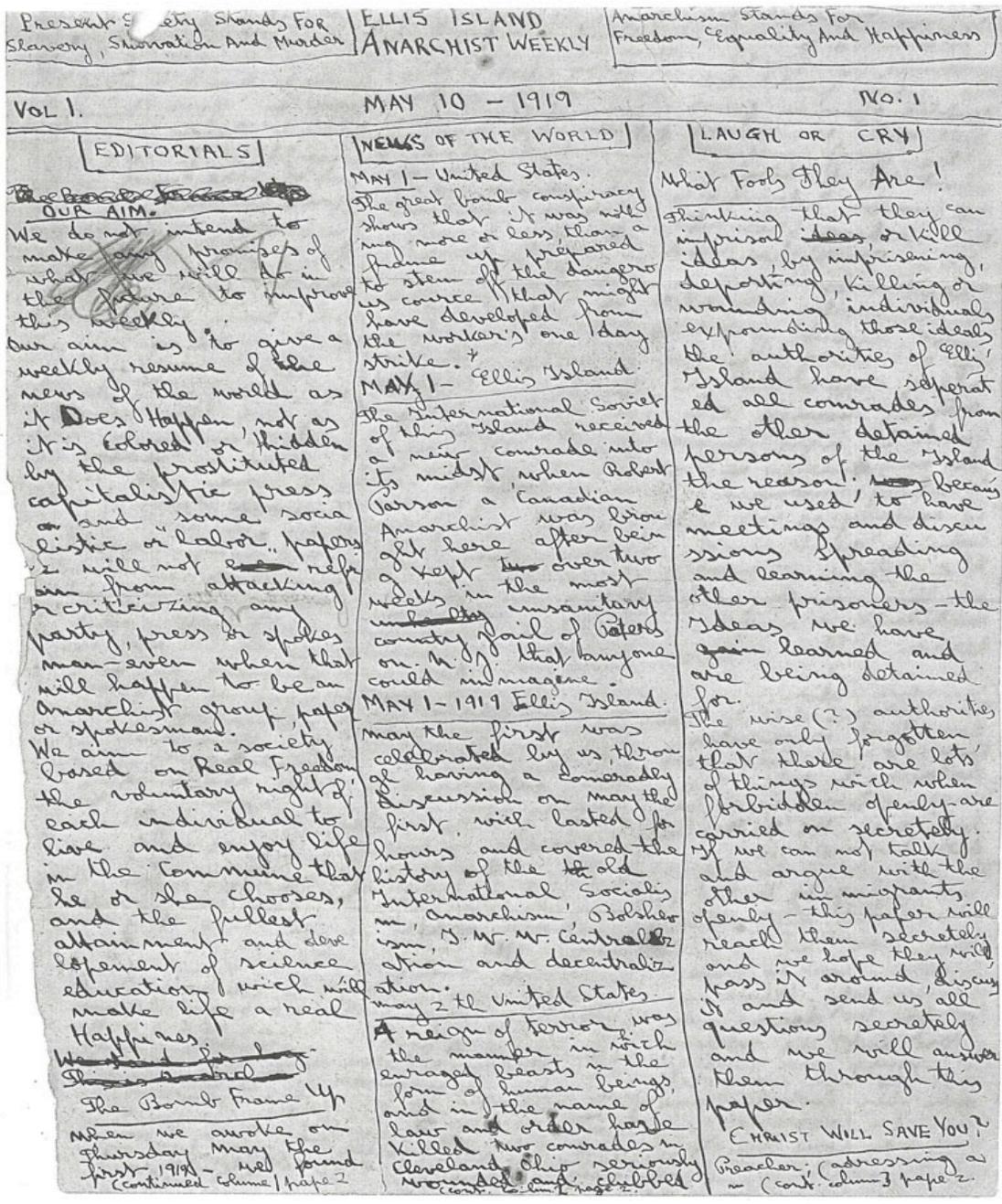
<sup>168</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 175.

detention center.<sup>169</sup> A single, two-sided, hand-written copy of the *Ellis Island Weekly* has survived today. It is unclear if other copies or editions were ever created. The paper provides a window onto the activities of the political detainees, and demonstrates that they understood they were being detained for their thoughts rather than their actions:

Thinking they can imprison or kill ideas, by imprisoning, killing, deporting, or wounding individuals expounding those ideals, the authorities of Ellis Island have separated all comrades from the other detained persons on the island. The reason: because we used to have meetings and discussions spreading and learning the other prisoners, the ideas we have learned and are being detained for.

---

<sup>169</sup> *Ellis Island Anarchist Weekly*, May 10, 1919, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, LC.



**Figure 3:** Ellis Island Anarchist Weekly  
Image courtesy of the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan.

The creator(s) of the *Weekly* hoped the paper would circulate amongst the non-political immigrants detained on the island, and that they would write questions and continue their dialogues with the anarchists about the views espoused therein.<sup>170</sup> The detainees' loved ones did not quietly accept their arrest and likely deportation either. Relatives were allowed only occasional visits, and these were brief and conducted through a screen. Aided by radical attorney Harry Weinberger, families lodged appeals for wives and children to be transported back to Russia with their detained relatives, but Justice Department and Immigration officials refused to even provide notice regarding the date of departure.

On Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, groups of workers captured in the November 7<sup>th</sup> raids in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Buffalo, Hartford, and other cities were transported by train to New York and ferried to Ellis Island. After dinner the detainees were told they would depart within hours, after which the assembled group elected Alexander Berkman "leader of the expedition."<sup>171</sup> At dawn on the morning of December 21<sup>st</sup>,

---

<sup>170</sup> It is uncertain who created the *Ellis Island Weekly*, but clues point strongly towards Graham. The *Weekly* bears the date May 10, 1919. Graham was detained on Ellis Island for two weeks in May of 1919, after he was caught with copies of the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* in Patterson, New Jersey. The mast head of *Free Society*, which Graham is known to have edited, reproduces almost exactly the mast-head of the *Ellis Island Weekly*. Whoever was in possession of the paper had to have eventually gotten off the island, which Graham did, and been in correspondence with the Labadie Collection at the University of Michigan, which Graham was. On Graham's detention on Ellis Island, see Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 183-4; Marcus Graham, "A Statement of Facts," *Man!*, August-September 1936, 4; Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee, "Freedom of Thought Arraigned," 8.

<sup>171</sup> "249 Reds Sail, Exiled to Soviet Russia; Berkman Threatens to Come Back; Second Shipload May Leave this Week," *New York Times*, December 22, 1919.

249 detainees were transferred to an old army transport ship, the Buford, which promptly set sail for Russia.<sup>172</sup> The majority of the deportees were members of the URW, though approximately 40 anarchists with other movement credentials, such as Berkman and Goldman, were also placed aboard. They shared the ship's tight quarters with 125 crew members and 250 soldiers sent to guard against any attempted uprising at sea. Mollie Steimer, Mary and Jacob Abrams, and Samuel Lipman remained imprisoned when the Buford departed. Lipman's wife Ethel Bernstein, however, shared a cabin with Goldman and the only other female deportee, Dora Lipkin.

The Buford was already miles out to sea when news of its departure broke in the daily newspapers. The following morning, nearly 150 enraged and heartbroken family members and friends of the detainees, mostly women, assembled at the lower Manhattan ferry to Ellis Island demanding to know if their loved ones had been placed aboard the transport ship. When officials declined to disclose which men had been deported and refused to allow anyone to visit those remaining on the island, the woman launched a minor riot. A 24-year old Russian woman, Clara Brooks, stepped forward, announced herself an anarchist, and shouted, "Down with this dirty, rotten government! They have taken my husband, and are taking the husbands, fathers, and brothers of us all!" The crowd then surged toward the dock. Brooks and another woman punched out the glass of the gatekeepers' booth and other members of the crowd began throwing "a volley of stones and other missiles" at the ferry office.

---

<sup>172</sup> Drinnon, *Rebel in Paradise*, 215-223.

Determined to reach the island, the crowd snapped a guard railing and ran for a boat. The first policeman to arrive on the scene was surrounded and beaten by the crowd. Only a “detail of coast guards with fixed bayonets” was able to drive back and contain the bloc of anarchists. Brooks was arrested and jailed for two days on disorderly conduct charges. The *New York Times* learned that her husband, Abe Brooks, was, indeed, aboard the Buford. A member of the URW, he had been arrested in Washington Square Park for “circulating anarchist literature which protested against the presence of American troops in Russia”—most likely the Frayhayt Group leaflet that had also landed Mollie Steimer in jail. In the aftermath of the struggle, the protestors composed a telegram to Attorney General Palmer and Immigration Commissioner Anthony Caminetti seething with contempt. “In the name of humanity and justice we demand at this time when all the world is about to celebrate the birth of Christ, the name you hold so sacred, the right of peace in our hearts. We demand that you unite us with our husbands and fathers.”<sup>173</sup>

Despite the women’s attempt to reason with the officials on the basis of their common humanity, coverage in the *Times*’ and other newspapers continued to represent anarchists in dehumanizing terms. In accounts appearing throughout the country, the Buford was described as the “Soviet Ark” or the “Red Ark.” Clearly used in a pejorative sense, “ark” was not intended to suggest the ship’s passengers heralded

---

<sup>173</sup> “Second Lot of Reds Sails Soon,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 23, 1919, I6; “Relatives of Reds Mob Barge Office,” *New York Times*, December 23, 1919, 1; “US to Ship Reds’ Wives on next ‘Ark’,” *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1919, 1.

a new beginning for humanity, but rather to represent them as an assortment of animals herded aboard. A reporter covering the confrontation at the ferry dock wrote, “Apparently imbued with a desire to get to Ellis Island and maul the officials over there as responsible for the exiling of the Buford’s cargo, groups began to assemble at the barge office yesterday morning.”<sup>174</sup> Russian anarchist women, the article suggested, couldn’t restrain themselves from animalistic attacks, while their deported family members were not passengers, but cargo.

Less than a week after the Buford sailed, Attorney General Palmer launched a second set of raids, this time targeting the membership of two newly formed communist parties. In preparing for this second round of raids, the Justice Department drew on its extensive surveillance network to prepare more than 3,000 individual warrants for the arrest of participants in the communist movement. Palmer and his deputies planned to debilitate the communist parties by charging their foreign-born members with violation of immigration restrictions, rather than any criminal law, as it had with the URW in November. In its most sophisticated operation to date, Bureau agents simultaneously raided radical haunts and personal residences in 33 cities—stretching across 23 states—and arrested more than 4,000 people in a matter of hours. Despite the warrants obtained ahead of time, the raids were once again sweeping and arbitrary; many arrests were “made without the formality of warrants as bureau agents

---

<sup>174</sup> “Relatives of Reds Mob Barge Office,” *New York Times*, December 23, 1919.

entered bowling alleys, pool halls, cafes, club rooms, and even homes, and seized everyone in sight.”<sup>175</sup>

Aimed at eliminating the U.S. communist parties, Palmer’s January raids directly impacted far fewer anarchists than those carried out in November. Those still at liberty as the new decade opened, however, recognized that their activity remained extremely circumscribed and that they remained under heavy surveillance. Immigration and Justice department officials claimed that the Buford would soon be followed by a other “arks” carrying foreign-born radicals out of the country, leading many to believe additional arrests were imminent. In February federal agents raided the anarcho-syndicalist L’Nuovo Era Group of Patterson, believing—erroneously, as it turned out—that the group was responsible for the May 1 and June 2 bombings. The group’s library and equipment for producing its newspaper was seized and destroyed and dozens of members were removed to Ellis Island and other detention centers. Yet the raid did not turn up the evidence agents hoped to discover. For the next two years the Bureau of Investigation continued to track the anarchist movement—especially its Italian-language component—to locate the bombers, even as the investigation seemed to have gone cold to the public eye.<sup>176</sup>

The Red Scare that had begun in 1917 finally began to wane in the spring of 1920. A combination of factors contributed to the changed national mood. In

---

<sup>175</sup> Murray, *Red Scare*, 213; Finan, *From the Palmer Raids*, 3.

<sup>176</sup> For a history of the investigation see, Charles H. McCormick, *Hopeless Cases: The Hunt for the Red Scare Terrorist Bombers* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded*.

January, state representatives from New York found they had over-reached the limits of extra-democratic tolerance when they voted to disbar five fellow assemblymen elected on the Socialist Party ticket, charging them with disloyalty and providing comfort to the enemy due to their opposition to the war. Even to many supporters of the round-ups and deportations of radicals, the exclusion of elected officials charged with no crime seemed to set a dangerous precedent. Harsh criticism from the mainstream press and liberal political figures mounted quickly and persistently. During the same months, the post-war industrial reconversion progressed significantly leading to improved economic conditions and a corresponding decline in strike activity. Also important, by 1920 attempted post-war communist revolutions in Germany, Italy, and Hungary had been defeated, lessening concerns that the Bolshevik revolution would spread across Europe into North America. Still, in September 1921, more than four years after the Espionage Act was approved and nearly two years since the Palmer Raids commenced, an anonymous editorial in the anarchist newspaper *Free Society* acknowledged the toll the repression continued to take on the anarchist movement in the United States, while simultaneously declaring the movement's determination to continue to resist:

We will not dwell at length on the necessity of an underground anarchist movement. We did not start it because we wanted it, but the State outlawed our Ideal. We could of course issue a paper openly, with open groups, etc. This, however, would mean we would have to write in our papers or say in our meetings only such things as the State would permit. But to act in such a compromising manner would be the most flagrant insult to our ideals imaginable. Therefore, as long as the

time for open revolutionary agitation and action in defiance of the State has not arrived, we shall continue conspiratively.<sup>177</sup>

Amidst these most difficult of circumstances, anarchist hopes that the Russian revolution would lead in a libertarian direction were also put in check. The *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* was one of the first anarchist publications in the United States to begin voicing criticism of the Soviet system. Its opposition intensified quickly. In the July 1919 issue, the editors exclaimed: “Let our message to the Workers Soviets of Russia be: ‘Keep up your courageous battle for freedom! The working class of the entire world will soon be fighting on the barricades of the social revolution against capitalism, its agents and upholders, the government, the church, and the press.’”<sup>178</sup> By August, however, the *Bulletin* broached what it admitted was a delicate subject: a critique of “Bolshevism.” While both desired to do away with capitalism, the editors distinguished Bolshevism from anarchism by arguing the former sought the centralization of power while the latter desired its decentralization.

“If, till now capitalists have decided what we should or should not get from what we produce, now, under Bolshevism it is the government that decides what we should or should not get from **our own labor**. If we have freed ourselves from economic slavery only to find ourselves under government slavery, then we have again Centralization, and a worse kind than before, for now in Russia, the Centralized government is keeping the worker’s enslaved and is fooling them by the cry ‘that it is for their own good.’”

The article argued that intellectuals ran the new government because they did not believe that workers had the capacity to manage themselves. This was demonstrated,

---

<sup>177</sup> *Free Society*, September 1921, 2.

<sup>178</sup> “Time for Action,” *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, July 1919, 2.

according to the *Bulletin*, by the Bolsheviks' interference with attempts by peasants to claim and distribute land amongst themselves, and by the Bolsheviks "fighting and destroying Decentralized Communistic Factories, and reestablishing owners, managers, foremen, and 'skilled' workers."<sup>179</sup> Here, then, two years before the infamous Kronstadt uprisings, which marked the definitive break between anarchists and Bolsheviks in Russia, and at a time when Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman were still trumpeting the virtues of Lenin and Trotsky, the editors of the ASB had outlined the central features of the anarchist and libertarian socialist critique of Leninism. In January of 1921, the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* changed its name to *Free Society*.<sup>180</sup> "The change in name," the editors later explained, "was due to the fact that though as Anarchists we support the idea of real soviets, yet to have continued to use the name would have meant that we support the present Soviets in Russia, which we do not, since they have become mere puppets in the hands of the Bolshevik Government."<sup>181</sup> As news filtered back from comrades who had voluntarily returned or had been deported to Russia, optimism that the Russian Revolution represented just the first of many libertarian transformations, spread throughout communities of anarchists still living in the United States. Their defeats at home,

---

<sup>179</sup> "Anarchism and Bolshevism," *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*, August, 1919, 2.

<sup>180</sup> "Free Society" was a name commonly used amongst anarchists. The *Free Society* of 1920-1922 was distinct from the periodical of the same name produced by the Mary and Abe Isaak from 1897 to 1904. It was also unrelated to the Free Society group formed in Chicago in 1924.

<sup>181</sup> "The Need of Anarchist Movement," *Free Society*, September, 1921, 2.

combined with the bitter disappointments of the Russian experience, marked the first years of the 1920s as a period of confusion tinged with despair.

### **The Johnson-Reed Act**

The final decisive act of repression taken against the U.S. anarchist movement in the aftermath of WWI was the passage, in 1924, of the Johnson-Reed immigration act which brought the immigration of working men and women from eastern and southern Europe to a virtual halt.<sup>182</sup> As much as the detentions and deportations themselves, the new immigration regime was nearly fatal to the anarchist movement in the U.S. It hurt the movement, first, by cutting off the steady stream of radical immigrants that had formed the primary social base and recruiting pool for U.S. anarchists since the late 1870s, and secondly, it severed the linkages existing immigrant communities maintained to radical European cultural traditions, which had nurtured anarchism in the hostile U.S. American environment in earlier years.

By 1924 conditions made it possible for Congress to remold immigration regulations in a way that would redraw the racial composition of the United States and diminish working class power. Anarchists, indirectly, contributed to the establishment of these conditions in a variety of ways. The Johnson-Reed Act was passed in a climate of intense nativism, built on racist ideas regarding of immigrants from Europe bolstered by the claims of scientific racism and the eugenics movement. As we have

---

<sup>182</sup> Mae Ngai, *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004), 21-55; Jacobson, *Whiteness*, 78-90; Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 139-145.

seen, central tropes in the racializing language nativists employed against eastern and southern European immigrants are traceable to exaggerated and intentionally skewed reactions to anarchist violence, sexual practices and politics stretching back to 1886. This discourse was raised to a fever pitch by the president, judges, journals of opinion, and vigilante groups during the red scare, in the aftermath of anarchist anti-war activities and bombing campaigns. It grew to encompass immigrant radicals in general and was transferred via association to African-Americans during the “Red Summer.” Anarchists, likewise, hold the dubious distinction of having provoked the federal government to begin erecting the legal infrastructure of immigration regulation that the Johnson-Reed act was built upon in later years.

In cutting off the supply of European laborers, the act forced manufacturers to look for new pools of labor to draw workers from. “With the main sources of immigrant labor suddenly shut off,” David Roediger argues, “capital turned to the recruitment of workers racialized as nonwhite, not ‘in-between.’”<sup>183</sup> Employers first turned to the millions of African-Americans who had migrated to northeastern and midwestern industrial cities to labor in the war industries. Having just survived one of the most volatile periods of industrial relations in U.S. history, employers naturally sought compliant workers. Though black workers were far from quiescent in the following decades, the violent attacks by white citizens against newly forming communities of color that took place in 1919 indicated the violence black workers

---

<sup>183</sup> Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness*, 150.

could expect if they expressed ideas too radical or interfered with white prerogatives. The fear of anarchism provided cover for white citizens physical violence and politicians verbal attacks on the initiatives of African Americans to secure better livelihoods, by linking foreign radicalism with black self-defense. In this way, the anti-black racism of working and middle class white citizens aided the employers' drive to replace radicalized immigrant workers, who had opened a phase of mass revolt, with a workforce of newly proletarianized black workers disciplined not only by the factory foreman, but by the white community at large.

The break in European immigration also had a wide-ranging affect on the cultures of the European immigrant communities established prior to the passage of the act. Mae Ngai has argued that “the cutoff of European immigration created conditions for the second generation of those immigrants who had come to the United States from the 1890s to World War I to more readily assimilate into American Society. The loosening of these ethnic groups’ ties to their homelands facilitated that process.”<sup>184</sup> Ironically, the harsh repression of European immigration through restriction lead in two decades time to the incorporation of already arrived European ethnics into the full privileges of whiteness. A crucial aspect of this assimilation was the declining commitment to radical politics amongst immigrant communities between the world wars.

---

<sup>184</sup> Ngai, *Impossible Subjects*, 4.

Clearly the 1924 passage of the Johnson-Reed Act was a pivotal moment which led to a reshuffling of the racial order. However, we should also view this moment of “class decomposition” in which a militant working class, bolstered by the circulation of radical ideas and individuals between the U.S. and Europe, was reorganized in a less threatening fashion by capitalists and other state actors. The Espionage and Sedition Act prosecutions, Red Summer riots, the Palmer Raids, and the post-1924 immigration regime functioned together as a campaign of class decomposition carried out through a racial reordering, promoted in part through a defense of patriarchal gender relations. If business owners were concerned with upholding capitalism, much broader social groups, including middle class moralists and workers organized in conservative unions and vigilante groups, were intent on maintaining white supremacy and patriarchal gender roles. When we view these processes as interrelated, we are better able to recognize the linkages between racist and anti-radical persecution. In doing so, the centrality of racializing representational practices to the expansion of state power, and the importance of these practices in the ongoing construction of the meaning of whiteness are also placed in relief.

The following two chapters register the process by which different anarchist groups throughout the country came to terms with the marked decline in immigration, the increasing assimilation of second generation European immigrants into U.S. culture, and the impact this had on the anarchist movement. The Libertarians of Los Angeles and the Free Society Group of Chicago, for example, both began as Yiddish

speaking anarchist groups but soon decided on the necessity of organizing in English. The problem was exceedingly clear to the young anarchists who constituted the Vanguard Group in the early-1930s. Criticizing movement elders for insufficient work recruiting and training young people, they noted, the movement's "limited growth [prior to WWI] was checked with the passage of the immigration laws...it should have been clear that the movement was in a serious predicament and was headed for a decline."<sup>185</sup> Likewise Italian anarchists in San Francisco suspended publication of their newspaper *L'Emancipazione*, to devote resources to an English language paper—*Man!*—which they hoped would have a wider impact.

A rapidly changing working class was only one of the difficult challenges U.S. anarchists faced in the 1920s and 1930s. In the next chapter we will see how opposition to the rise of fascism and Communism as international political forces absorbed the energies and attention of U.S. anarchists to the exclusion of many other urgent tasks.

---

<sup>185</sup> "A Neglected Task," *Vanguard*, April 1932, 16-17.

## **Chapter 2: “A Movement of Defense, of Emergency”: Regrouping while Encircled, 1920-1929**

The loosening grip of repression came as a relief to U.S. anarchists who had managed to avoid incarceration and deportation during the previous three years. Yet those who had survived the Red Scare were forced to rebuild their movement on a fraught and dangerous political terrain, both locally and internationally, with many of their most talented and experienced comrades out of action. Anarchists spent the 1920s defending not just their political vision but also their lives from attacks on all sides.

During the early 1920s, U.S. anarchists tended to retreat from the cross-ethnic unity that had begun to crystallize prior to the war. The raids, undercover spies, and suppression of periodicals during the years of the Red Scare had taken their toll on trust and lines of communication. In the aftermath, ethnic groupings prioritized different political projects, often in accordance with the survival needs of anarchists in other countries. English-speaking anarchists focused on building arts and education-focused communities, often well outside the industrial cities that had long served as strongholds of anarchist activity. Italians fought the rise of fascism in Italy, and, in Italian American communities across the United States, there arose a mass defense campaign for the Italian anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartalameo Vanzetti, who faced execution. After learning of the Bolsheviks’ brutal suppression of anarchists and other

leftists in the new Soviet Union, Jewish anarchists in the United States helped fight off an Communist takeover of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU), to which many of them belonged. Meanwhile, anarchists of all nationalities worked to raise funds and provide support for revolutionaries imprisoned or exiled by the new regimes in Russia and Italy. For anarchists remaining in the United States, these fights weren't merely ideological. Rather they were seen as campaigns against political forces and states that actively jailed, exiled, and executed personal friends and comrades.

After 1922, the immigration of European workers to the United States declined precipitously as a new immigration regime took effect. By mid-decade, Italian, Jewish, Spanish, and Russian-speaking anarchists began to recognize the growing importance of English-language outlets for their ideas, given the changing composition of the labor force. Accordingly, they participated in local "international groups," which hosted English-language public forums, and contributed money to national efforts such as the monthly newspaper *The Road to Freedom*. Despite these efforts to rebuild a large-scale anarchist movement relevant to changing conditions in the United States, when the stock market crashed in 1929 none of the country's anarchists were strategically prepared or institutionally strong enough to leverage the capitalist crisis into broader support for their movement's ideals.

## **Anarchists and the Soviet Union**

In a few short years, post-tsarist Russia devolved from serving as the locus of anarchists' grandest hopes to the scene of the most grotesque repression they had known, as anarchist revolutionists were manipulated, imprisoned and executed by the Bolshevik regime. Concern over the fate of the Russian revolution, and, subsequently, of Russian anarchists, therefore, became a central preoccupation and defining feature of 1920s U.S. anarchism. This unease was only compounded by the recognition that what happened in Russia would also have a defining impact domestically, as the Communist Party of the United States (CP-USA) aggressively worked to remake the U.S. left in the Bolshevik image. Anarchists, therefore, devoted enormous time and resources to combating authoritarian Communism, despite many other pressing concerns. To fully appreciate these domestic developments, a brief review of developments in Russia is called for.

From the time of the spontaneous strikes and riots which finally toppled tsarism in February 1917, relations between Russian anarchists and Bolsheviks oscillated between appreciative collaboration and violent hostility for four intense years.<sup>1</sup> When Bill Shatov, Voline, and other members of the Union of Russian

---

<sup>1</sup> On anarchists in the Russian Revolution, see Paul Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005 [1967]); Voline, *Nineteen-Seventeen: The Russian Revolution Betrayed* (New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1954); Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003 [1923]); James Joll, *The Anarchists* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964), 181-193; George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Peterborough: Broadview

Workers returned to Russia early in the summer of 1917, they found the anarchist movement expanding quickly in Petrograd, Moscow, and parts of the Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Anarchist cells of bakers, metal workers, miners, and printers, were growing rapidly and networking with one another in city-wide federations. In 1917, these federations counted approximately 12,000 active members and distributed 25,000 copies of their daily and weekly newspapers.<sup>3</sup> Laborers and artisans were joined by formerly exiled and imprisoned anarchist intellectuals, most notably Peter Kropotkin, who rushed back from Siberia, Western Europe, and North America after Kerensky's provisional government declared amnesty for all political opponents of tsarism. The Russian movement, like its U.S. counterpart, was divided primarily between anarcho-syndicalists and anarchist-communists, with the former supportive of organizing unions in large-scale industry and the latter advocating expropriation, terrorism, and insurrection to bring about a world comprised of village-sized communes of craftsmen.<sup>4</sup>

Despite these differences of vision and strategy, Russian anarchists agreed that Lenin's April Theses, which called for the immediate overthrow of capitalism and the creation of soviets modeled after the Paris Commune, echoed their own political ideals. Indeed, beginning in February, workers began to form factory committees as

---

Encore Editions, 2004 [1986]), 335-356; Daniel Guérin, *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice* (New York: Monthly Review, 1970), 82-108.

<sup>2</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 124-125.

<sup>3</sup> Marshall, *Demanding*, 472.

<sup>4</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 123-151, 160-163; Marshall, *Demanding*, 470.

well as city-wide soviets on their own accord. The committees, also known as workers' councils, demanded not only better pay and shorter hours, but also a say in management decisions such as hiring and work organization. The essentially syndicalist idea of "worker's control" spread quickly throughout Russia's industrial cities. In a bid to win over the councils, the Bolsheviks proclaimed their support for immediate workers' control of industry in May. For the better part of 1917, then, anarchists believed that they and the Bolsheviks were organizing in a "perfect parallelism," as Voline put it, despite their longstanding theoretical differences.<sup>5</sup> This was the situation which prompted Emma Goldman to write glowingly in the Spring of 1917 that the "Bolsheviki" had "been swept forward on the waves of the Revolution to the point of view held by the Anarchists since Bakunin; namely, that once the masses become conscious of their economic power, they make their own history and need not be bound by traditions and processes of a dead past..."<sup>6</sup>

Anarchists participated in the Bolshevik-led popular insurrection of October 1917 that overthrew Alexander Kerensky's provisional government. They pinned their hopes on the eventuality that "the creative masses" would take control of their own lives and reject the formation of a new state apparatus once the provisional government had been disposed of. The daily and weekly anarchist newspapers advocated a social order based on autonomous factory committees and city-wide

---

<sup>5</sup> Guérin, *Anarchism*, 83-86; Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 128-130; Voline, *Nineteen-Seventeen*, 69-76.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Goldman, *My Disillusionment*, xi.

soviets, where laborers unaffiliated with any political party would make decisions about economic and social life in a truly democratic fashion.<sup>7</sup> They were disabused of these hopes in very short order. From November 1917 to May of 1918 the Bolsheviks instituted a series of policies and new institutions that the anarchists denounced in print and speech. Most prominent was the establishment of a soviet of People's Commissars composed solely of members of their own party, to be given authority over local soviets. On November 2nd, the government declared the rights of Russian peoples to self-determination through the formation of independent states, a policy the anarchists saw as regressive for its statism. Soon followed the creation of the secret police force known as the Cheka, and the nationalization of land and the banks.

Since the October revolution, laborers in many factories had interpreted Lenin's calls for workers' control in a narrow fashion, sometimes seizing control from managers before they had developed the technical knowledge necessary to operate their factories, at times making decisions with little consideration of the needs of the larger economy, and, in some cases, simply selling off tools and machinery for individual gain. Other factions of the left blamed the ensuing chaos and decline in productivity on the syndicalists' persistent demands for immediate worker ownership and self-management. In January 1918 the First All-Russian Congress of Trade Unions was brought to order with a large majority of delegates belonging to the Bolshevik party. Since anarchists had shunned trade unions in favor of workers'

---

<sup>7</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 158; Voline, *Nineteen-Seventeen*, 64; Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 349.

committees, they sent only six representatives—including Bill Shatov, and G.P. Maximoff, a *Golos Truda* writer who would later emigrate to the United States. Against the anarchist delegates' strenuous objections, the Congress voted to "transform workers' committees into primary union organs." The trade unions, in turn, were brought under direct control of the Bolshevik Party. In this way, only three months after the revolution, the anarchists fear of a hierarchical bureaucracy reclaiming authority from councils of rank and file workers had already all but come to pass.<sup>8</sup>

Throughout the spring, anarchists organized into city-wide and regional federations and denounced these developments with increasing vigor. In Moscow, activity centered around the former Merchants' Club which was seized and dubbed the "House of Anarchy," becoming, perhaps, the world's first official anarchist squat. In this and other social centers, anarchists carried on their propaganda, producing and distributing *Golos Truda* weekly and the anarchist-communist paper *Anarkhiia* daily. The Moscow Federation of Anarchists also began establishing militia units called "Black Guards," armed with pistols, rifles, and grenades, and intended to serve as the beginnings of a partisan army to defeat the German army, while also providing a show of force to the Bolsheviks.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, and since expropriation had been

---

<sup>8</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 158-170; Guérin, *Anarchism*, 87-94.

<sup>9</sup> Conflict between the anarchists and Bolsheviks reached new heights in February when Lenin signed the treaty of Brest-Litovsk, ceding more than a quarter of Russia's population, and a good deal of arable land and heavy industry to Germany. Despite

central to Russian anarchist-communism since 1905, some members of the Black Guards continued the practice of requisitioning houses, cars, and money from those they deemed bourgeois.

Having solidified their rule, the Bolsheviks decided to move against their erstwhile collaborators. After anarchists stole a car belonging to a U.S. American Red Cross official in April, the Cheka raided 26 anarchist centers. In the House of Anarchy and a requisitioned monastery, anarchists resisted arrest with firearms. Twelve Cheka and forty anarchists died in the shoot-out, and more than 500 others were taken prisoner. The Cheka then raided anarchist centers in Petrograd and other cities, shutting down *Golos Truda*, *Anarkhiia*, and other anarchist newspapers in May. The police raids on anarchist centers prompted a new round of terrorist attacks by Anarchist-Communists in Moscow and in southern Russia, including a deadly bombing of a meeting of the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party. Anarcho-syndicalists, such as Maximoff, denounced such attacks as a harmful and discredited tactic, but were unable to stop them. Unsurprisingly, the violence prompted a massive wave of arrests and summary trials of anarchists by the Cheka.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the violence on both sides, the greater threat posed by the reactionary White Army in the deepening Russian civil war pushed the Bolsheviks and some anarchists back into closer collaboration during the summer of 1918. Recognizing

---

their ardent opposition to the war in principle, the anarchists now rejected the idea of surrendering to the German army. Voline, *Nineteen-Seventeen*, 94-99.

<sup>10</sup> Voline, *Nineteen-Seventeen*, 110-121; Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 179-189.

their common imperative to defeat the Whites, prominent anarchists, including syndicalists Bill Shatov and Alexander Shapiro and anarchist-communists Appollon Kerellin and Abba Gordin, sought to defend the revolution by joining the Red Army or accepting government posts. In the process, many reconciled themselves with the new regime and some joined the party. Such loosening of tensions paved the way for Goldman, Berkman, and the other deportees aboard the Buford to be given an official welcome upon their arrival in January, 1920.

Other anarchists chose to fight the reactionaries on their own terms, however. Moscow-based anarchists Volin, Senya Fleshin, and Mark Mratchny, among others, fled the 1918 springtime repression and established the Nabat Federation in the Ukraine. There they collaborated with the Insurgent Army of the Ukraine, a force of more than 10,000 peasants lead by local anarchist Nestor Makhno. During the 1917 revolution, Makhno organized impoverished farmers from his hometown of Guliai-Pole to seize the estates of local elites in order to redistribute their land. Beginning in July of 1918, the Insurgent Army launched a series of raids against the German and Austrian militaries (which had advanced into the Ukraine), against Ukrainian nationalist militias, and against detachments of both the White and Red Armies. From January to May of 1919, Makhno and his followers held each of these forces at bay from the region surrounding Guliai-Pole and encouraged peasants and laborers to take control of production and organize their lives as they wished. The Insurgent Army formed a series of tenuous alliances with the Red Army throughout 1919 and 1920 in

pragmatic efforts to defeat the Whites. With that task finally accomplished, however, Trotsky ordered the Red Army to liquidate their temporary allies. In November 1920, the Insurgent Army of the Ukraine was crushed and Makhno narrowly escaped to Paris. Simultaneously, the Cheka arrested the leaders of the Nabat Federation and the syndicalists still active in Moscow.<sup>11</sup>

The Russian Civil War prompted Lenin to implement “war communism,” a series of measures intending to bring state control of labor to new heights by instituting “one-man management” in the factories and conscription of workers to produce war materiel. This complete repudiation of workers’ control, paired with the severe shortages of food and other supplies, however, led to growing resistance to the Bolshevik regime. A “worker’s opposition” formed within the Communist Party, calling for a return of economic control to factory committees and trade unions. In February of 1921, a series of strikes erupted in Petrograd with workers calling for freedom of speech, an end to the Cheka, and a return to the rule of free soviets. The next month radical sailors stationed at a naval base on the island of Kronstadt mutinied and declared themselves a free commune in opposition to the “commissacrocracy” created by the Bolsheviks. Anarchists quickly declared their support for the uprising, with hopes that it would spread and reignite the earlier,

---

<sup>11</sup> On the Nabat Federation, Nestor Makhno, and the Insurgent Army, see Alexandre Skirda, *Nestor Makhno, Anarchy’s Cossack: The Struggle for Free Soviets in the Ukraine, 1917-1921* (Oakland: AK Press, 2004); Michael Palij, *The Anarchism of Nestor Makhno, 1918-1921* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976); Michael Malet, *Nestor Makhno and the Russian Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1982).

libertarian, character of the revolution. After two weeks, however, the Red Army violently suppressed the Kronstadt rebellion with some 14,000 soldiers and sailors killed in the fighting. Soon afterwards, the Cheka moved to suppress the anarchist supporters of the uprising once and for all. Volin, Mratchney, Maximoff and hundreds of others were arrested. In September the Cheka began executing anarchist prisoners.<sup>12</sup> After protests by international labor and radical organizations and a hunger strike carried out by the prisoners, Lenin released those with the highest profile, sending them into permanent exile in December 1921. Goldman, Berkman, and Shapiro left the country on their own accord at the same time.<sup>13</sup>

Having been deported from the United States in November, Mollie Steimer and other members of the Frayhayt Group arrived in Moscow just after their friends Goldman and Berkman had departed for Berlin. Steimer met Senya Fleshin in Petrograd shortly after her arrival. Together they launched an organization to aid the hundreds of anarchists languishing in soviet prisons. But even this activity was considered unacceptable. They were jailed twice before being expelled from the country in September 1923.<sup>14</sup> By that time, suppression of the Russian anarchist movement was total, and all the movement's surviving exiles could do was attempt to

---

<sup>12</sup> Paul Avrich, *Kronstadt 1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970); Marshall, *Demanding*, 476-477.

<sup>13</sup> Goldman, *My Disillusionment*, 237-241; Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 230-233.

<sup>14</sup> Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 222-223; Richard Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 352-356.

alert the world to the realities of the new order and do their best to send material and spiritual comfort to those remaining in prison.

### **Laying Low in Radical Colonies**

Events moved quickly in Russia and, despite their keen interest, it was often difficult for anarchists in the United States to stay informed due to the wartime suppression of their newspapers and meeting places. However, the desire for information about developments in Russia and the fate of comrades who emigrated or had been deported there was at least partially satisfied in new anarchist communities that blossomed throughout the 1920s. During and immediately after the Red Scare, some anarchists took refuge in the avant-garde cultural scene that sectors of the movement had built close ties with in the 1910s. This took many of them out of the cities to small town “artist colonies” that had sprouted in places such as Provincetown, Massachusetts and Woodstock, New York. Others maintained their connection to politics by living and raising children in anarchist colonies established in New Jersey and upstate New York. These continued to grow and flourish throughout the 1920s. Though their emphases and social composition differed from one another, the artist communities and anarchist colonies all offered their participants greater freedom of expression in daily life while distancing them from the industrial work and direct conflict with authorities that characterized urban life. In some instances, anarchists placed a distinct stamp on the locale to which they decamped. In others, the

experience of cooperative rural living may have reshaped the anarchist project more than the new residents made an impact on their surroundings.

Ties between anarchists and Greenwich Village bohemians grew through the latter's attendance of Ferrer Center classes, anarchists' participation in literary salons, and the praise anarchist journalists like Hutchins Hapgood showered on the city's modernist artists. Another important link came in the person of Hippolyte Havel. While serving as an editor of *Mother Earth*, Havel helped operate Polly's Restaurant, a bohemian hang-out on MacDougal Street, with his love interest, Polly Halliday. After striking up a friendship with Eugene O'Neill, Havel participated in productions at the Provincetown Playhouse. A regular at the Golden Swan bar, located just around the corner from Polly's Restaurant, Havel served as the model for the character of Hugo Kalmer, the anarchist newspaper editor in O'Neill's famous play "The Iceman Cometh."<sup>15</sup> O'Neill's crowd of literati often "summered" in a series of rural and small town "art colonies" that had grown up throughout New England. Havel and Halliday briefly maintained a second restaurant in Provincetown, Massachusetts, "for the convenience of the local artists' colony and the intelligencia who lived or visited there." In Providence, painters like Rockwell Kent socialized with anarchists such as Emma Goldman and Carlo Tresca.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>15</sup> Doris M. Alexander, "Hugo of the Iceman Cometh: Realism and O'Neill," *American Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1953): 357-366; Stephen A. Black, *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 187.

<sup>16</sup> Rose Pesotta, "Hippolyte Havel," unpublished manuscript, 1932, 8, Miscellaneous Manuscripts – Pesota, Rose, LC.

Havel was born in Chicago in 1871 to Bohemian immigrant parents who returned with him to Europe shortly after his birth. He attended secondary school in Vienna, where he was mentored by Ignaz Matzinger, a “conspirative revolutionist” who had worked on the *Arbeiter Zeitung*, the German language anarchist newspaper that Haymarket martyr Albert Spies had edited in Chicago prior to his imprisonment and execution.<sup>17</sup> Havel traveled throughout Europe speaking on behalf of the cause, and was frequently arrested and held for short periods of time. In London, Havel met Emma Goldman and traveled with her to the United States in 1905. After a stint in Chicago, he moved to New York to help Goldman and Max Baginski edit *Mother Earth*. After Goldman’s journal was quashed in 1916, Havel attempted two other periodicals but both met the same fate. Beginning in 1919 he helped to secretly produce the *Anarchist Soviet Bulletin* and *Free Society*. In 1920, with the Palmer Raids turning up the heat on anarchists everywhere, Hutchins Hapgood invited Havel to accompany him to Woodstock, New York, a bohemian haunt of growing renown in the Catskills.<sup>18</sup> The town had much to offer a culturally minded anarchist like Havel.

Located 100 miles up the Hudson River from New York City, Woodstock first became a center of artistic production in 1903 when a wealthy Englishman established a summer school to train students in painting, furniture making, pottery, and other

---

<sup>17</sup> Pessota, “Hippolyte Havel,” 3.

<sup>18</sup> For biographical information on Hippolyte Havel, see Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006), 131-138; Alan Antliff, *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 95-122.

mediums.<sup>19</sup> Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead, heir to a wealthy mill owning family, was profoundly affected by the ideas of John Ruskin, whom he studied under at Oxford University. Ruskin, alongside figures such as William Morris and Thomas Carlyle, was a leading exponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement, a network of British intellectuals who advocated a return to small scale craft production and simple living as an alternative to the alienating and environmentally damaging effects of modern industrial life. The humanistic socialist vision presented by Arts and Crafts advocates, Morris in particular, shared much in common with the anarchist communist vision of thinkers such as Peter Kropotkin.<sup>20</sup> Whitehead purchased approximately 1500 acres on a hillside overlooking the hamlet of Woodstock. He had a series of studios, workshops, performance spaces, and lodgings built there, naming the property and the school Byrdcliffe.

Whitehead aimed to provide the grounds for “an association of independent workers in a cooperative effort.” On paper, this was a vision very similar to the anarchist ideal of a society of free individuals engaged voluntarily in collaborative labor and mutual aid. Whitehead encouraged students to conceive of the Byrdcliffe project as an example to the outside world. In the words of historian Alf Evers, “The young students of painting, drawing, and of woodworking, carving, weaving and

---

<sup>19</sup> Alf Evers, *Woodstock: History of an American Town* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> Evers, *Woodstock*, 402-403. On William Morris’ life and politics, see E.P. Thompson, *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1955).

metalwork felt the Byrdcliffe experiment as a forerunner of a future similar to the one they had read of in William Morris' *News From Nowhere*, in which pollution of air and water had ended, money had become a mere curiosity, and all shared in a life of creative fulfillment."<sup>21</sup> Classes at Byrdcliffe, like those offered by Robert Henri and his collaborators, did away with the disciplined training in technique demanded by the major art academies, allowing students "to paint or draw as they pleased, under whatever master they might prefer." The school grew rapidly in its first two seasons.

Despite his avowed socialism, however, Whitehead quickly demonstrated a strong cultural elitism—he and his wife were served by butlers and refused to associate with the townspeople—as well as an authoritarian personality streak that alienated many of the instructors he had hired. A handful left Byrdcliffe but remained in the Woodstock area to initiate artistic endeavors of their own. One former instructor opened a Woodstock branch of the New York City-based Art Students League, which focused on teaching landscape and figure painting. For its use of live nude models, the League faced consistent attack by Anthony Comstock, the moral crusader who also led opposition to anarchist campaigns in support of sexual freedom and birth control. This reputation contributed to Woodstock's growing fame as a place for tourists to gawk at odd—and possibly naked—art students at work and play. By 1908, League students and other Woodstock artists began experimenting with impressionistic techniques. Over the next few years, students returning from Europe

---

<sup>21</sup> Evers, *Woodstock*, 422.

encouraged them to explore the panoply of avant-garde styles that Picasso, Matisse, Duchamp, and others were pioneering. Such early exposure to Modernist styles opened the door for Woodstock painters Andrew Michel Dasburgh and David Putnam Brinley to contribute work to the infamous New York Armory show of 1913.<sup>22</sup>

Most notable amongst the Byrdcliffe castoffs was Hervey White, a novelist with a degree from Harvard who had spent four years working at Hull House in Chicago and proudly sported a red necktie to announce his socialist politics. White chaffed at the overly-structured environment Whitehead insisted upon, and bought a large nearby farm of his own in 1905. There he installed a printing press and began publishing books of poetry, plays, novels, calendars, and a literary journal while contract work for local businesses provided extra income. White's turn to experimental literary styles inspired by the likes of Carl Sandberg, T.S. Elliot, and James Joyce helped Woodstock attract avant-garde writers alongside its visual artists. In 1908 White began building cabins and inviting artists and progressive intellectual friends to summer on his property, which he named the Maverick Arts Colony. His visitors ranged from Ferrer Center regulars such as Robert Henri and George Bellows to the rogue economist-sociologist Thorstein Veblen and the feminist author Charlotte Perkins Gilman. White's conclaves of progressive thinkers combined with

---

<sup>22</sup> Evers, *Woodstock*, 440-443.

Byrdcliffe's social reform ideals to build the town's reputation as a haven for politicians as well as artists.<sup>23</sup>

In 1915 residents of the Maverick Colony organized a summer festival to raise money to install a well. It turned out to be a thoroughly bacchanalian affair with participants dressed as "pirates, puritans, and Parisian Gamines," dancing, engaging in sports competitions, staging plays, listening to music, and buying the wares of local artists and farmers. The festival became "an annual Bohemian carnival" that brought thousands of visitors to Woodstock for a weekend of politically-infused revelry, creativity, and community each summer until 1931.<sup>24</sup> In the early 1920s White decided to open a restaurant that could serve the town's many visitors. In an unpublished biographical sketch of Havel, the anarchist Rose Pesotta recounted: "In Woodstock the veteran Anarchist-Communist, devoid of personal ambition, found his vocation as chief cook and right-hand man for Hervey White, the novelist and founder and proprietor of the Maverick, a summer playground for tired Villagers. Thus those

---

<sup>23</sup> This reputation only deepened when the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) used an old Woodstock area hotel as the site of its "Unity House" cultural and recreational summer program in 1918 and 1919. In May of 1921 the two largest U.S. communist parties met in the same hotel to unify their organizations and join the Communist International. Evers, *Woodstock*, 486-489.

<sup>24</sup> "The Maverick Festival, Woodstock, 1915-1931, On-line Exhibit," Samuel Dosky Museum of Art, State University of New York-New Paltz, <http://www.newpaltz.edu/museum/exhibitions/maverick2007/index.htm>. (accessed June 28, 2009).

playwrights, writers and artists again rubbed shoulders with an active exponent of the philosophy of Anarchism.”<sup>25</sup>

Emma Goldman’s niece, Stella Comyn, also found sanctuary amongst the artistic avant-garde. Comyn had served as an assistant and confidant to her aunt before the war. When Goldman was arrested in 1917, Comyn helped bring out the final issues of *Mother Earth*, and then edited the *Mother Earth Bulletin* until April 1918. She also briefly attempted to establish a Mother Earth Bookstore in Greenwich Village, explaining to a friend that, “circulating such books as the government allows is the only method of education left to us.”<sup>26</sup> In the early 1920s Comyn met E. J. “Teddy” Ballantine, a Scottish Shakespearean actor and anarchist who worked closely with O’Neil and helped to establish the Provincetown Playhouse. As her relationship with Ballantine blossomed, Comyn travelled with him between Greenwich Village, Provincetown, and Woodstock. Teddy Ballantine helped to build the Maverick Theatre in 1924, participating in productions when it was completed.<sup>27</sup> After marrying, the couple moved to the Woodstock area permanently in January 1926.<sup>28</sup> The artists colony established there by anarchist-influenced writers and playwrights would be influential to another generation of anarchists in the 1940s. Moreover, the Maverick Festivals built a reputation for the town still alive in the 1960s, attracting

---

<sup>25</sup> Pesotta, “Hippolyte Havel,” 9.

<sup>26</sup> Comyn to Van Valkenburgh, June 28, 1918, Van Valkenburgh Papers, LC

<sup>27</sup> Evers, *Woodstock*, 504.

<sup>28</sup> S. C. Ballantine to Van Valkenburgh, January 14, (no year [1926]) and Van Valkenburgh to S. C. Ballantine, January 20, 1926, Van Valkenburgh Papers, LC.

some of the decade's most important folk and rock musicians, and inspiring concert promoters to revive the tradition of the Woodstock Festival in 1969.

In Chicago, art fused with politics in different ways than it had in Woodstock, leading to the rise of a “hobohemia” in the Towertown neighborhood after the war. Towertown, located on the city's near Northside, was home to the General Headquarters of the IWW as well as a variety of skid-row boarding houses, both of which attracted perambulatory homeless workers to the area. But beginning in the mid-1910s it also hosted a growing number of bookstores, cafes, and lecture halls that attracted writers, artists, and radical-minded intellectuals. Two institutions, in particular, brought these crowds together. The first was a small city park that became known as Bughouse Square as its reputation as Chicago's premier venue for soap-boxing and public debate grew. Only a square-block in size, Bughouse Square's assortment of speakers often drew crowds in the thousands. As one regular visitor explained, “Present are Christians, pagans, vegetarians, Socialists, agnostics, atheists, single-taxers, Communists and a full score of other rebels against the existing order, each the incarnation of some society-saving panacea.”<sup>29</sup> Close by was the Dil Pickle Club, a nightclub and open forum that hosted jazz musicians, poets, and dramatic performances, as well as all manner of radical lecturer. A sign on the Dil Pickle's door reading, “Step High, Stoop Low, Leave Your Dignity Outside,” gave patrons fair

---

<sup>29</sup> Frank O. Beck, *Hobohemia: Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons, Ben Reitman, and other Agitators and Outsiders in 1920s/30s Chicago* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2000 [1956]), 91.

warning that those concerned with moral propriety and proper decorum were not particularly welcomed. Opened in 1917 by former Wobbly Jack Jones, the Dil Pickle “at once became the rendezvous of leading labor organizers and leaders, of radical artists too often coarse and ribald, of modern poets often equally unrefined and gross, of rising literary personages and revolutionists,” according to frequent patron Frank Beck.<sup>30</sup> Residents of Towertown, then, shared the Woodstockers’ and Greenwich Villagers’ interests in artistic modernism, as well as their devotion to inventing new ways of living. Hobohemia, however, exuded a more working-class sensibility and was also considerably more multi-racial.<sup>31</sup> Between the wars it would shape the thinking of important anarchist thinkers of the 1940s, such as Kenneth Rexroth. And, like Woodstock, it too would leave in place a seed of counter-cultural radicalism that bore new fruit in the 1960s.

\*\*\*

Other anarchists spent the war years and the early 1920s building up “colonies” they had established in rural areas outside of New York City. In 1915 anarchists associated with the Ferrer Center in New York created the Stelton Colony near New Brunswick, New Jersey, in order to move the center’s Modern School for children to a healthier, rural environment. According to Joseph Cohen, “The primary

---

<sup>30</sup> Beck, *Hobohemia*, 102.

<sup>31</sup> Slim Brundage, *From Bughouse Square to the Beat Generation: The Selected Ravings of Slim Brundage* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1997); Franklin Rosemont, ed. *The Rise and Fall of the Dil Pickle Club: Jazz-Age Chicago’s Wildest and Most Outrageously Creative Hobohemian Nightspot* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003).

object of the Colony, as conceived by Comrade Harry Kelly in the summer of 1914, was to secure a small tract of land and some buildings for the School out in God's open country...Neither he nor any other influential member of the Francisco Ferrer Association was interested in colonization on its own account."<sup>32</sup> The sociologist Laurence Veysey also suggests that in the wake of the Lexington Avenue explosion in 1915 some members of the Ferrer Center, including Kelly, sought to move the school to the countryside as a means of distancing the children from the adult anarchists who used the center to plan militant activities.<sup>33</sup>

In order to establish the school, the Ferrer Association bought three contiguous farms, together constituting 143 acres. It began to sell one acre lots to members of the movement, retaining nine acres in common for roads, the school, a boarding house for students with non-resident parents, a library, and other community facilities. Despite the fact that the land turned out to be only semi-arable, approximately 100 families purchased plots and began building houses in the first four years.<sup>34</sup> An early resident recalled that, "all sorts of homes were built at Stelton, from neat two-story houses with modern plumbing, steam heat, and accessories to make them akin to a comfortable city

---

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Cohen and Alexis C. Ferm, *The Modern School of Stelton: A Sketch* (New York: Factory School, 2006 [1925]), 53. Anarchists used the term "colony" and "colonization" without apparent concern for the imperialist significance of the terms. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the term "colony" was regularly used to describe any settlement of a particular group of people, such as an immigrant community, in a locale in which they were not previously concentrated.

<sup>33</sup> Laurence R. Veysey, *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 104-110.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006 [1980]), 242.

dwelling, down to rough shacks that were used first as living quarters and later for chicken houses when the owners built more substantial structures from themselves.”<sup>35</sup> By 1920, nearly 150 people lived at the colony year round. Residents were primarily anarchists but since the colony brooked no ideological test radicals and progressives of other stripes settled there as well. Russian Jews comprised approximately three-quarters of the colony’s population, but Italians, Spaniards, Britons, and a sprinkling of native born U.S. Americans also called Stelton home.<sup>36</sup>

Though the initial colonists desired, in principle, to build a new life based on the principles of anarchist-communism, they had no illusions that Stelton would be self-sufficient. Most adult residents travelled to New York, Philadelphia, or New Brunswick by train each day, relying on wage labor in garment factories and other industries to support themselves. Individually, a few members, such as Ferrer Center organizer Joseph Cohen and his wife, Sophie, tried to raise poultry commercially on their plots.<sup>37</sup> The colony did develop a number of cooperatively owned enterprises, however, including a taxi service to the nearest train stop, a grocery and ice-delivery service, and eventually a small garment manufacturing shop. Moreover, the colony created a performance space in an old barn and erected a library named after Kropotkin for use by the entire community. Members gathered regularly for community dinners in which they discussed concerns relevant to the colony, the

---

<sup>35</sup> Harry Kelly, “Roll Back the Years,” unpublished manuscript, Chap. 26, pg. 8, John Nicholas Beffel Papers, TL.

<sup>36</sup> Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 122.

<sup>37</sup> Avrich, *Modern School*, 243.

school, and the movement at large. In the warm season, visitors eager to escape the city for the weekend pitched tents at Stelton. Invited guests—including figures as diverse as John Dewey, Helen Keller, and Paul Robeson—frequently gave lectures to the adult members of the colony, helping to reproduce, on a smaller scale, the rich intellectual environment that first drew many of the colonists to the Ferrer Center and to the anarchist counter-culture of the large cities more generally.<sup>38</sup>

The relocation of the Modern School in 1915 was fortuitous, for the Stelton Colony offered some degree of sanctuary to anarchists during the years of the Red Scare. In 1919 Lusk Committee investigators visited the colony and questioned residents at length. Finding no illegal activity taking place, the agent alerted his superiors to the colony's moral shortcomings. Kelly later recalled, "Knowing that the best way to blacken the reputation of a man, woman, or movement, is to raise some questions involving sex, this 'investigator' pictured our school as a place where 'nude bathing' took place, leading to sex irregularities."<sup>39</sup> Though the committee suggested every member of the colony be held on Ellis Island for deportation, authorities never acted on the suggestion. Joseph Cohen reasoned that "what saved us was the fact that we were all property owners, tied up with all kinds of obligations and entanglements."<sup>40</sup> In addition to the safety it provided its permanent residents, Stelton also served as a weigh station for anarchists who lost their jobs and apartments due to

---

<sup>38</sup> Avrich, *Modern School*, 266, 303

<sup>39</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 31, pg. 3.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 131.

political persecution between 1917 and 1920. Mollie Steimer's co-defendant Jacob Abrams, for example, spent the summer of 1919 recuperating there, following the Frayhayt Group's sedition trial.<sup>41</sup> The colony did not go wholly unscathed, though. In 1918 a contingent of local Home Guards visited Stelton looking for conflict, but left without violence after tearing down a red flag flying from the communal water tank.<sup>42</sup>

Although the Modern School provided the impetus that brought the colony together, it also at times threatened to tear residents apart. Raising their children using libertarian educational techniques became increasingly important to anarchists in the decade after Francisco Ferrer's execution, as it seemed to offer an alternative to the insurrectionary strategies of change that had proven unsuccessful to date. Kelly explained, "We wanted to give the children the best possible teaching, but above and beyond this was the social ideal behind the [Ferrer] Center, to rebuild society through the agency of schools for the young based on libertarian principles."<sup>43</sup> The goal, according to one historian of the school, was to raise "a generation of children uncorrupted by the commercialism and selfishness of the capitalist system and undisturbed by political repression and indoctrination in religion or government as taught in traditional schools."<sup>44</sup> However, residents of the colony and members of the Modern School Association of North America, which administered the school after it moved to Stelton, rarely agreed on the details of what constituted the ideal libertarian

---

<sup>41</sup> Polenberg, *Fighting Faiths*, 161.

<sup>42</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 31, pg. 4.

<sup>43</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 25, pgs. 5-6.

<sup>44</sup> Avrich, *Modern School*, 250.

education. Although it was generally accepted that students should not be subject to discipline or grades, the combination of intellectual subjects, outdoor activities, and trade skills offered by teachers was in constant flux, and largely subject to the whims of a revolving cast of teachers during the colony's first five years.<sup>45</sup>

Stelton's most consistent educational program was initiated by Elizabeth and Alexis Ferm, who took charge of the school in 1920. The Fermes believed that raising children to be free human beings primarily entailed facilitating each one's process of self-discovery and self-development. Yet, owing to a vision that shared much in common with that of Woodstock's Ralph Whitehead, the Fermes also aimed to train students to live as self-sufficient artisans or small farmers outside the rapidly expanding commodity system. When the couple took over the school in 1920 they actively discouraged students from focusing on "abstract" and "academic" studies, including basic reading and math skills, and instead encouraged the children to engage in artistic and musical activities while learning skills in a variety of manual trades, such as weaving and printing.<sup>46</sup> In a sense, the Fermes sought to prepare children to

---

<sup>45</sup> Kelly humorously recalls, for instance, that an early Ferrer School teacher, Henry Schnittkind, "wrote a one-act anti-war play, 'Shambles,' and staged it, with his pupils enacting the various roles. It was a gruesome portrayal, and quite unsuited for juvenile presentation, but its author was an ardent pacifist. The war was already a year old, and horrifying with its vast toll of life and limb, so perhaps he can be excused for writing such a play for a young cast. . . . My foster son, Wally Krimont, then about ten years old, unmistakably enjoyed his part as a stretcher bearer, even though he had no lines to speak." Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 24, pg. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 149. The Fermes explain their pedagogical practice in Cohen and Ferm, *Modern School*, and Elizabeth Byrne Ferm, *Freedom in Education* (New York: Factory School, 2005 [1949]).

live their lives in line with the vision of anarchist communism Kropotkin had enunciated in his 1899 book *Fields, Factories, and Workshops*.<sup>47</sup> This pedagogical practice, however, did not sit well with many Modern School parents, whose lives had been defined by industrial society and for whom intellectual pursuits, including a deep engagement with political theory, were important and gratifying.

An intense debate developed in Stelton over the Ferrers' refusal to teach the students the rudiments of anarchist thought and ethics. Alexis Ferrer argued vehemently that to teach such ideas amounted to imposing a stultifying system of ideas on children in the same way that religious schools imposed Christianity. By contrast, Elizabeth Ferrer, who spent her early life in a convent, carried a fairly conservative sexual politics into her work at the school. She organized sex-segregated sleeping quarters in the school's dormitory, chastised children for masturbating, and discouraged the partial nudity that had become commonplace amongst the children before her arrival. In this sense, bodily protocols observed at the Stelton Modern School represented a reversal from the sex radicalism that prevailed in the anarchist movement before the war. These issues combined with the worries of many working-class parents that their children would be limited later in life by their lack of training in math, science, and other traditional subjects. As Veysey astutely explains, "The parents of the Ferrer children had always tended to call for definiteness in the

---

<sup>47</sup> Peter Kropotkin, *Fields, Factories, and Workshops; or, Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Mental Work* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1901]).

instruction, both morally and intellectually. In effect they demanded that the children be given the basic tools to enable them to rise in society at the same time that they be indoctrinated with the social consciences of militant revolutionaries.”<sup>48</sup> Under mounting pressure, the Ferms decided to leave Stelton in 1925 rather than modify their own version of libertarian education. The disagreement over the Stelton school exemplified the enduring tension in the anarchist movement regarding the degree to which liberation can be (or must be) an inner, individual process, or a collective, social process. The Modern School’s decision not to explicitly teach children the ideas which lead to its own founding had effects on the movement’s future, as we will see later.

In the early 1920s Stelton residents also clashed with one another over the nature of the new social order in Russia and how they should relate to it. The colonists were at first overwhelmingly supportive of the October revolution. Within a year, however, letters describing the growing centralization of power and the repression of anarchists, Social Revolutionaries, and other Left dissidents began to arrive from anarchists who had returned to Russia from the United States. Community leaders read such letters aloud at public meetings, leading to “heated and often acrimonious argument over the merits and demerits of the economic, social, and political set-up in Russia.”<sup>49</sup>

---

<sup>48</sup> Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 152-3.

<sup>49</sup> Kelly, “Roll Back the Years,” Chap. 27, pgs. 1-2

Harry Kelly also served as a personal conduit of information about Russian realities to Stelton colonists. European anarchists organized an International Anarchist Congress to be held in Berlin in 1921 and U.S. anarchists sent Kelly as their sole representative. His steamer was delayed causing him to miss all but the final day of the conference. However, he took the opportunity to travel to Sweden, where Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, and Alexander Schapiro were temporarily living after leaving Russia in December 1921. The Russian refugees recounted their first hand experiences and impressions of Russia to Kelly while beginning work on a series of critical essays and memoirs in which they renounced their earlier support for the Bolsheviks. Kelly relayed the opinions of these respected comrades upon his return to the United States in May.<sup>50</sup> That same spring, Goldman unleashed a torrent of criticism against the Soviet regime in a series of articles published in the *New York World*. Her book, *My Disillusionment in Russia*, was published by a major press in 1924, followed by Berkman's *The Bolshevik Myth* in 1925.<sup>51</sup> These lengthy first-hand accounts by respected organizers reinforced the anti-Communist perspective already prevalent amongst U.S. anarchists by the end of 1922. The mixed political character of the residents of Stelton Colony, however, ensured that opinions about Russian society, and Communism more generally, remained divisive until the colony

---

<sup>50</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 35, pgs. 6-7.

<sup>51</sup> Goldman, *My Disillusionment*; Emma Goldman, *My Further Disillusionment in Russia* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Page, 1924); Alexander Berkman, *The Bolshevik Myth: Diary 1920-1922* (New York: Boni and Liverwright, 1925).

disbanded in the early 1940s. Struggles between Communists and anarchists also wracked a second colony founded by anarchists early in the decade.

In 1923 Harry Kelly learned that a 450 acre wooded property on Lake Mohegan, forty-five miles north of New York City, was for sale. Geographically more attractive than the Stelton site, the property was already equipped with a 19-room farmhouse with modern utilities. Kelly and a few collaborators wasted no time in organizing a meeting to assess interest in launching a second community-building effort. In a telling passage of his unpublished memoir, Kelly noted,

Our purpose, sketchily outlined that evening, was to establish another children's school, to be conducted along libertarian lines, to build a community wherein a larger measure of individual and social life, as we understood those terms, could be realized. We knew of course that we must live within the limits of national and state laws, but we believed it possible to create a community life in that pleasant setting much better than anything we as individuals could hope for in a teeming city like New York. After all, as one of those present remarked, even workers are entitled to, and would prefer, a more aesthetic place to live in than the lower East side or even the Bronx. To which others said: Amen!<sup>52</sup>

The would-be colonists' initial calling to create social change through libertarian education was, by 1923, compounded by a plan to collectivize the process of social mobility.

Those interested in participating pooled down-payments for plots of land under the auspices of a Mohegan Modern School Association. The association purchased the land and began subdividing it into single acre parcels, reserving common space for

---

<sup>52</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 37, pg. 2.

a school and dormitory, a park, and a beachfront on Lake Mohegan. Lewis Mumford, an admirer of Kropotkin and Morris who contributed his design skills to early suburban developments near New York, helped lay out the streets of the new community.<sup>53</sup> By the end of the year, twenty-five families had moved to the new colony. Hippolyte Havel relocated from the Maverick Colony in Woodstock and plied his trade as chef for Mohegan while private homes were under construction. A Modern School was launched in 1924, and the new colony grew rapidly, attracting nearly 300 families by 1930. As at Stelton, Jews predominated, but immigrants from nearly every major European country made their home in Mohegan. The new colony's residents tended to be more financially secure than the first families to settle in Stelton. According to Avrigh, "Mohegan projected a more prosperous, more middle-class image, with professionals and even businessmen quite common among its inhabitants."<sup>54</sup>

Though the Mohegan Association attempted to more stringently screen applicants than its counterpart in Stelton had, the political character of the colony once again became mixed between anarchists, socialists, Communists, and liberals of

---

<sup>53</sup> Avrigh, *Modern School*, 318. Kropotkin's vision of community life that combined the best of the rural and urban was a major inspiration for Ebenezer Howard, the planner whose "garden city" concept served as a model for early proponents of suburbia in the United States. Though Kropotkin's initial vision was abandoned by degrees in successive iterations of the suburban concept over the century, these anarchist contributions are deeply ironic considering the extensive critiques late-20<sup>th</sup> century anarchists have leveled at the social life and environmental consequences associated with suburban living. See Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002), 91.

<sup>54</sup> Avrigh, *Modern School*, 317-318.

varying stripes. To Kelly's mind, an "initial and fundamental error was in assuming that all the applicants for membership understood the meaning of the term libertarian and told the truth in answer to the questions on the printed application blank."

Looking back, the anarchist-cum-real estate broker asserted that "one cannot build a free community if it includes totalitarian Communists who do not believe in freedom, even if they are merely a small minority."<sup>55</sup> For the next two decades anarchists persistently accused residents with CP affiliations of using manipulative organizational techniques, such as packing committees and voting in blocs, to control the school and the administration of the colony. Although evidence suggests Communists did not hesitate to use Mohegan for their own ends (the colony was the site of a 1949 Paul Robeson concert which ended in the infamous Peekskill Riots, for example), anarchist residents interviewed by Paul Avrich also admit that many of the anarchists were "too weak or apathetic" to actively enforce the colony's founding principles.<sup>56</sup>

Still, Mohegan served as a supportive home base to many anarchists who played important roles in the inter-war movement including Valerio Isca, Simon Farber, and, after 1937, the revered German anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker. Like Stelton, Mohegan Colony regularly hosted public forums addressed by prominent visitors such as Socialist Party chairman Norman Thomas and the pacifist and labor organizer, A.J. Muste. The colonies also served as free spaces that were used to host

---

<sup>55</sup> Kelly, "Roll Back the Years," Chap. 37, pg. 5.

<sup>56</sup> Avrich, *Modern School*, 335-336.

meetings, conferences, summer camps, and to produce important movement periodicals. Large contributions from “Stelton” and “Mohegan” are recorded in the financial statements of most anarchist periodicals and prisoner defense organizations operating during the colonies’ existence. Forums, dinners, and other events served as important fundraising opportunities, but the high density of radicals made it possible for organizers to easily walk door to door, collecting donations from each individual or family. In the mid-1920s such funds were desperately needed by Russian prisoners, but also by two of the most prominent anarchists ever imprisoned in the United States.

### **The Italians—Defending Sacco and Vanzetti and Fighting Fascism**

Italian anarchists in the United States had little time to lick their wounds following the raids and deportations of 1919 and 1920. Throughout the 1920s they concentrated on two central tasks: the fight to stop the executions of two of their own, Nicola Sacco and Bartolemeo Vanzetti, and unyielding opposition to the growth of fascism in Italy and the United States.<sup>57</sup> As before the war, they were divided

---

<sup>57</sup> Literature on the Italian anarchist movement has grown quickly in recent years. See Jennifer Guglielmo, *Living the Revolution: Italian Women’s Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Michael Miller Topp, *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001); Nunzio Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca: Portrait of a Rebel* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005); Nunzio Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani and Italian Anarchist Terrorism in the United States,” *Studi Emigrazione/Etudes Migrations* 30, no.111 (1993): 469-488; Philip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, eds., *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003); Rudolf Vecoli, ed., *Italian American Radicalism: Old World Origins and New World Developments* (New York: Italian American Historical Association, 1973); Rebecca N. Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical*

amongst themselves into syndicalist and insurrectionist factions. The Nuovo Era Group of Patterson never recovered from the raids and jailings its members faced during the Red Scare years. Consequently, pro- union Italian anarchists tended to group around Carlo Tresca and his initiatives during the 1920s, while the circles formerly affiliated with *Cronaca Sovversiva* carried on independently.

“After the Palmer Raids,” historian Nunzio Pernicone writes, “dozens of Galleanisti went underground or into exile rather than risk deportation. Some never resurfaced, many restricted their activities, and still others became completely inactive.”<sup>58</sup> For example, the Grupo Bresci of East Harlem disbanded after the raids. Some participants in the 1919 bomb plot, such as Emilio Coda, slipped out of the country and joined deported comrades such as Galleani and Schiavina in Italy and France. However, hundreds of “anti-organizzatore” remained active in the United States, if on a more discreet level. The Grupo Autonomo of Boston, for example, continued to meet weekly, and a number of papers arose to take the place of *Cronaca Sovversiva* on a stop-gap basis.<sup>59</sup>

---

*History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 162-208; Beverly Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>58</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, “War among the Italian Anarchists: The Galleanisti’s Campaign against Carlo Tresca,” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, ed. Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 84.

<sup>59</sup> Among these publications were *Il Domani* and *L’Ordine*, published by Roberto Elia and Andrea Salsedo, soon to be implicated in the May 1 and June 2, 1919 bomb campaigns. Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 115.

The bombing campaigns of May and June 1919 carried out by the Italian insurrectionists set in motion an intense investigation to discover the perpetrators of the crimes. In late February 1920, relying on information provided by undercover agents who managed to infiltrate the Italian anarchist movement, the Bureau of Investigation tracked down the printers of the "Plain Words" leaflet that had been found at the scenes of the June 2, 1919 bombings. Print shop employees Roberto Elia and Andrea Salsedo were arrested in Brooklyn and illegally detained in the Justice Department's offices in lower Manhattan. During a brutal interrogation Salsedo confessed to his role in the bombings and implicated many of his former comrades. Provided with legal counsel by a man who was actually collaborating with the federal agents, Salsedo and Elia were secretly held at the Justice Department for two months. At the end of March, Salsedo was able to smuggle out a letter to one of his comrades from Boston, Bartolomeo Vanzetti, describing the conditions of his detention, but not admitting to the information he had provided.

After seeking advice from Carlo Tresca and ACLU lawyer Walter Nelles, Vanzetti began collecting money for the men's defense. It wouldn't be needed, however. Early in the morning of May 3, 1920, Salsedo plunged to his death from the 14<sup>th</sup> floor window of his makeshift cell at the Justice Department. Although evidence later showed that Salsedo almost certainly jumped from the window, likely out of shame for betraying his comrades, the Boston anarchists immediately accused the government agents of murdering him. In fact, however, Salsedo's death alerted the

press to leads the Justice Department had covertly been pursuing, throwing their investigation into disarray. The next day's headlines exposed the illegal detention of the two Italian men and indicated that the Elia and Salsedo had implicated the followers of Galleani. Two days later, Elia was transferred to Ellis Island and then deported to Italy.<sup>60</sup>

Upon learning of the confessions, Vanzetti, his friend Nicola Sacco, and two other members of the Grupo Autonomo, Mario Buda and Ricardo Orcianni, moved into high gear. On the night of May 5<sup>th</sup>, the four Italians attempted to retrieve Buda's car from a repair shop in order to transport incriminating literature—and, most likely, explosives—to a secure hiding place. Unbeknownst to them, however, Buda was under investigation for a series of robberies that had taken place in the previous months. Warned to be on the lookout, the repairman told the Italians that Buda's car was undriveable and alerted local police. After the anarchists split up for the evening, police snared Sacco and Vanzetti, both armed, as they made their way home. The anarchists lied about their itinerary and reasons for carrying pistols. Eventually, both were charged with participating in stick-ups during which men had robbed and killed payroll guards in South Braintree, Massachusetts.<sup>61</sup> Police caught Orcianni later in the

---

<sup>60</sup> Gage, *Day Wall Stree Exploded*, 214.

<sup>61</sup> The literature on the Sacco and Vanzetti case is extensive. See Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1991); Bruce Watson, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Men, the Murders, and the Judgement of Mankind* (New York: Viking, 2007); *Sacco and Vanzetti: Developments and Reconsiderations—1979, Conference Proceedings* (Boston: Boston Public Library, 1982); Peter Miller, dir., *Sacco and Vanzetti*, DVD (First Run Features, 2007).

week but released him after he provided sound alibis regarding his whereabouts during the robberies. Buda was harder to locate. Vanzetti was quickly convicted on a robbery charge in a case that relied heavily on racializing stereotypes of Italians and Red Scare anti-radicalism. Prosecutors intended to use Vanzetti's status as a recently convicted felon to help win a conviction for the murder charges despite the state's flimsy evidence.

Through interviews with aging Italian anarchists in the 1970s and 1980s, historian Paul Avrich learned that after being informed of the arrests of his comrades, Buda hid out in New Hampshire for two months. When Sacco and Vanzetti were indicted for murder on September 11, 1920 he moved into action. Buda travelled to New York City, obtained a horse, a carriage, and a large amount of dynamite. On September 16<sup>th</sup> he parked the carriage at the corner of Wall and Broad Streets, outside a U.S. treasury building and the offices of J.P. Morgan. Buda walked away from the cart shortly before it exploded, killing 38 people. He travelled to Providence, Rhode Island, and from there sailed for Italy, never to be apprehended for his role in any of the bombings.<sup>62</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> For a description of the bombing and the investigation that followed, see Gage, *The Day Wall Street Exploded*. For Buda as the culprit, Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti*, 204-207; Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 118; Charles H. McCormick, *Hopeless Cases: The Hunt for the Red Scare Terrorist Bombers* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005); Mike Davis uses this evidence to name Mario Buda as the inventor of the car bomb. Mike Davis, *Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb* (London: Verso, 2007).

Beginning in 1920, then, the Italian anarchists of the Galleani school had the difficult task of organizing a campaign to exonerate and free their imprisoned comrades, Sacco and Vanzetti, while avoiding implicating any additional participants in the string of bombings they had carried out since 1915. Partially for this reason, and partially due to their sectarianism, the initial defense committee for Sacco and Vanzetti was composed entirely of Galleani's followers, save for two trusted Italian syndicalists.<sup>63</sup> The Boston-based Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee (SVDC) was initially suspicious of outside supporters and carried on its work almost entirely within the confines of the Italian American community. The committee did, however, once more call upon Carlo Tresca for assistance. Tresca was known as a "fixer" when Italian radicals ran into trouble with the law, even when they hailed from different factions of the Left than his own. Tresca arranged for Fred Moore, an able labor lawyer associated with the IWW's General Defense Committee, to head up a legal and political defense campaign for the prisoners. Tresca also swung into action raising funds, undertaking lecture tours to build support for prisoners, and urging close associates, including Luigi Quintiliano and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, to do the same.

Tensions developed almost immediately amongst members of the defense team, however. The Galleanisti of the SVDC felt it crucially important to depict their

---

<sup>63</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 119. The first Sacco-Vanzetti Defense Committee was formed on May 9<sup>th</sup>, four days after their arrest. Gage, *Day Wall Street Exploded*, 222. Throughout the decade a host of additional defense committees would be formed and implement a wide variety of tactics and discursive strategies to free the pair. See Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law*, 162-208.

imprisoned comrades as models of heroic anarchism. They argued that the pair had been framed for the robberies and murders in retaliation for their work to expose the illegal detention of Elia and Salsedo. By representing Sacco and Vanzetti as exemplars of anarchist anti-authoritarianism, they hoped to use the case to rebuild support for anarchism in general. The committee was aided in this work when, in 1922, insurrectionists living in New York launched the newspaper *L'Adunata dei Refretarri* (The Summoning of the Unruly) as a permanent replacement for *Cronaca Sovversiva*. The paper regularly published articles about the Sacco-Vanzetti case, urging readers to take militant direct action to save the pair.<sup>64</sup> Editorship of *L'Adunata* passed in the mid-1920s to members of the bomb plot who had been deported or fled in 1919, but had returned clandestinely after the investigation had run aground. After 1927 the paper announced its editor as Max Sartin, who also went by the name Bruno. Both were pseudonyms of Raffaele Schiavina, the bookkeeper of *Cronaca Sovversiva*, who had been deported with Galleani in 1919.<sup>65</sup> Until it ceased publication in 1954, *L'Adunata* espoused an anti-organizationist, insurrectionary anarchism that combined classical anarchist-communist views with a heavily-Nietzschean individualism.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup> Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law*, 176.

<sup>65</sup> Pernicone, "War," 82, 86-7.

<sup>66</sup> The anarchist David Thoreau Wieck developed a friendship and worked closely with the editors of *L'Adunata dei Refretari* in the 1940s and 1950s. In 1991, he wrote to Paul Avrich, "They were anarchist communists certainly but there was a very strong focus on the individual. (Galleani had a rather favorable view of Stirner as an authentic ancestor of anarchism. Or to put it another way, his emphasis was upon 'anarchist.')" Wieck to Avrich, 6 October 1991, Box 1, David Thoreau Wieck Papers, TL.

The attorney Fred Moore found the Galleanisti of the SVDC difficult to work with, however. In letters to Tresca and Gurley Flynn, he complained that the Italians were sectarian and their anti-organizationism left them disconnected from the labor unions and other progressive organizations which might be of assistance. Moore requested assistance from individuals who felt “some responsibility to the organized labor movement. There is no one here with any sense of responsibility to anyone other than themselves.”<sup>67</sup> The lawyer planned to organize a mass political defense for the prisoners on the pattern developed by the IWW in previous decades. The committee’s continuing calls for workers to break the prisoners out of jail and exact revenge on their captors, however, worked directly against this strategy.

In publicity for the English language labor press, Moore, Flynn, and others significantly downplayed the defendants’ anarchism, instead focusing on their status as workers and labor organizers. In their telling of the story, Sacco and Vanzetti were framed, but for helping to organize local strikes and build bridges between workers of different races and ethnicities. Moore, in fact, planned to use the case to indict the larger pattern of frame-ups and other forms of legal repression that had incapacitated the IWW since 1917. In this way, the two obscure Italian insurrectionist anarchists grew to become symbols of the political and economic repression of the working-class as a whole. Defending them was widely felt to be a last concerted stand against the repressive anti-labor nativism of the Red Scare era.

---

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law*, 179. This section draws heavily on Hill’s insightful discourse analysis of the political and legal defense of Sacco and Vanzetti.

While Moore delayed hearings and searched for evidence to exonerate the captives, Flynn and other supporters worked relentlessly to publicize the case and raise funds. Their work paid off, as Sacco-Vanzetti defense committees sprouted across the country, raising at least \$365,000 for the defense between 1920 and 1925. Such efforts came at a cost, however. From the road, Flynn reported that “local groups feel that the Sacco-Vanzetti case is taking all their time, all their money, [and] stultifying their efforts along every other line.”<sup>68</sup> For anarchists, who also felt compelled to raise funds for the victims of Bolshevik repression, prisoner defense work threatened to overtake all their other activities in the 1920s.

In 1924, the internal conflicts boiled over and Moore quit the case. In a surprise move, the SVDC then allied with the ACLU and a group of liberal supporters who had organized themselves as the New Trial League. This coalition tried yet another representational strategy. Flipping the racializing discourse deployed against anarchists over the last four decades, the defense represented Sacco and Vanzetti as victims of a reactionary nativism which allowed them to be convicted on the basis of racist stereotypes and anti-immigrant demagoguery. This argument was supported, on the one hand, by African-American activists such as W.E.B. DuBois and Thomas Dabney, who drew comparisons between the persecution of Sacco and Vanzetti and black Americans, and on the other, by members of the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion who publicly demonstrated in support of execution as the case drew

---

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Hill, *Men, Mobs, and Law*, 183.

to a close. By 1925, the case had attracted so much attention—both nationally and internationally—that the CP-USA committed its own resources to winning the anarchists' freedom.

Though Vanzetti himself welcomed their aid, the perception that the Communist Party was attempting to leverage the case for its own organizational ends led to repeated conflicts with anarchists, socialists and other anti-Communists organizing on behalf of Sacco and Vanzetti. On July 7, 1924, thirty labor unions held a one-hour “general strike” in New York City to demand their release. Approximately 1,000 participants attended an indoor rally at the Amalgamated Temple of Brooklyn, with 2,500 packed into Manhattan's Cooper Union and another 500 listening to speeches at Webster Hall. These events were dwarfed, however, by a 10,000 person rally in Union Square. By 1927 the labor movement had long been convulsed by factional battles on the Left. When CP-USA leader Ben Gold was hoisted onto the stage of the Union Square rally, and then denied a chance to speak by the event's organizers, a riot broke out within the crowd, with pro- and anti-Communist Sacco and Vanzetti supporters fighting one another until the meeting was broken up by mounted police.<sup>69</sup>

In the end, none of the parties involved in the defense campaign or their respective representational strategies were sufficient to prevent a guilty verdict or stay

---

<sup>69</sup> “Reds Start a Riot, Ending Sacco Rally,” *New York Times*, July 8, 1927, 1; “The Union Square Riot: Its Cause and Effects,” leaflet, Box 2, Folder: Road to Freedom Miscellaneous [re: Sacco and Vanzetti], Van Valkenburgh Papers, LC.

of execution. On August 23, 1927 Sacco and Vanzetti were electrocuted in Boston, dealing a staggering blow to anarchists, the labor movement, and the international Left.

Despite his early support of the campaign, the Boston committee soon chose to exclude Tresca from participating directly in the defense campaign due to longstanding tensions between the factions. As one New York City anarchist put it, “The Italian movement in America was always dominated by personalities. Tresca had his groups and *L’Adunata* had its, and there was no cooperation between them.”<sup>70</sup> Although personal loyalties played a significant role, the divisions also stemmed from the conflicting strategies of syndicalists and insurrectionists.<sup>71</sup> Held at a distance from the Sacco-Vanzetti defense, Tresca and his collaborators focused their efforts on fighting the rise of fascism in Italy and amongst Italian Americans living in the United

---

<sup>70</sup> Valerio Isca quoted in Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005 [1995]), 147.

<sup>71</sup> The conflict between Carlo Tresca and the Luigi Galleani is traceable to the aftermath of the historic Lawrence textile strike of 1912, in which both men and their followers were involved. Tresca was chosen over Galleani by the IWW to lead agitation to free Ettore and Giavannitti, two syndicalist organizers framed for murder during the conflict. In the fall of 1912, the IWW called for a general strike in the garment industry to free the pair. Galleani and his insurrectionist collaborators devoted themselves to constant militant propaganda in order to build support for the strike (and perhaps even more militant tactics). When the IWW leadership called off the strike, fearing it would fail and that more blood would be shed, the Galleanisti focused their derision on Tresca, accusing him of having “eviscerated the enthusiasm of the proletariat.” Throughout the Lawrence strike Tresca had identified as a revolutionary syndicalist, but in 1913 he declared himself an anarcho-syndicalist. Galleani, however, did not concur; citing Tresca’s disagreements with his group’s tactics, he declared, “We will no longer travel on the same path: no longer can you be an anarchist.” Nunzio Pernicone, “War Amongst the Italian Anarchists.”

States. Tresca had skillfully parried with the authorities in 1917, when many of the other anarchist newspapers were being shut down. When his newspaper *L'Avvenire* was deemed unmailable for its anti-war content, Tresca jumped ship and quietly took over editorship of an anti-clerical newspaper, *Il Martello* (The Hammer). Tresca was careful not to publish any directly anti-war material while the fighting raged, but he made his position known through anti-war graphics and other material that could usually slide by the censors. The paper survived the war intact and was well-placed to serve as a syndicalist mouthpiece after the armistice was signed and the Palmer Raids had run their course. Published weekly from 1921, *Il Martello*'s circulation grew to a high of 10,500 copies in December 1924.<sup>72</sup>

After the war, Tresca maintained his commitments to militant trade unionism, but was forced to shift his primary focus to combating the growth of the Fascist movement in the United States and Italy. Like others on the Left, Tresca was dubious about the prospects of the Fascists coming to power during the Italian Biennio Rosso, the period in which the Italian Left grew dramatically through a series of factory occupations in the automobile plants of Turin.<sup>73</sup> After Mussolini's March on Rome of October 28, 1922, however, the editor began to regularly caution his readers about the serious threat posed by the Fascist movement. Italian Americans established their own fascist groups in New York City and Philadelphia in 1921. Excited by this development, Mussolini created a body to coordinate and expand the network of fasci

---

<sup>72</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 105.

<sup>73</sup> See Carl Levy, *Gramsci and the Anarchists* (Oxford: Berg, 1999).

in the United States. Within two years approximately 20,000 fascists belonged to more than 40 groups scattered throughout the country. Nunzio Pernicone suggests that the movement had a “predominantly middle and lower-class base” and especially attracted second generation Italian Americans frustrated by discrimination they faced in the United States. This core of ardent supporters—comprising approximately 5% of the Italian immigrant population—was supported by a larger number of “philofascists,” prominent members of the Italian American community who supported Mussolini but did not outwardly take part in blackshirt activities. Through their control of the preponderance of Italian American newspapers, radio stations, and churches, this Italian American elite wielded considerable influence, which they used to build support for Mussolini’s regime.<sup>74</sup>

Tresca soon became known—amongst both the broader U.S. American Left *and* the fascist authorities—as the leading figure of the anti-fascist resistance. This resistance took two main forms: the written word and the mobilization of large squads of anti-fascist militants dedicated to confronting fascists head-on. Tresca regularly published articles in *Il Martello* that sought to discredit the claims of Italian progress and the heroic self-image fascists sought to cultivate. The paper was an important voice of opposition not just in the United States, but also in Italy, where the radical press was repressed. Tresca arranged to have bundles of his paper smuggled into the

---

<sup>74</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 133; Topp, *Those Without*, 247-248; Philip V. Cannistraro, *Blackshirts in Little Italy: Italian Americans and Fascism, 1921-1929* (West Lafayette, IN: Bordighera Press, 1999).

country by a variety of associates living in Europe. He appealed for Italians living abroad to boycott all business and services that supported the fascist government, and ceaselessly collected funds from Italians in the United States, Argentina, and elsewhere that he then forwarded to the embattled anarchists and syndicalists of Italy. Tresca paired the written word with lecture tours in which he lambasted the fascists in lecture halls and open-air meetings held in Italian American neighborhoods.<sup>75</sup>

Though he distrusted social democratic union leaders and had declared himself an opponent of Bolshevism after the Kronstadt rebellion of 1921, Tresca worked to build a pragmatic united front of leftists against the growing fascist movement. He considered Italian Communists in the United States a logical group to ally with, since Communists, like anarchists, were equally under siege by Mussolini and fascist squads in Italy at the time. Tresca and his associates collaborated with figures like CP leader Vittorio Vidali to build the Anti-Fascist Alliance of North America. From the beginning, however, the Alliance was undermined by conflicts between Communists and anti-Communists in the labor unions which comprised its largest affiliates.<sup>76</sup>

The most ostentatious aspect of the resistance to fascism, however, was less formal and drew on the anarchist commitment to take direct action. When fascist officials and dignitaries visited from Italy and when local fascists mobilized in shows of strength, anti-fascists organizers assembled enormous crowds of workers in counter-marches. Frequently, the anti-fascist crowds confronted their opponents

---

<sup>75</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 136-137.

<sup>76</sup> Topp, *Those Without*, 249-255; Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 176-181.

directly. When the fascist deputy Giuseppe Bottai visited the United States in August 1921, Tresca and his allies organized large assemblies to confront him in New York City, Utica, New Haven and Philadelphia. At Bottai's speech in Philadelphia:

The audience included some 2,000 anti-fascists...Bottai spoke for ten minutes, repeatedly interrupted by shouts of Abbasso Bottai and Morte a Bottai! before police drove the anti-Fascists from the theatre with clubs. Outside, another 4,000 anti-Fascists joined the demonstration but were dispersed by mounted police who charged the crowd.<sup>77</sup>

When another fascist deputy, Antonio Locatelli, arrived in 1924 "3,000 anti-Fascists disrupted a banquet in his honor with a volley of tomatoes, rocks, and bricks."<sup>78</sup>

Regular routings such as these emboldened the fascists to retaliate. In 1925, at the behest of the Italian embassy, Tresca was arrested for violating obscenity laws by printing a two-line advertisement for a pamphlet on birth control in *Il Martello*. Found guilty, he received a sentence of four months in the Atlanta penitentiary. However, the case generated considerable backlash, especially after the role of the Italian officials was publicly revealed. On completing his sentence, Tresca returned to anti-fascist organizing with vigor. After a series of humiliating defeats, a fascist group attempted to detonate a bomb during a rally Tresca and his allies organized in an East Harlem neighborhood. The bomb accidentally detonated in the car used to transport it to the rally, however, and the only casualties were the three Fascists on board.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>77</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 139.

<sup>78</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 165; Topp, *Those Without*, 251.

<sup>79</sup> Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 147-161, 172; Topp, *Those Without*, 251.

Violent conflicts between sovversivi and Italian American fascists were not limited to the industrial cities of the east. Circles of leftwing militants and blackshirts sprouted in nearly every community in which Italians had settled, making them ripe for conflict. After immigrating to the United States in 1920, Attilio Bortolotti joined his brother in the Detroit area, sometimes living and working across the border in Windsor, Canada. He first learned of anarchism in 1922 after reading a leaflet defending Sacco and Vanzetti and soon became a member of the Galleanisti “Gruppo I Refrattari.”<sup>80</sup> Attilio recalls:

In 1926 the struggle with the fascists in Windsor was increasing and comrades asked me to join in. I attended a meeting addressed by the Italian consul. I raised my hand, but the consul did not recognize me. I called him what he was—a coward. On the platform one of the fascist leaders in Windsor said, “If you have the guts come here and speak.” I got up as fast as I could and in five seconds I was there. I told the consul what they were—a bunch of killers, liars, and the rest. At my shoulder was a picture of the king. I tore it off the wall, crumpled it in my hands, and threw it in the face of the consul. That started a melee. In less than a minute the whole audience was fighting each other.<sup>81</sup>

Though the Detroit-area anarchists had backed the fascists “into one corner” they were forced to flee as the police arrived on the scene. The tables were turned, however, on Columbus Day of 1928. When anarchists learned that “the fascists would come out in black shirts and full regalia and march through the city to Cadillac Square” they managed to organize a united front defense with local Communists and Socialists. On the appointed day, however, only twelve Leftists showed up to oppose

---

<sup>80</sup> Avrigh, *Anarchist Voices*, 175-188.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Avrigh, *Anarchist Voices*, 181.

five times that many fascists. Bortolotti recalls that, “When the band began to play Giovenezza, the fascist hymn, we exploded in catcalls: ‘Abasso il fascismo! Assassini!’ etc. The man who held the fascist flag put it down, took out his gun, and shot two comrades, both anarchists.”<sup>82</sup> One of the shot men died, and the rest of the radicals barely escaped. Despite the high stakes, similar confrontations continued throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

### **The Jewish Movement—War in the ILGWU**

The Yiddish-speaking anarchists came out of the war institutionally stronger than other sectors, but politically more moderate. New York City remained the center of Jewish anarchism, though significant groups existed in other large cities, such as Chicago and Los Angeles, as well.<sup>83</sup> The movement was held together via a set of institutions with overlapping memberships: the weekly newspaper *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*, a Jewish Anarchist Federation, anarchist branches of the Workman’s Circle mutual aid society, the garment workers unions, and associations of anarchists living in large co-operatively owned apartment complexes. The Jewish anarchists had impressive staying power. They published their newspaper until 1977, longer than any other ethnic anarchist group. They were also more successful than the other

---

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 183.

<sup>83</sup> Literature on the Jewish anarchist movement in the United States after the First World War remains scant. However, see Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 176-199; Herman Frank, “Anarchism and the Jews” in Basil J. Vlavianos and Feliks Gross, eds., *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People* (New York: Arts, Incorporated, no date [1953]); Melech Epstein, *Jewish Labor in U.S.A., 1882-1914 (Vol. 1)* (No city, KATV Publishing House, 1950), 192-219.

ethnic groups in producing a generation of children that became active anarchists themselves. They did so despite—or, perhaps, because of—the fact that the group’s day to day politics moved increasingly to the center after the First World War.

Because the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* supported the Allies in World War I it was not suppressed like every other anarchist periodical of note. This led to intense resentment from other anarchists. In *Free Society*, Marcus Graham denounced the Yiddish-speaking anarchists as a whole for abandoning their principles. During the war, he noted, “Only the Jewish Anarchist movement and its organ *Die Freie Arbeiter Stimme* remained intact. Why? Not because it was a ‘favorite’ of the State, but for the simple reason that since the anti-Anarchist law became effective, in 1919, the movement and this organ spoke and wrote only that which was ‘within the law.’” To Graham’s mind the editors admitted as much when they published a groveling editorial in May 1921 which read, “True, it is not very respectable and not right to incite anyone to treason, rebellion, or violent opposition of any kind of law of the United States, but in the name of the censor, where, when, and how, through which, and on what grounds, have we called upon or incited anyone to this?”<sup>84</sup>

In 1919, longtime editor Saul Yanofsky left the paper to become editor of the ILGWU’s internal weekly newspaper, *Justice*, which was printed in Yiddish, Italian, and English.<sup>85</sup> With Yanofsky’s departure coming on the heels of the Red Scare, and with the return of many Russian readers following the revolution, the paper’s future

---

<sup>84</sup> “The Jewish Anarchist Movement,” *Free Society*, December 1921, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 38.

was imperiled. In response, Jewish anarchists held a convention in Philadelphia in October 1921 to launch a Jewish Anarchist Federation which they hoped would ensure the longevity of the newspaper and help coordinate other activities. The assembled organizers took the opportunity to distinguish their vision of anarchism from insurrectionist perspectives and popular representations that circulated widely throughout the duration of the Red Scare. They explained:

We are revolutionists but not terrorists. We work to bring near the complete reconstruction of the Social order. We fight every attempt to interpret our theory as an encouragement to deeds of violence and expropriation. Expropriation when practiced by individuals or small groups is one of the most harmful deeds to the revolutionary movement. The expropriation of the natural social wealth will be carried out by the organized organizations, in the interests of the entire society.<sup>86</sup>

Through a series of appeals and fundraising banquets, the new federation was able to secure the finances of the FAS; it appointed Joseph Cohen, stalwart of the Philadelphia Radical Library, the Ferrer Association, and the Stelton Colony, as the new editor.

In addition to the new federation, many Jewish anarchists belonged to branches of the Arbeiter Ring, or Workmen's Circle. The Arbeiter Ring was established in 1892 to provide Yiddish speaking laborers insurance benefits, educational opportunities, and a friendly environment for socializing and relaxing. By 1915 the organization counted nearly 50,000 people members nationally, and provided substantial insurance payouts and educational programming. As Melech Epstein

---

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in "The Jewish Anarchist Movement," *Free Society*, December 1921, 4.

explains, “The branches were autonomous units free to move in every direction within the broad framework of the constitution.”<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, branch positions were unpaid which reduced struggles between members for control. This autonomy and horizontality proved attractive to many anarchists who organized their own anarchist-specific local chapters. The Bronx boasted a Ferrer Branch, while Los Angeles hosted a Kropotkin Branch.

Collectively, these institutions, along with the trade unions, served to knit together the lives of Jewish anarchists. Audrey Goodfriend, who would make important contributions to the anarchist movement in the 1940s, was raised in this milieu. She recalled,

My parents were Jewish anarchists, so I was introduced to the the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* at a very young age and participated in the fundraising affairs. They had picnics in the summer time and an annual three-day bazaar, with actors and singers at Irving Place. My father was secretary of a Workmen’s Circle anarchist branch which was called the Ferrer Center branch. Then when Rocker died it became the Ferrer-Rocker branch. My father was also a member of the Modern School Association. They always had a convention around Memorial Day and we would go out to Stelton. And my father was a member of the Jewish Anarchist Federation. My friend Sally Ginn’s father used to sell the FAS in the streets. My other friend Lilly’s father was also part of the branch, and they were all very involved in the garment workers union--the ILGWU.<sup>88</sup>

Nowhere was the presence of Jewish anarchists felt more than in the ILGWU. Anarchists had played prominent roles within the Jewish labor movement since the

---

<sup>87</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 316.

<sup>88</sup> Audrey Goodfriend, interview with author, Berkeley, California, November 10, 2008.

1880s. After the establishment of the ILGWU in 1900 they served as some of its most vocal and committed organizers, strikers, and officers. Men and women such as Leibush Frumkin, Eva Brandes, Nicholas Kritzman, Rose Mirsky, Fanny Breslaw, Sima Rothman, Isadore Farbiash, Israel Ostroff, Joe Schneider, and Louis Levy were just a few of the most active in the New York area.<sup>89</sup> Anarchists played their most concerted role as a delineated political faction within the union in the 1920s when political groupings fought a “civil war” for control of the union.

The 1920 constitution of the ILGWU declared it a democratic socialist organization dedicated to the abolition of capitalism. The union’s president, Benjamin Schlesinger, was the former business manager of the socialist newspaper the *Jewish Daily Forward*, and he and other members of the General Executive Board remained close to this influential organ of the Jewish labor movement.<sup>90</sup> Yet, as the union grew more successful the politics of its leaders and many members began to moderate considerably. “The hope for a swift and basic change—the Social Revolution—was put off by the large majority for the distant future, though it was still given perfunctory allegiance and repeated like an evening prayer,” the historian Melech Epstein explained.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, as the membership expanded, so did the number of paid officers and union staffers, many of who envisioned turning their service to the union a permanent career. As an official historian of the union admitted, “Many of the

---

<sup>89</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 249, 253, 275, 341-350, 380.

<sup>90</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 129, 367.

<sup>91</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 98.

officials—managers, business agents, organizers, secretaries of this or that—were old-timers who had gradually degenerated into smug routiners.”<sup>92</sup> By 1920 the ILGWU administration, despite its nominal socialism, was declared the “right” by an increasingly frustrated coalition of anarchists, Communists, and left-wing socialists who comprised a loose “left” within the organization. Over the next decade, a struggle to direct the course of the union raged in New York City, and, to a lesser extent, in other cities where it represented garment workers. Though in 1919 anarchists formed an important constituency fighting for greater democracy and militancy in the union, by 1922 they found themselves outnumbered and outmaneuvered by the Communist Party, on the one hand, and the business unionists on the other.

Of the many anarchists active in the ILGWU, Rose Pesotta may have most effectively bridged her union work with other anarchist initiatives during the 1920s. Born in 1896, Pesotta immigrated from Derazhnya, Russia, to New York in 1913, the same year as Mollie Steimer. As a young girl, Pesotta had participated in clandestine revolutionary circles with her older sister, where she read Bakunin and Alexander Herzen and was inspired by female revolutionists such as Vera Figner.<sup>93</sup> Like Steimer, Pesotta immediately began sewing shirtwaists for a living and joined Local

---

<sup>92</sup> Benjamin Stolberg, *Taylor's Progress: The Story of a Famous Union and the Men Who Made It* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1944), 110.

<sup>93</sup> Elaine Leeder, *The Gentle General: Rose Pesotta, Anarchist and Labor Organizer* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1993), 7-9. Pesotta's adolescent life is also documented in her second memoir, *The Days of Our Lives* (Boston: Excelsior, 1958).

25 of the ILGWU. Under leadership of women such as Fannia Cohn, Local 25 pioneered a broader approach that tried to give a “soul” to unionism by hosting classes in English, politics, and art.<sup>94</sup> It was in this context that Pesotta first came into contact with anarchists. “Having found a number of activists in the shops, she soon felt at home among them,” explains her biographer. “She began to attend meetings and to participate in their social and political activities,” soon moving out of her sister’s apartment “to live with her comrades.”<sup>95</sup> In addition to her union activities, Pesotta attended classes and lectures at the Ferrer Center on the Upper East Side and later at the Stelton Colony in New Jersey. In May 1914, she participated in the mass anti-conscription rally organized by Goldman and Berkman at Madison Square Garden. Though she eventually met Mollie Stierner, Pesotta was apparently not interested in or invited to join the Frayhayt Group. Moderating her involvement in the movement didn’t spare Pesotta from personal tragedy during the Red Scare, however. The young seamstress met her first love, a Russian seaman named Theodore Kushnarev, through her activism. However, Kusharev was arrested in the November 1919 raid on the Russian People’s House in New York and detained on Ellis Island.<sup>96</sup> A twenty-three year old Rose Pesotta tearfully bid Kusharev farewell on December 21, 1919 when he was deported to Russia on the *Buford*, alongside her role model, Emma Goldman.

---

<sup>94</sup> See Daniel Katz, “A Union of Many Cultures: Yiddish Socialism and Interracial Organizing in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, 1913-1941” (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 2003).

<sup>95</sup> Leeder, *Gentle General*, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Leeder, *Gentle General*, 22-26.

However, like most other anarchists at the time, Pesotta still held high hopes for the Russian Revolution and even considered returning herself.



**Figure 4:** Rose Pesotta in the 1940s.  
Image courtesy of Pacific Street Films Photographs  
Collection, Tamiment Library, New York University.

Throughout the Red Scare years of 1919-1921, Pesotta remained a seamstress, garnering the respect of many of her fellow workers. At the time Local 25, also known as The Ladies Waist and Dressmakers Union, was the largest in the ILGWU with over 20,000 members. It was also full of young female radicals, including many recent immigrants like Pesotta. “The girls went to work carrying Karl Marx and Kropotkin under their arms,” noted one union historian.<sup>97</sup> The “girls” toting Kropotkin to work included anarchist friends of Pesotta, such as Anna Sosnofksy and Clara Larsen. In 1917 they formed a Current Events Committee that began advocating for a more expansive vision of unionism, in which the ILGWU could express “a way of life with vision and soul.”<sup>98</sup> Their work led to the creation of innovative cultural and educational work, including the establishment of the “Unity House” in Woodstock, but it was greeted with fierce sexism by the all-male international leadership.<sup>99</sup> The Current Events Committee found considerable support, however, among anarchist men, including Simon Farber and Max Bluestein—a resident of the Stelton Colony—who were also active in Local 25 and the city’s other Jewish locals.<sup>100</sup>

---

<sup>97</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 130.

<sup>98</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 130.

<sup>99</sup> Benjamin Stolberg writes, “To all this transcendentalism of the girls the trade union bureaucrats reacted with bored indifference, and the heavy humorists among them offered cynical advice on how to get it out of their systems.” Stolberg, *Taylor’s Progress*, 110.

<sup>100</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 341, 346; Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 196.

In 1919, Pesotta joined a “Worker’s Council” in her local that was inspired by the Russian soviets and by the shop delegates movement of England. The British movement sought to restructure labor unions as a means of combating bureaucracy and ensuring greater member control.<sup>101</sup> This appealed to the young ILGWU radicals who connected the post-war slump in employment and worsening conditions on the job with the “conservative” tendencies of the union’s top officers. Members began promoting a system where each workplace would appoint representatives to city-wide councils with decision making powers, thus circumventing the long-standing system of locals and joint boards. As Epstein notes, “The broad aims of the shop delegate system brought together socialists, anarchists, syndicalists, communists, and other dissidents.”<sup>102</sup> As part of this radical movement for union reform, Pesotta was elected to the executive board of Local 25 the following year.<sup>103</sup>

In 1922 Pesotta was elected as a delegate from her local to the ILGWU national convention, held in Cleveland, Ohio. There she attempted to build support for both the union reform initiatives and for a variety of anarchist causes. Pesotta and

---

<sup>101</sup> From 1917 through the early 1920s, council forms of Marxism were central to the worker’s movement throughout Europe. Before information to the contrary was widely available, it appeared that the Bolshevik movement would truly rely on the power of workers councils (soviets). Movements in Italy and Germany relied on councils, and the theoretical writings of Anton Panekoek, Rosa Luxembour, and other councilists were taken more seriously. The councilist moment, sharing much in common with anarcho-syndicalism, provided a short period of hope for collaboration amongst anarchists and soon to be Communists. See Darrow Schecter, *The History of the Left: From Marx to the Present* (New York and London: Continuum, 2007), 117-120.

<sup>102</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 131.

<sup>103</sup> Leeder, *Gentle General*, 33.

other anarchist delegates to the convention, including Simon Farber, introduced a strongly worded resolution to lend financial and organizational assistance to the campaign to free Sacco and Vanzetti, which was unanimously approved. Pesotta later introduced a resolution, which carried, stating, “Whereas, the Ferrer Modern School in Stelton, N.J. has after ten years of experiment and experience demonstrated that libertarian methods as applied to the education of children are far superior to authoritarian methods,” the union would donate \$300 to the school.<sup>104</sup>

Pesotta and other members of the Shop Delegate’s League were far less successful passing resolutions to modify the union’s constitution. She and delegates from Local 9 floated a resolution to allow for the recall of officers of the General Executive Board, a long standing tenet of many anarchist proposals for direct democracy. It was denied. The left locals next proposed a system of proportional representation that would give the larger (Left-led) locals more power over the centrist administration, and another proposal to institute the shop delegate system they had united around in the first place. After considerable debate these, too, were defeated.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> Anarchists wrestled another \$150 dollars out of the coffers for the Kropotkin Publication Society, and \$100 for a Political Prisoners Defense and Relief Committee to help free victims of the Red Scare still imprisoned in the United States. The *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* was given \$250 for its historical support of the labor movement though it was cautioned for its “unjust criticism” and “undeserved attacks” on the ILGWU leadership. *Report and Proceedings of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, 16<sup>th</sup> Convention, Cleveland, 1922*, 120-121, 188, American Labor Unions’ Constitutions, Proceedings, Officers’ Reports and Supplementary Documents, Microfilm, Reel 45, TL. I thank Dan Katz for suggesting I investigate the published reports of ILGWU conventions.

<sup>105</sup> *Report and Proceedings, 16<sup>th</sup> Convention*, 150-151.

Anarchists, Communists, and other radicals were able to jointly promote these proposals, which they believed would increase union democracy and create openings for them to unseat the centrist union leadership. However, divisions within this insurgency were already beginning to show at the 1922 convention.

Aiming to take some wind out of the Left's sails, supporters of the union's current administration presented a resolution that declared "there still are many political prisoners in Russia, while sections of the labor and Socialist movement are being suppressed, their leaders jailed and their members terrorized" and called for the union to call on the "Russian Soviet government." The resolution sparked a vigorous debate. One Communist Party member moved for the resolution to be tabled "owing to the unreliability of the news published regarding Russia." Another delegate argued that the resolution would "aid the capitalistic world in crushing Russia." By 1922, having learned of the suppression of the Kronstadt uprising, Goldman and Berkman's decision to leave the country, and other reports of Bolshevik repression, anarchists in the United States were becoming more vocally critical of the regime. In light of this, the anarchists at the convention jumped into the fray. The proceedings record the following exchange:

Delegate Miss Pasetta [sic]: I amend it to read that this resolution apply only to anarchists, left social revolutionaries and social democrats.

There was no second to the amendment.

Delegate Miss Pasetta: If we request the capitalist governments to release political prisoners, it is no more than right to request the workers' government to release their political prisoners.

Delegate Lanch: Why is it that Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, who were in Russia two years, were not put in jail although they had different opinions?  
Delegate [Simon] Farber: Because the Soviet Government was afraid to arrest such famous people, who are known the world over.  
Delegate Farber concluded his remarks by mentioning the names of several people who had been either executed or jailed because of their opinions and exhorted the delegates to pass the recommendation of the committee [demanding the prisoners be released].  
Upon being put to a vote, the report of the committee was adopted. 129 voting for, 41 against.<sup>106</sup>

The anarchists' personal knowledge of the persecution of their comrades, then, was important in moving their union to inveigh against Soviet repression. It also indicated, however, that they shared some common ideological ground with the administration.

The division between anarchists and Communists in the Shop Delegate League deepened after the convention. In 1920 the League had affiliated with the Trade Union Education League (TUEL). By the end of 1922, it became clear that leaders of the TUEL had aligned the organization with the Communist International's union federation, the Profintern, and were receiving funds and instruction from the Worker's Party, as the Communist Party of the United States was then known. Recognition that U.S. Communists had secretly been maneuvering to control the Shop Delegate League came at the same time as Goldman and Berkman's disturbing revelations about the nature of the Communist state in Russia. Consequently, the anarchists bolted, forming their own caucus and launching their own weekly Yiddish-language newspaper *Der*

---

<sup>106</sup> *Report and Proceedings, 16<sup>th</sup> Convention*, 180.

*Yunyon Arbeiter* (The Union Worker)<sup>107</sup> It is not clear how many members belonged to this new formation, or what locals they were drawn from. However, participants likely numbered in the hundreds and belonged to the predominantly Jewish radical locals of New York City, namely Locals 1, 9, 22, and 25.

The situation in Russia was not only politically, but also personally, compelling for Pesotta. Her father had been executed in 1920 by a general of the counter-revolutionary White Army. Yet her former lover, Kushnarev, was imprisoned by the Bolsheviks the following year.<sup>108</sup> In addition to her union activism, Pesotta devoted energy to the New York City chapter of the Anarchist Red Cross, an international organization founded in 1907 to support Russian anarchists imprisoned by the tsar.<sup>109</sup> In 1917 the organization raised funds to help Volin, Shatov and other members of the URW return to Russia and reestablish *Golos Truda* there. In the early 1920s, however, the Red Cross was reformed to fundraise for anarchists imprisoned or exiled to Siberia by the Soviet state. The work she and other anarchists undertook on

---

<sup>107</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 132.

<sup>108</sup> Leeder, *Gentle General*, 30-31.

<sup>109</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 113; Boris Yelensky, *In the Struggle for Equality: The Story of the Anarchist Red Cross* (Chicago: Anarchist Red Cross, 1958) In 1974 the Russian born anarchist Morris Ganberg told Paul Avrich, “The Anarchist Red Cross was founded in 1911, and I was active from the start. The center was in New York, with branches in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other cities... The New York branch had about sixty or seventy members and met every week on East Broadway.” Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 373-374. It may be that branches in London and other European cities were organized in 1907 and the New York Branch did not form until 1911.

behalf of political prisoners in Russia informed the positions they took in the growing conflict within the ILGWU.

In February of 1923, Morris Sigman, a former IWW organizer who had fought union corruption but was also well respected by the ILGWU establishment, took over the presidency from Schlesinger. Sigman renewed the fight with the Communists by declaring the TUEL a “dual union” which allowed him to ban all TUEL caucuses in the locals, expel certain members, and ban others from holding office.<sup>110</sup> The ILGWU national convention of 1924 was even more hotly contested than the previous one, with dozens of delegates denied seats due to their continuing affiliation with the TUEL and Communist Party. Pesotta did not serve as an elected delegate, but addressed the convention as a representative of the “Red Cross for political prisoners of Russia.” In what the proceedings described as a “stirring address” greeted by “prolonged applause,” Pesotta exclaimed,

Most of you know how long the Russian people have struggled to get some freedom which they have not got now...The political prisoners in Russia have not any legal groups within the boundaries of Russia and are therefore compelled to look to other countries. They are branded as counter-revolutionists, as bandits, as speculators in order not to let the outside world know the truth.<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>110</sup> Nadel, “Reds Versus Pinks,” 59.

<sup>111</sup> *Report and Proceedings of the Seventeenth Convention of the ILGWU, Boston, 1924*, 29, American Labor Unions’ Constitutions, Proceedings, Officers’ Reports and Supplementary Documents, Microfilm, Reel 46, TL.

As the faction fight raged on the convention floor, the anarchist Max Bluestein—serving as an elected delegate for Local 22—and guest speakers Harry Kelly and Joseph Cohen again secured donations for anarchists’ extra-union activities.<sup>112</sup>

Over the next three years the conflict only deepened. Communists and their sympathizers gained control of three New York City locals in the 1924 elections and held an unabashedly pro-Communist May Day rally. In retaliation, Sigman suspended the locals’ executive boards. They recomposed themselves into a “Joint Action Committee” which organized a one day work stoppage of 30,000 members to force reinstatement of the deposed officers.<sup>113</sup> This rank and file upsurge put the anarchists in a torturous position. They opposed the political moderation and the anti-democratic tendencies of the administration. Yet, they saw clearly the ends of the Communist party in the Soviet Union and felt manipulated by their former Communist allies in the Shop Delegate League. CP members followed a clear strategy, designated by the Profintern, to “bore from within” existing AFL unions, by establishing secret Communist cells within locals with the intent of gaining leadership positions, and shifting the unions politics to the left. The entrenched administration of the ILGWU, which became known as “the Right” had a strategy of its own: it attempted to use its control of the international union apparatus to prevent Communists from holding office, and used its ties to the highly influential socialist newspaper *The Jewish Daily Forward* to brandish the insurgents as puppets of Moscow.

---

<sup>112</sup> *Report and Proceedings, Seventeenth Convention*, 15.

<sup>113</sup> Nadel, “Reds Versus Pinks,” 61-63.

Prior to WWI, most anarchists in favor of union organizing promoted what amounted to a “dual union” strategy. As syndicalists, they worked to build explicitly revolutionary unions with democratic internal structures. Save for the Yiddish-speaking sector of the movement, anarchists had long derided AFL unions and urged workers to join more radical outfits like the URW and the IWW. In the early 1920s, however, the URW had been destroyed by a combination of Red Scare repression and the return of its most able organizers’ return to Russia. The IWW was, meanwhile, holding on for dear life. Many of its leaders languished in prison on sedition charges and while public supporters continued to be prosecuted into the 1930s under Criminal Syndicalism Laws written explicitly to outlaw the union. Moreover, the IWW was ridden with a an attempted Communist takeover of its own between 1920 and 1925.<sup>114</sup>

Anarchists clearly needed to articulate a new labor strategy relevant to the significantly different conditions that characterized the post-WWI context. In this important but difficult task, the anarchist garment workers found little support from the larger movement. Not only were other anarchists focused on building colonies, supporting the prisoners in Russia, defending Sacco and Vanzetti, and heading off the threat of Italian American fascism. Many of them also continued to look upon the Yiddish-speaking movement with contempt due to the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*’s support for the war in 1917. Left without a solid strategy or sufficient resources of

---

<sup>114</sup> Fred Thompson and Jon Bekken, *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years* (Cincinnati: IWW, 2006), 133-148; Zimmer, “Premature Anticommunists?” 59-61.

their own, the anarchist group swung its support to the ILGWU “right.” In short order, they became some of the union’s staunchest anti-Communists. When others, including leaders of the Socialist Party, leaned on Sigman to reach a settlement with the Joint Action Committee in 1924, a committee of four anarchists, including Simon Farber (and perhaps Rose Pesotta) “spent a whole night with Sigman vainly trying to dissuade him from signing the agreement.”<sup>115</sup>

Although the “right” eventually regained the upper hand, the CP continued to vie for control until October 1929 when, after the declaration of the “Third Period,” the Comintern changed its labor strategy and ordered CP unionists to form dual unions rather than continue to bore from within existing ones.<sup>116</sup>

### **English Language Groups and *The Road to Freedom***

Despite the exhausting toll the conflict in the ILGWU took, many anarchist garment workers, including Pesotta, Bluestein, and Farber, also regarded the re-establishment of an independent, active, and highly-visible anarchist movement in the United States as a high priority. Relative to the activity of Italian- and Yiddish-speaking communities, anarchist political work conducted in English was slower to revive after the Red Scare. When English speaking groups and publications did resurface, they were predominantly comprised of foreign-born individuals—most often Russian Jews—who recognized the importance of promoting anarchism in the

---

<sup>115</sup> Epstein, *Jewish Labor*, 140.

<sup>116</sup> Nadel, “Reds Versus Pinks,” 65-72.

official language of the country they lived in. In the 1920s the most consistent and active English speaking groups were based in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New York.

English-speaking anarchists in Los Angeles were the first to reconstitute themselves after the war. In November of 1922 they organized themselves as “The Libertarians” and launched a program of lectures, debates, and fundraising socials. In sketching the group’s history, one member noted, “At the beginning it was organized as a Jewish group but we soon realized the necessity of an English movement and changed into the above name.”<sup>117</sup> Electing to conduct business and hold events in English brought together a disparate grouping of anarchists who found themselves in California after the war. The group’s most active members included Joseph Spivak, a Russian Jew; Jules Scarceriaux, a Frenchman; and Thomas H. Bell, who hailed from Scotland. The new group first focused on fundraising for prisoner support, sending “\$230 to the IWW and over \$100 to the Russian Political Prisoners.” After a year, The Libertarians began organizing a regular lecture and discussion series known as the Free Workers Forum. The Forum provided a public face to the anarchist movement in Los Angeles, as well as an occasion for distributing literature. “It will not be exaggerating to state that this open Forum has made Anarchism in Los Angeles popular,” Joseph Spivak proudly announced five years after the group’s formation. The forums, he qualified, were at least, “the only instance where I could notice actual converts to our idea.” By 1927, the Libertarians functioned alongside an anarchist

---

<sup>117</sup> Joseph Spivak, “A Coast to Coast Observation,” *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 7.

Workmen's Circle branch that organized support for the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* and a small Mexican anarchist formation, Libertario Centrio, concerned with fundraising and carrying out propaganda activities in Spanish. "In general, with the three groups in existence," Spivak confidently predicted, "Los Angeles may be looked upon as the future central point of activity on the Pacific Coast."<sup>118</sup>

English-language anarchist activity reemerged in Chicago in nearly the same pattern as it had on the West Coast. Boris Yelensky, an émigré from Russia and a driving force in the Chicago movement, remembered, "The red-baiting reaction and hysteria which raged under Attorney General Palmer after the First World War served to smother the Anarchist movement in Chicago, so that for several years it had no organized expression in this city."<sup>119</sup> Russian-American anarchists who visited their country of birth in 1923, however, returned with first-hand accounts of the conditions in which anarchists were being held in prisons and concentration camps. It was "the arrival of distressing news from Soviet Russia...the anguished cries of our tortured brethren there" that prompted the formation of a new anarchist organization, the Free Society Group in 1923.<sup>120</sup> Initially the Free Society Group was composed solely of Jews and conducted business in Yiddish. But, as Yelensky recalls, "In the course of

---

<sup>118</sup> Joseph Spivak, "A Coast to Coast Observation," *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 8.

<sup>119</sup> Boris Yelensky, "25 Years of 'Free Society' Activity in Chicago," Free Society Group, eds., *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View* (Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951), 90.

<sup>120</sup> Chicago had hosted a group under the same name prior to the war, organized around publication of the journal *Free Society* founded by Mary and Abraham Isaak. See Alice Wexler, *Emma Goldman in America* (Boston: Beacon, 1986), 100-102.

time the question arose as to what language we could most advantageously employ in continuing our propaganda activities. After extended debate it was decided that, inasmuch as our membership was no longer exclusively Jewish, we should conduct our agitation in English.”<sup>121</sup>

Like their Los Angeles counterparts, the Free Society Group first focused on raising funds for anarchist victims of the Russian revolution. Beginning in 1926, however, the Chicago group focused its efforts on organizing a regular series of Free Society Forums in which anarchists and progressive intellectuals debated economic and social issues at labor halls throughout the city. Proceeds from these educational events, as well as from fund-raising socials, were distributed to anarchist periodicals and defense campaigns throughout the United States and abroad, as well as to the publication of anarchist literature, including G.P. Maximoff’s account of the Bolshevik repression of anarchists, *The Guillotine at Work*, and, later, Rudolf Rocker’s analysis of the rise of national socialism, *Nationalism and Culture*.

---

<sup>121</sup> Yelensky, “25 Years,” 90.



**Figure 5:** The Free Society Group. Date unknown.  
Image courtesy of Pacific Street Film Photographs Collection, Tamiment  
Library, New York University.

The relief efforts undertaken by the Libertarians and the Free Society Group, as well as other small circles in cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, and St. Louis, were inspired and coordinated by the efforts of a small group of Russian exiles operating out of Berlin and Paris. After fleeing the Bolsheviks' post-Kronstadt crack-down on left-wing dissidents, Alexander Berkman, Mark Mratchney, Voline and others established the Joint Committee for the Defense of Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia. From Berlin they attempted to track the whereabouts and condition of anarchists, Left Social Revolutionaries, and other radicals taken into custody. They dedicated themselves to providing money, clothes, food, and other necessities, as well as moral support in the form of personal correspondence, with every prisoner they could locate and get mail through to. Simultaneously, the committee worked to publicize the treatment of the prisoners in order to mobilize international pressure against the regime. To this end they published a bulletin in English, French, German, Russian and "occasionally" in Dutch and Esperanto. In December 1926, the Joint Committee was subsumed under the International Working Men's Association, also known as the Syndicalist International, and Mollie Steimer and Senya Fleshin took on much of the relief work from Paris.<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Upon being subsumed in the IWMA, the committee adopted the burdensome name The Relief Fund of the International Working Men's Association for Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists Imprisoned or Exiled in Russia.

The *Bulletin's* pages overflowed with letters from prisoners detailing their conditions.<sup>123</sup> In the early 1920s many political prisoners were held at the former Solovetsky Monastery, located on an island in the White Sea. A prisoner writing to the Joint Committee explained, “The past winter was very hard on us, and we have much suffered in health...The administration is pursuing a policy of suppression, and no help is coming from outside. We have reached a condition of physical exhaustion and we are now facing slow death from starvation.” Though conditions were bad for opposition leaders like themselves, writers explained that the treatment of Kronstadt sailors, student protestors, “rebel peasants...and numbers of workers arrested during strikes” not given “political” status was much worse. Those accused of any infraction were placed in “dungeons, known here as stone ‘bags’, in the cellars.” The writer explained that, “One placed in such a ‘bag’ can hardly move around, cannot even stretch out to his full height. Frequently the prisoner is forced to strip almost naked, retaining only his underwear. The ‘bags’ are infested with lice, black roaches and other vermin.” At Solovetsky, writers explained, female political prisoners were subject to systematic sexual assault. “They are forced to become the concubines – first, of the higher officials, then of the chief inspectors, and gradually lower down to

---

<sup>123</sup> *Bulletin of the Joint Committee for the Defense of the Revolutionists Imprisoned in Russia*, March-April 1925, reprinted in Alexander Berkman Social Club (ABSC), ed., *The Tragic Procession: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid* (Berkeley, CA: Alexander Berkman Social Club and Kate Sharpley Library, 2010).

the pettiest officer. By degrees they are bereft of all human semblance, [and] are infected with venereal diseases...”<sup>124</sup>

As the decade wore on, letters and reports from the prisons only grew more desperate. Resistance to conditions of imprisonment lead to summary execution of prisoners, deprivation of food, and growing numbers of suicides.<sup>125</sup> The pages of the *Bulletin* also record, however, the regular contributions of funds to the relief effort by anarchists throughout Europe and the United States. The March-April 1925 issue, for example, records a \$75 donation from “Los Angeles Aid Society Polit. Pris., per J. Spivak,” and \$45 from “Chicago Group, per Yelensky.” New York anarchists also did their part. The December, 1926, issue of the *Bulletin*, lists a \$250 donation from “An. Aid Com., N.Y. (former Red Cross)” and a personal donation of \$25 from Anna S[osnofsky].” Despite their focus on securing funds for the Sacco and Vanzetti defense, Italian anarchists in the United States also pitched in regularly. The November 1927, *Bulletin*, for instance, records donations “Per L’Adunata” from the Group Libertario of Rochester, New York, and from the “Group Germinal, Chicago, per Armando Tiberi.”<sup>126</sup> Through the efforts of Berkman, Steimer, and others on the committee, the suffering of Russian anarchists was made visceral for U.S. anarchists who realized if they didn’t aid these prisoners, no one would.

\*\*\*

---

<sup>124</sup> ABSC, *The Tragic Procession*, 8-9.

<sup>125</sup> Avrich, *Russian Anarchists*, 234-235.

<sup>126</sup> ABSC, *Tragic Procession*, 13, 27, 33.

In October 1924 a group of fourteen anarchists who had assembled at the Stelton Colony admitted “there had been practically no activities in the anarchistic group of Stelton for what seems a long while.”<sup>127</sup> To rectify that situation, they launched a new English language newspaper, *The Road to Freedom*. The newspaper’s first editorial explained, “Since the myrmidons of Mitchell Palmer laid their heavy hand on the radical press the Anarchist movement in this country has been without an organ; without a medium able to expound our ideal, our philosophy and our view of a free society. Many of our most active comrades being silenced either by imprisonment or through deportation, a period of stagnation was inevitable.” However, the editorial continued, anarchists had to overcome such stagnation as “there never was a greater necessity for an Anarchist publication in the English language than at the present time.”<sup>128</sup> The fate of the Russian anarchists was clearly on the minds of these east coast anarchists, as it had been on those in Los Angeles and Chicago; “Road to Freedom” is the English translation of the title of the Nabat Federation’s journal, *Put’ k Svobode*.<sup>129</sup>

Upon being elected editor of the new periodical, Hippolyte Havel relocated from the Mohegan Colony to the Stelton Colony’s Kropotkin Library, where he lived off the generosity of fellow anarchists until the 1940s. Havel’s alcoholism grew in the post-war years, resulting in cycles of hard work followed by periods of incapacitated

---

<sup>127</sup> *The Road to Freedom*, January 1925, 8.

<sup>128</sup> “To Our Readers,” *The Road to Freedom*, November 1924, 5.

<sup>129</sup> Avrich, *The Russian Anarchists*, 215.

drunkenness. A younger man, Warren Starr Van Valkenburgh—known to friends simply as Van—officially replaced Havel as editor in 1928, but played a critical role even during the years Havel’s name topped his on the masthead. Born in 1884, Van Valkenburgh hailed from Schenectady, New York, where he had distributed *Mother Earth* and *The Blast* before the war and had lost a leg as railroad employee. In the 1920s, Van and his wife, Sadie Ludlow, held clerical positions in New York City. Widely regarded as a congenial and conciliating figure in the movement, Van arranged speakers for anarchist forums in New York and Philadelphia while helping to keep *Road to Freedom* afloat.<sup>130</sup>

*The Road to Freedom*, which appeared monthly as an eight-page tabloid, served as the only nationally distributed English-language anarchist periodical published in the United States during the 1920s. Though the majority of articles came from those in the vicinity of New York, *The Road to Freedom* published the writings of anarchists living throughout the United States and abroad. Yelensky’s Free Society Group in Chicago held regular fundraising events on behalf of the paper, while the Libertarians of Los Angeles regularly contributed articles and funds to the new periodical. The enthusiasm for this new effort—but also the depths of inactivity to

---

<sup>130</sup> An anarchist who began writing for the paper towards the end of its run noted, “I will always gratefully remember that it was Van who encouraged us youngsters to write in the *Road to Freedom*.” Sam Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Cambridge, UK: Refract, 1986), 9. Like his co-editor Havel, however, Van was known for drinking too much. Sarah Taback, a member of the Road to Freedom Group, recalls that “One day while walking to a meeting I saw him lying in the gutter on Fourteenth Street, drunk and dirty and mumbling to himself.” Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 430. On Van Valkenburgh’s life, see “Finding Aid,” Van Valkenburgh Papers, LC.

which the English-speaking movement had sunk in the five years following the Red Scare—was palpable. More than 60 people from around the country subscribed before the second issue was published. Emma Goldman wrote from abroad, “That is good news that you are to start a paper. Heaven knows it is necessary after so many years of silence. I confess the fact that nothing was being done in America since our deportation has been harder to bear than many other things that made life so difficult the last seven years.”<sup>131</sup>

In the paper’s first issue, Havel defined anarchism as “the negation of all government and all authority of man over man, Communism as the recognition of the just claim of each to the fullest satisfaction of all his needs, physical, moral, and intellectual.” Like previous anarchist-communists, Havel declared “that monstrous bulwark of all our social iniquities—the State” to be the primary target of anarchist political activity. Havel was no more specific as to the form that activity should take than to note, “By education, by free organization, by individual and associated resistance to political and economic tyranny, the Anarchist hopes to achieve his aims.”<sup>132</sup> *The Road to Freedom* group assumed working people to be its primary audience, and believed that providing news and analysis of the labor movement would draw them to the newspaper and to anarchism. “If we can give in every issue accurate reports of the main labor events all over the country,” Havel assured readers in the

---

<sup>131</sup> *The Road to Freedom*, December 1924, 5.

<sup>132</sup> No Author [Hippolyte Havel], “Anarchist Communism,” *The Road to Freedom*, November 1924, 5-6.

first issue, “we will secure a large number of genuine workingmen readers and a great moral influence with the working classes.”<sup>133</sup> The group, however, was never able to build a sufficient network of correspondents to make the paper a reliable source of labor news. Although contributors consistently discussed the labor movement, their articles more often than not lacked nuance, fiercely criticizing organized labor in general. Moreover, its monthly format and small page count made it impossible for *The Road to Freedom* to be as comprehensive as the weekly and daily newspapers published by the Socialist and Communist parties.

Early issues of the paper balanced commentary on current events and the labor movement with reprints of articles by respected figures such as Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta. *The Road to Freedom* also continued the tradition begun by earlier anarchist newspapers of memorializing important dates in anarchist history, such as November 11th, the day the Haymarket martyrs were executed. At times, the paper offered insightful commentary on emerging social phenomenon. Havel, for example, anticipated contemporary theories of globalization by more than half a century when he editorialized:

Thanks to the unprecedented facilities of intercourse and communication we are in the midst of an epoch of immense diffusion which cannot but smooth the way toward some kind of social synthesis of humanity. The goal of this development—a goal which we approach but never quite attain—is the suppression of distance. As we approach it, human groupings are transformed in type. They are less dominated by geography and more by affinity and preference.<sup>134</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> “To Our Readers,” *The Road to Freedom*, November 1924, 5.

<sup>134</sup> No title, *The Road to Freedom*, November 1924, 4-5.

Contributors were also early critics of the sense of alienation then rising alongside the expansion of advertising and mass consumption in the 1920s. “We believe that the modern form of slavery in workshops and offices is worse than it has ever been,” claimed a writer using the name Andros. “Surrounded by ugliness and being constantly taken up with the menial things of life, more and more, man loses his critical sense and his natural intelligence.”<sup>135</sup> Such insights into emerging social phenomena were rarely pursued systematically, however. The newspaper’s writing and editing was uneven and its stable of contributors was not gifted with any major theorists; most authors drew on and reiterated traditional anarchist ideas and concerns.

*The Road to Freedom* retreated from the discussion of gender and sexuality that *Mother Earth* and the “gruppi femminili di propaganda” thrust upon the movement prior to World War I.<sup>136</sup> Women contributed content to the newspaper sporadically, but their articles tended to be reports on group activities or project finances rather than the news items, opinion pieces, and forays into political analysis that men typically contributed. Considerations of racism and opposition to white supremacy, such as had filled the pages of *L’Era Nuovo*, were also almost totally absent. The paper commented occasionally on the continuing oppression of “negros” in southern states, but made no effort to examine conditions within the rapidly growing communities of African-Americans in northern cities, nor to consider the

---

<sup>135</sup> Andros, “On the Road,” *The Road to Freedom*, December 1924, 3.

<sup>136</sup> For a rare exception, see “Woman and the Fundamentalists,” *The Road to Freedom*, July 1925.

political appeal of such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association or the African Blood Brotherhood, which were on the rise in the 1920s.<sup>137</sup> And despite a short piece by Robert Henri in the debut issue, *The Road to Freedom* did not follow post-war developments in the world of arts and letters.

Despite these literary and political shortcomings, *The Road to Freedom*, like many anarchist journals before it, functioned as more than just a newspaper. The periodical was a project that anarchists began to regroup around. It served as the basis for reestablishing a public culture of anarchism on the East Coast after the repression of the World War I era. The Road to Freedom Group, however, worked hard to bring the different fragments of the movement, which had shattered largely on ethnic lines during the Red Scare, back together in order to reestablish an explicitly anarchist culture and public presence in New York City and further afield.

While most U.S. Americans were celebrating the 4<sup>th</sup> of July in 1925, the group hosted a two-day Anarchist Conference at the “Kropotkin Institute”—the library of the Stelton Colony. Although the conference does not appear to have drawn representatives from outside of metropolitan New York region, official delegates represented the Road to Freedom Group, the Anarchist Aid Society, the Spanish language anarchist newspaper *Cultura Obrera*, the New Society Group, the Ferrer Center (though it was no longer functioning), and the “Circ. Op. de Cult. Soc.,” likely

---

<sup>137</sup> The black labor leader Thomas Dabney, who also contributed to the Sacco-Vanzetti movement, contributed a single article to *The Road to Freedom* which bemoaned the small numbers of African Americans participating in radical movements. Thomas Dabney, “The Negro and the Radical Movements,” *The Road to Freedom*, April 1926.

an Italian group. Harry Kelly, Hippolyte Havel, and Lilly Sarnoff opened the conference with short speeches, each emphasizing the need to attract young people and build a “broader” movement.<sup>138</sup> In the first session, which addressed means of propaganda, Kelly argued that building colonies served as “a means of propaganda for an Anarchist mode of life.” This drew criticism from other participants who believed the “colony life engages the individuals in too much routine, diverting them from the general struggle of the movement.” A second session focused on concrete ways of maintaining *The Road to Freedom*, while a third was used to debate the anarchist “attitude toward the labor movement.” The discussion of unions was contentious given the conflict raging at that moment within the garment unions. Anna Sosnovsky, an active ILGWU member and friend of Rose Pesotta, argued that unions should be seen as a “place for education and propaganda” that allow anarchist to “establish closer contacts with the workers, especially in their daily struggles.” Yet she admitted that in the imbroglio with the Communists and Socialists of the garment unions, “many mistakes have been made by our comrades.” While some other delegates “completely denied the necessity of working in the Unions,” the majority sided with Sosnovsky.

The conference concluded by passing six resolutions. Tellingly, three sent collective greetings and pledges of support to “exiled comrades from the United States” and to “all political and class-war prisoners,” noting especially Sacco and

---

<sup>138</sup> Anna Sosnovsky, “The Anarchist Conference,” *The Road to Freedom*, August 1925.

Vanzetti. Two others announced the creation of a sustaining fund for *The Road to Freedom*, and an “International Group in New York, the said group forming a nucleus for all Anarchists in New York and vicinity, in the hope of being able to extend the Organization over the whole country.” On the subject of the labor movement, the conferees could only manage to “reaffirm their faith in the organization of the workers, insist in their right to propagate their ideas among the workers of all organizations, but repudiate most emphatically all dictatorship, dictatorship either on the part of the bureaucratic leadership or originating from political parties.”<sup>139</sup> A high degree of concern for persecuted comrades, a low degree of unity on the matter of labor strategy, and an earnest desire to regroup: this was the state of U.S. anarchism in 1925.

---

<sup>139</sup> Sosnovsky, “The Anarchist Conference.”

Shortly after the conference, the newly constituted International Group of New York established a “Workers’ Centre” in lower Manhattan (on Second Avenue, just below 14<sup>th</sup> Street) in hopes of rebuilding some of the popular interest and support for anarchism that characterized the Ferrer Center era. The group launched a program of Friday evening lectures on libertarian topics. In February of 1926, for example, visitors could hear Havel critique the American Federation of Labor and Alexis Ferm discuss the educational practices he and his wife had instituted at Stelton. Anarchists in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles, linked to one another through *The Road to Freedom*, likewise reestablished public lecture series in their own cities. Meanwhile, contributors to the newspaper, such as Havel and Marcus Graham, undertook lecture tours through the Northeast and Midwest, selling subscriptions to the newspaper along the way.

**LECTURES  
ON ANARCHISM**

Arranged by the  
**International Anarchist Group  
of New York**  
at the WORKERS' CENTRE  
219 Second Avenue      New York City

February 3, 1926  
"Is Syndicalism a Practical Anarchist  
Philosophy"  
GUSTAVE FREITAG

February 10, 1926  
"The Anarchist Position in the Labor  
Movement"  
HIPPOLYTE HAVEL

February 17, 1926  
"The Anarchist Movement — Debts  
and Credits"  
GEORGE S. SELDES

February 24, 1926  
"The Radical and His Child"  
ALEXIS FERM  
QUESTIONS and DISCUSSION

---

**PHILADELPHIA  
LECTURES ON ANARCHISM**

February 2, 1926  
"A Wanderer in Italy"  
HARRY KELLY

February 9, 1926  
"Anarchism for Anarchists"  
ABE WINOKOUR

February 16, 1926  
"Anarchism in Theory and Practice"  
HIPPOLYTE HAVEL

February 23, 1926  
"Subject to be Announced"  
ALEXANDER BROWN

---

**EN ROUTE**  
HIPPOLYTE HAVEL  
will speak on  
"THE ANARCHIST POSITION IN  
THE LABOR MOVEMENT"  
in PHILADELPHIA—January 26th  
AT THE LABOR LYCEUM  
8th and Locust Streets  
in WASHINGTON, D. C.—Jan. 28th  
1817 Kenyon Street  
in BALTIMORE—January 29th  
AT THE PROGRESSIVE LABOR LYCEUM

**Figure 6:** *The Road to Freedom*,  
Feb. 1926

In April, 1927, for instance, Graham spoke in Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., New York, New Haven, Boston, Worcester, Rochester, Buffalo, Cleveland, Youngstown, and Detroit, most frequently on the question, “Why are there Political Prisons in Russia?” Although Graham did not provide attendance figures in the tour report he penned for *The Road to Freedom*, he claims in several cities large halls were “overcrowded.” Communists comprised a significant portion of Graham’s audiences, especially in cities where he was scheduled to debate Party officials. The vast majority of those who came to hear Graham lecture were of European immigrant working-class backgrounds. Graham noted that in Boston, “I was very pleased in having as one of the listeners, a colored man, the only one during my tour.” A lecture organized by the local branch of the IWW in Buffalo, New York, brought a considerable crowd of “native-born” workers. With this exception, however, Graham concluded, “There is without a doubt a great field for English propaganda today. The only regretful thing is the almost complete absence of an American element in all the places I have been to.”<sup>140</sup>

The constant need to raise funds for *The Road to Freedom* and other projects also provided East Coast anarchists a welcome excuse to resume organizing dinners, dances, and other social events which served as fundraisers that also brought together the dispersed community of anarchists on a more relaxed basis. During the summer of 1925 the paper advertised a “Concert and Dance at Danceland, Coney Island,” to

---

<sup>140</sup> Marcus Graham, “From New York to Detroit,” *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 6-7.

benefit the Anarchist Aid Society for Political Prisoners. The newspaper itself took home the proceeds of a Costume Ball at the Harlem Casino in December.<sup>141</sup> The following summer, the educative, fundraising, and social aspects of the movement's work were brought together at the Road to Freedom Camp, held in August and September in "the heart of the woods" near Croton-on-Hudson.<sup>142</sup> The camp provided space for anarchists to pitch a tent and relax, while participating in daily discussions of "Sociology, Economics, Workers' Education, Co-operation, Factionalism, and the different social philosophies." Alexis Ferm offered a weeklong course in Child Education. "Besides the course there will be a week of real good time and recreation. You can make it a thorough vacation week," explained the newspaper. If taking a whole week was out of the question, comrades were encouraged to visit during Labor Day weekend, when "The Italian comrades are planning an outing to the Camp" to host an "Italian Festival and Picnic."<sup>143</sup>

*The Road to Freedom* also initiated a mail order book service, listing on the back page of the paper a dozen or more English language pamphlets and books readers could order at low cost. Book services had been a consistent feature of anarchist publications from the movement's inception. They often served as the only means of distributing radical titles, produced by movement printers, that commercial booksellers

---

<sup>141</sup> *The Road to Freedom*, August 1925, 8; *The Road to Freedom*, October 1925, 2.

<sup>142</sup> The camp was located on a plot of land near the town of Croton-on-Hudson that Harry Kelly had purchased in order to found yet another colony in 1925. However, it never grew into a permanent anarchist settlement. Avrich, *Modern School*, 333.

<sup>143</sup> Anna Sosnovsky, "Road to Freedom Camp," *The Road to Freedom*, August 1926, 8.

refused to market. *The Road to Freedom*'s selection in October 1925 included four pamphlets by Kropotkin, one each by Bakunin, Proudhon, Malatesta, and Elisee Reclus, as well as Goldman and Berkman's accounts of their deportation and disillusionment with Russia.<sup>144</sup> Although many of the titles were anarchist classics, growing increasingly dated by 1925, it is likely that *The Road to Freedom*'s service provided the first means for English speaking anarchists—and curious individuals—outside of the major cities to obtain such material since 1917.

### **Potholes in the *Road to Freedom***

From its first issue, it was evident that *The Road to Freedom* would take a tone less caustic and smug than pre-war anarchist newspapers such as Berkman's *Blast*, or Galleani's *Cronaca Sovversiva*. The milder character of the newspaper is attributable to competing visions of the paper's purpose, as well as disagreements on what tactical lessons to take from the repression meted out over the previous decade. Contributors varied considerably in their interpretation of anarchism and in what they hoped to achieve with the newspaper. Although *The Road to Freedom* announced itself as an anarchist-communist newspaper, by the mid-1920s it was not precisely clear what this entailed in terms of political line, organization, and strategy. Contributors and subscribers were united primarily by the feeling that it was essential to put an English language anarchist newspaper—*any* English language anarchist newspaper—into circulation.

---

<sup>144</sup> *The Road to Freedom*, October 1925, 8.

During its first four years, *The Road to Freedom* contributors rehashed old debates between individualist and social anarchism while clashing over questions of organization and strategy. Although, as Road to Freedom Group member Jack Fraeger put it, “the *main thrust* was anarchist-communist,” proponents of more individualist forms of anarchism were regularly given space to air their views.<sup>145</sup> One F. Kraemer, for example, contributed a series of articles in 1926 outlining the “new” theory of “associational anarchism,” whose origins lie “in the works of Stirner and Tucker.”<sup>146</sup> Feeling the dissipation of anarchist forces, the editors also published articles which sought points of unity and synthesis of various anarchist positions, such as Max Nettlau’s June 1925 essay, “Anarchism: Communist or Individualist?—Both.”<sup>147</sup> Such efforts to gloss over significant philosophical differences confused rather than clarified the paper’s vision of anarchism, and were unlikely to win many new supporters, given that the individualist anarchist movement had almost completely dissolved when Benjamin Tucker folded *Liberty* and moved to France in 1911.

*The Road to Freedom* also provided mixed signals about what types of tactics best served the anarchist cause. The editors deemphasized propaganda of the deed and instead encouraged anarchists to expand their efforts at propaganda of the word

---

<sup>145</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 432. My emphasis.

<sup>146</sup> F. Kraemer, “Associated Anarchism,” *Road to Freedom*, May 1926, 2.

<sup>147</sup> Max Nettlau, “Anarchism: Communist or Individualist?—Both,” *The Road to Freedom*, June 1925, 1-2. See also, No Author [Hippolyte Havel], “The Evolution of Anarchist Theories,” *The Road to Freedom*, April 1925, 1-3; T.H. Bell, “What is Mutualism?” *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 8.

(publishing, lectures) and libertarian education. Yet when a contributor suggested anarchists should explicitly reject violent methods in order to attract allies, he was roundly upbraided. In a 1925 article first delivered as a lecture at the Worker's Centre, D. Isakovitz wrote that anarchists' fascination with expropriation and propaganda of the deed had "made our movement a nest for spys and provocators," divided socialists from anarchists, attracted criminal elements, and alienated the "general public." Moreover, he argued, "Every political, economical and social activity and reform that could not be considered as making the social revolution was ignored and labeled as a palliative, as a patch on the present rotten society and a hindrance to the millennium." This, Isakovitz claimed, had had a "paralyzing effect" on the movement.<sup>148</sup> Isakovitz found little support for his suggestions, however. Such a position amounted to "revisionism," plain and simple, contributor Theo L. Miles insisted. "Every true anarchist," Havel added, "is a social rebel, awaiting with impatience the coming days of social revolution."

*The Road to Freedom's* position on the use of retributive violence at times took on a character almost schizophrenic. On a single page of the September 1927 issue, Van Valkenburgh noted with joy the passing of steel magnate Elbert Gary. "That nothing more serious than public exposure ever happened to Gary is because sensitive souls like that of Berkman's occur so seldom in the human race," the editor opined.<sup>149</sup> Clearly lauding Alexander Berkman's attempted assassination of another steel baron,

---

<sup>148</sup> D. Isakovitz, "Anarchism and Revolution," *The Road to Freedom*, June 1925, 2-4.

<sup>149</sup> W.S. Van Valkenburgh, "Gary Goes," *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 2.

Henry Clay Frick, in this passage, Van Valkenburgh made a 180 degree turn in an immediately adjacent article regarding a small bombing attributed to supporters of Sacco and Vanzetti. “Such a tremendous storm against the legal lynching of Sacco and Vanzetti was raised prior to August tenth that a couple of explosions were necessary to stay the tide of public sympathy,” he coolly explained. “Even a simple minded fool would know that only an enemy of Sacco and Vanzetti would use such methods to gain their freedom.”<sup>150</sup> While honoring historical acts of political violence, the editor portrayed contemporary examples as self-evidently detrimental or as transparent attempts by officials to discredit the movement. Van Valkenburgh’s position appeared even more tenuous given Sacco’s and Vanzetti’s own calls for comrades to attempt a rescue and to violently avenge them once all legal avenues to obtain their freedom appeared foreclosed.<sup>151</sup>

Questions regarding organization also continued to bog anarchists down in internal debates and bouts of name calling. Tensions flared in 1928, for example, with the publication of a self-reflective article, “What’s Wrong With Our Movement,” written by Joseph Spivak of the Los Angeles Libertarians. After traveling through “most of the big cities” of the United States, Spivak asked why the movement’s influence remained “so negligible.” The problem, he concluded, lay with “the lack of interest in the English propaganda and the lack of the proper methods of

---

<sup>150</sup> W.S. Van Valkenburgh, “The World We Live In,” *The Road to Freedom*, September 1927, 2.

<sup>151</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani and Italian Anarchist Terrorism in the United States,” *Studi Emigrazione/Etudes Migrations* 30, n.111 (1993): 488.

organization.” Spivak argued that with the emphasis placed on “the Italian, Jewish and other language” literature, “the majority of our propaganda is being conducted among the same group of people all the time, among those who need it least, and is [therefore] practically a waste of energy.” He proposed that in order to create a “strong English movement” anarchists of all nationalities needed to create a single “International organization.”

This task was complicated by the hostility to organization exhibited by many of the anarchists Spivak encountered during his travels, however. “Not only have most of the anarchists of this country not learned the value of united forces in a systematic way, but in their primitive conception of organization, in their narrow mindedness and in their impracticability, they are afraid of this terrible word or of anything resembling it,” he wrote. Spivak noted that while “there are Italian anarchists in practically every important city in the United States, in every mine town,” they “especially belong to this class.” After praising their bravery and devotion to the anarchist ideal, Spivak argued that the “entire Italian movement is what I call an emergency movement. They do things spontaneously, when there is a call for it, in the eleventh hour of its need.” The author insisted that the form of organization he advocated was entirely in line with anarchist principles as it would be voluntary and federative, with officers only responsible for administrative tasks rather than decision making. Spivak further argued that the resistance to formal organization

actually led to un-anarchist outcomes, and insisted, as Fred Moore had during his work with the Sacco and Vanzetti Defense Committee, on the need for accountability:

Activity and work carried out without a regular form of organization is breeding dishonesty, despotism and autocracy. The initiators of such a movement are only responsible to themselves not to a group, they are their own controllers, are not responsible to any particular individuals and have the best chances to become dishonest.

Spivak felt such measures were necessary if anarchism was to “become a movement of construction, a movement of planning and building in advance, not a movement of defense, of emergency, as it is now.”<sup>152</sup>

Despite the modest nature of Spivak’s proposals, his article precipitated strident rebuttals. Paul Boattini, an Italian anarchist based in Detroit, penned an indignant letter to the editor, asserting, “I think Spivak is trying to build a platform in America...Anarchism is against platforms and you should understand the consequences if these articles do not stop.” Boattini’s brief response indicates the transnational scope of the U.S. movement even as late as 1928. Spivak’s ruminations on organization echoed a debate that had embroiled the European anarchist movement beginning in 1926. In the mid-1920s, Russian anarchists exiled in France and Germany launched a vigorous discussion regarding the lessons to be gleaned from their deadly defeat at the hands of the Bolsheviks. One faction, lead by respected organizers such as Petr Arshinov and Nestor Mahkno, published “The Organizational Platform of the General Union of Anarchists,” which insisted that an anarchist

---

<sup>152</sup> Joseph Spivak, “What’s Wrong with Our Movement?” *The Road to Freedom*, April 1928, 2-3.

movement capable of victory required greater theoretical unity and organizational discipline than had previously existed in the international anarchist movement. Unsurprisingly, anti-organizationists denounced “The Platform” as a deviation from principles bordering on submission to Leninism.<sup>153</sup> *The Road to Freedom* carried little discussion of this important debate and Spivak did not address it directly in his comments. Intent on denouncing Spivak’s organizationalism, however, Boattini apparently missed the substance of Spivak’s actual criticisms. In defense of the Italian anarchist community, the letter writer from Detroit insisted, “We are conducting propaganda with five papers here and helping keep alive others in France. We are also helping hundreds of international victims, and not only Italians.” Such a claim lends credence to Spivak’s argument that Italian-American anarchists dedicated little effort to proactively organizing English-speaking U.S. Americans at the same time it indicates the degree to which support for embattled anarchists abroad remained an absorbing priority for militants living in the United States throughout the 1920s.

Van Valkenburgh also responded to Spivak with a surprisingly emphatic defense of business as usual. Relying on a racially essentialist logic, he argued *against* an expansion of English language propaganda: “Anarchism is a difficult theme for the Anglo-Saxon to assimilate...It takes a particular type of people to perceive and

---

<sup>153</sup> For a discussion of the debates surrounding the “Platform” see Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968* (Oakland: AK Press, 2002), 121-143, and Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 253-261.

pursue an invisible idea and the Anglo Saxon cannot, and never could, see anything but the obvious.”<sup>154</sup> Van Valkenburgh also scoffed at new organizational initiatives, claiming, “There are already too many Anarchist federations in existence and another on at this time would merely serve as a stamping ground for disgruntled individualists who cannot work with any group and who have left in their trail chaos, dissention, personal bitterness, and soiled linen wherever they have been.” Besides, the editor concluded, expanded activity was pointless since “there are no outstanding personalities left in America [and]...No unpopular idea can gain rapid strides without the aid of dominating personalities.” To Van Valkenburgh’s mind, organized groups simply inspired petty despots, but real change could only be catalyzed by charismatic individuals. His thinking highlighted a persistent, if rarely explicit, theme in anarchist thought: the movement needs heroes, but not leaders.<sup>155</sup>

Beyond his desire to ensure Italian anarchists continued donating to *The Road to Freedom*, Van Valkenburgh’s resistance to new initiatives stemmed from a growing sense of cynicism that he shared with other movement veterans, including Havel and Kelly. In his response to Spivak, Van Valkenburgh asserted that anarchism “is an ideal to be achieved by posterity in ways unknown to us, unknown because

---

<sup>154</sup> Van Valkenburgh was not the only anarchist of this period to succumb to essentialist understandings of national-racial attributes. In a 1925 article Harry Kelly marveled at the fact that in Sweden an anarchist association claiming 3,000 active member was able to function efficiently. “It may have been because they are of a northern race wherein organization is more highly developed or inherent,” he reasoned. Harry Kelly, “The Psychology of Fear,” *The Road to Freedom*, August 1925, 1.

<sup>155</sup> This idea is insightfully developed by Rebecca Hill in *Men, Mobs and Law*.

unknowable...”<sup>156</sup> Havel had sounded a similar note in an early issue of *The Road to*

*Freedom*:

“While we doubt, right down deep in our souls, that a freeman, an anarchist, can be made by conversion or persuasion... The call to freedom will be heard wherever there are men and women ready for freedom... We feel assured our paper will serve in making friends, will get people acquainted, will unite them by the great idea they are holding in common.”<sup>157</sup>

While commentary of this sort indicated the editors’ continuing acceptance of the fatalistic conception of revolution expounded by Kropotkin, it represented a significant departure from the missionary zeal and revolutionary sureties that characterized earlier publications. While calling for a paper that could serve as an organizing tool, the editors often created one primarily devoted to nurturing a dwindling community that shared a utopian vision. Anarchism, in this conception, took on characteristics similar to the Christian belief in predestination or to that of Marxists comforted by the iron laws of capitalist development and crisis: if anarchism was only a distant dream, there was no urgency in discovering the best methods for enacting change in the present.

Not to be outdone, Harry Kelly offered dour prognostications of his own at a 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration for the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*. “Instead of the war being of short duration and bringing in its train a social revolution,” he claimed, “it lasted long enough to kill a very large part of the youth and revolutionary forces of the world

---

<sup>156</sup> W.S. Van Valkenburgh, “What is Wrong with Our Movement?” *The Road to Freedom*, May 1928, 3.

<sup>157</sup> No title, *The Road to Freedom*, Jan 1925, 8.

and so impoverish the rest as to create the weariness and pessimism of the present time. The world is weary and sadly lacks the faith that animated it twenty-five years ago.”<sup>158</sup> This mood of resignation only deepened with the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti in 1927. Like the foreign-language anarchist press, and nearly every other left grouping in the country, *The Road to Freedom* took up the cause of Sacco and Vanzetti with increasing fervor as their case wound its way through the courts. Nearly apoplectic as the date of the execution approached, the editors slathered the paper’s front cover with a desperate, accusatory, cry for the nation’s workers to save their comrades.

Neither the Electric Chair – nor a Living Death! – But Full Freedom!!  
for Sacco and Vanzetti...Give up appeals and use DIRECT ACTION!  
Only a GENERAL STRIKE will prevent this double murder and secure  
liberty for our two brothers and fellow-workers...Its up to you to  
prevent this crime against humanity. Its YOU who are on trial today! History  
will judge YOU!<sup>159</sup>

Thoroughly dispirited with their own ability to build a mass movement to save their comrades, whether in Massachusetts or in the Solovetsky Monestary, and rebuild the labor movement on libertarian and anti-capitalist footings, one senses that the editors were in actuality concerned about history judging them.

*The Road to Freedom* can’t be pigeonholed as the expression of a unified political position; rather it served as a forum for the many disagreements, contradictions, and confusions which beset the movement in the 1920s. While

---

<sup>158</sup> Quoted in Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 167.

<sup>159</sup> No title, *The Road to Freedom*, May 1927, 1.

anarchism certainly stood to benefit from wide-ranging debate during this period, the fact that *The Road to Freedom* functioned as the only English language anarchist periodical in the country created real challenges for rebuilding practical momentum. The paper attempted to serve as both an internal discussion bulletin amongst committed activists and as an agitational newspaper tasked with recruiting new adherents to the cause. Though some saw the paper's ideological openness as just what was called for in a period of instability and regroupment, others thought it amounted to a contradictory mess sure to confuse readers. A young contributor, Sam Dolgoff, who would launch his own anarchist newspaper after the *Road to Freedom* ceased publishing, later claimed members of the Road to Freedom Group "were too vague, they were childish in the extreme...a mélange of impractical and nonsense."<sup>160</sup> While articles were frequently vague and of mixed political character, this criticism is perhaps too harsh. Despite its shortcomings, *The Road to Freedom* provided an English-language voice of anarchism in the United States during the 1920s. Its editors persistently struggled to present a libertarian perspective during a period in which anarchism was marginalized amongst a general economic upswing and a dramatic restructuring of both the working class and the production process itself.

### **The Great Depression**

Weak in numbers and in analysis during the years of growing prosperity, U.S. anarchists were caught off guard by the crisis of overproduction that developed at the

---

<sup>160</sup> Sam and Esther Dolgoff interview, 1975, CD, LC.

decades' end. Anarchists reacted to the onset of the Great Depression in a number of ways, but none of the groups had the organizational capacity or a sufficiently developed strategy to take full advantage of the century's worst crisis of capitalism. The Free Society Group of Chicago focused its efforts on organizing educational forums and debates at a time when working people increasingly sought to better understand the factors contributing to the crisis. "When open forums were booming everywhere in the winter of 1928-29," Yelensky explained, "we hired the hall of the Northwest Side Arbeiter Ring School for such a forum and it became one of the most popular in the city."<sup>161</sup>

Some members of The Road to Freedom Group recognized that the rising unemployment would likely create an audience more receptive to revolutionary ideas. To this end, a committee including Havel, Kelly, Joseph Cohen, Lilly Sarnoff, and others, circulated a call for support which announced, "The necessity for an Anarchist Weekly publication in the English language is now apparent to everyone in the revolutionary movement. The limitations of the monthly *Road to Freedom* render it impossible to cope with the present urgent situation. The Anarchist appeal must be made through the portrayal of current events." The committee saw "the social structure at the point of collapse" but recognized "the Anarchists remain, at this all-important juncture, without an effective voice of their own." Once again they reiterated the dilemma of the movement in the United States: "The foreign-born

---

<sup>161</sup> Boris Yelensky, "25 Years," 91.

Anarchists are fairly well represented here with a considerable number of periodicals in their own tongues; but this is not enough. The future social edifice must be erected by the workers and farmers of America. So it is to the vast masses of the American people that we should speak.”<sup>162</sup>

Launched in January 1933, with Kelly serving as editor, *Freedom* struggled from the beginning to obtain sufficient funds and to fill its pages with hard-hitting content. Qualitatively and quantitatively, its contents differed little from those of its predecessor since the new paper was soon reduced to only four pages per issue. In a letter to a contributor, Kelly noted with exasperation, “I would have preferred to publish eight pages once a fortnight instead but our comrades are crazy for a weekly, so I’m doing my best. Considering that the paper must be printed in an office where the work must be paid for and the comrades are so desperately hard up everywhere it was foolhardy to issue a weekly in the first place.”<sup>163</sup> *Freedom* collapsed altogether in June of 1934, only 18 months after it began. This early attempt to leverage the financial crisis to the advantage of the anarchist movement met with little success. However, the demise of *Road to Freedom* and *Freedom* cleared the ground for the emergence of two new major English language periodicals, *Man!* and *Vanguard: A Libertarian Communist Journal*. As we will see in the next chapter, the editors of these papers each hewed to a sharper political vision than had Havel and Van

---

<sup>162</sup> “Freedom: A Weekly Journal Devoted to Anarchist Thought” circular, Vertical File: Anarchist—Freedom Group—New York, LC.

<sup>163</sup> Harry Kelly to Ammon Hennacy, March 5, 1933, Ammon Hennacy Papers, LC.

Valkenburgh, and their publications soon began to enunciate significantly different visions of the anarchist ideal and how it would be achieved.

## **Conclusion**

Anarchists saw themselves as part of an international working class and a transnational movement that was committed to the struggle against political and economic domination in all countries of the world. Prior to WWI, anarchists used the international mobility afforded by steamboats, railroads, and other transportation technologies to move constantly between different nation-states as a means of avoiding prosecution, securing facilities to produce propaganda, and putting their organizing skills to work wherever workers were apt to listen to their message. Many anarchists living in the United States prior to 1917 were political refugees from European countries, and viewed their residency as a strategic sojourn while awaiting more favorable political conditions to develop in their countries of origin. U.S. anarchists likely did not perceive the repressions of 1917-1920, then, as a permanent threat to the movement or even a permanent barrier to their eventual return to the United States. While the World War I era repression was harsh and presented a serious setback for the movement, it may not have been insurmountable if other factors were not also at play.

Of signal importance was the fact that the anarchist movement was placed in competition with, and came under attack by, the Communists and the fascists immediately after having been repressed in the Western democracies. As we have

seen, Jewish anarchists spent the 1920s battling a Communist takeover of the garment workers union, while their Italian counterparts fought the rise of fascism on the streets of Little Italy. But because the movement was transnational, and its members so mobile, attacks on anarchists in Moscow, Berlin, and Barcelona also seriously stunted the efforts of anarchists in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles. U.S.-based anarchists felt the dire need to focus their efforts on providing material aid and spiritual comfort to comrades imprisoned abroad, and to produce anarchist literature in Italian, Yiddish, and Russian, that could be smuggled into countries where publishing had become politically impossible. While the production of non-English anarchist newspapers in the United States spoke to the insularity of aging anarchist circles, it also indicates the endurance of their transnational commitments to providing aid and ideas wherever they were most needed. Anarchists regarded the provision of such aid as a moral requirement, even if it proved a political liability in their countries of residence by limiting local organizing work in a period when resources were scarce.

Partially because of these international commitments, the U.S. anarchist movement of the 1920s failed to adapt to a class and racial landscape that had evolved substantially in the interwar years—an evolution that, as I have argued, was partially set in motion by the actions of the anarchists themselves. According to Nunzio Pernicone, “By the Second World War, the anarchists were a dwindling element among Italian-Americans. The immigration laws of 1921 and 1924 had prevented any appreciable infusion of new blood from Italy, and the movement itself had failed to

propagate a second generation.”<sup>164</sup> This was just as true for Russians and Russian Jews, the other immigrant groups that contributed large numbers of militants to the U.S. anarchist movement in century’s first decades. With the new immigration regime in place it became more important than ever for U.S. anarchists to maintain their movement by organizing U.S. American workers and by passing their ideals on to their children.

As we have seen, U.S. anarchists were unable to develop a comprehensive strategy to broadly organize workers in the 1920s. The most concentrated anarchist involvement in labor struggles came in the form of struggle for control of the garment workers union. Having sided with the moderate socialists, the anarchists came out on the winning side of the “civil war,” though the costs and benefits of their position have never been adequately tallied. Anarchists such as Simon Farber, Louis Levy, Max Bluestein, Saul Yanofsky, Rose Pesotta, and Anna Sosnofksy gained or retained staff positions as organizers, business agents, and editors of union periodicals in the 1930s and 1940s, in some cases even securing positions for their children. Yet many anarchists of other trades and ethnic groups were highly critical of the strategy the Yiddish-speaking anarchists adopted during the conflict. Sam Dolgoff would later write,

The *FAS* [Freie Arbeiter Shtimme] anarchists, with little or no reservations, swung their considerable influence to the “right wing” machine and became, in time, fully integrated into the class collaborationist “right wing” apparatus... The defectors did not

---

<sup>164</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, “Luigi Galleani,” 488.

deliberately abandon their principles. Unable to formulate an independent, consistent anarchist policy alternative to both “right” and “left” factions and bewildered by the complexity of the situation, they became enmeshed in union factional politics.”<sup>165</sup>

In 1925, Stelton resident Abe Blecher accused the FAS of “revisionism” and propounding “a type of anarchism which is eclectic in character and claims its derivation to collectivist and communist sources, but in its outlook and main features it is rather liberalistic.” To his mind, their anarchism was characterized by “its opportunism and conservatism.” Joseph Cohen, editor of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* from 1923 to 1929, accused his successors of moderating the paper’s criticism of the garment unions to insure the revenue those unions regularly provided to it through donations and advertisements.<sup>166</sup>

It is undeniable that the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* did continue to moderate its editorial line in the 1930s and 1940s. A sizeable number of Jewish anarchists became attracted to the Labor Zionist movement, and became staunch supporters of Israel, which was reflected in the newspaper’s pages. Domestically, “more than a few” Jewish anarchists voted for Roosevelt in support of his New Deal policies, while other

---

<sup>165</sup> Sam Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 26.

<sup>166</sup> A. Blecher, “Problems of Theory and Practice, Part II,” *The Road to Freedom*, August 1926, 7-8. This funding was substantial and it extended beyond the FAS. For example, no less than twenty-two different branches of the garment labor movement donated to the Modern School of Stelton 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. See the program of the Modern School of Stelton 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Anarchist Archives, [http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist\\_Archives/bright/ferrer/stelton25.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bright/ferrer/stelton25.html). (Accessed October 22, 2009).

U.S. anarchists continued to deride him as a shill for corporate interests.<sup>167</sup> However, such broad-brush criticisms fail to acknowledge positive contributions made by anarchist garment worker unionists and shortcomings amongst other sectors of the anarchist movement. Despite their denunciations of Jewish anarchists' fealty to ILGWU leadership, anarchists continued to accept much needed union contributions to their Modern Schools, prisoner defense campaigns, and other projects. While criticizing the garment unionists' accommodation with centrist tendencies in their union, other sectors failed to offer an alternative strategy for organizing masses of working people or for turning back the rising tide of U.S. Communism. Lacking such a strategy and program, the anarchist movement began growing apart from the working-class in the 1920s. For all their shortcomings, the garment unionists provided the most direct ties anarchists held to the rapidly changing working class. In the 1930s and 1940s the ILGWU would dedicate itself to organizing the growing number of African Americans employed in the garment trades. Rose Pesotta, as we will see, focused specifically on bringing more women into the union's rank and file, staff, and elected leadership. She attempted to develop organizing and administration techniques functional for working with large numbers of people while retaining their commitments to anarchist principles.

Anarchists also met with little luck reproducing commitments to the movement in their own children during the 1920s. According to the San Francisco-based

---

<sup>167</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 196.

insurrectionist Dominick Salitto, Italian anarchist child rearing practices contributed to their failure to raise anarchist children. “Children of anarchists,” he claimed, “shied away from the movement because the parents themselves often failed to practice what they preached. The women seldom participated, and the Italian anarchist father was often an authoritarian at home.”<sup>168</sup> The Italians’ disinterest in prefiguring egalitarian relations in the home hindered the development and continuity of their movement. On the other hand, the Stelton Colony Modern School’s approach to education—refusing any doctrinal education to allow the students to develop opinions freely—could be seen as a strict adherence to prefigurative principles, and it too mostly failed to instill a deep commitment to building the anarchist movement amongst its students.

The founders of the anarchist colonies initially placed great stock in the uses of libertarian education, seeing it as an important component of the anarchist movement’s strategy for creating an egalitarian world. However, this was a strategy without clear benchmarks. Though certain precepts of Modern School pedagogy were adopted by later progressive educators, it was never clear for the parents and supporters of the School how their efforts concretely altered the larger world in the short term. The Modern Schools at Stelton and Mohegan produced many bright students who excelled when they moved on to traditional public high schools and universities as teenagers. They did not, however, produce a new, larger, generation of anarchist militants ready to take the reins of movement from their parents’ hands.

---

<sup>168</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 166.

The focus on education and the move away from factories and urban centers that had served as the flashpoints of earlier anarchist struggles implied a grudging acknowledgement amongst the colonists that the great social revolution was not impending, as they had assured themselves in previous periods. In the end, the colonies may have contributed significantly to the upward mobility experienced by many anarchists in the interwar years. They provided an affordable means for workers to build single family houses on their own plots of land—a process repeated by millions of working-class families moving to the newly built suburbs after the Second World War. Meanwhile their intensive investment in education prepared many of their children to enter professional fields their parents never dreamed of.

Despite these many set-backs and strategic dead-ends, the U.S. anarchist movement did survive into the 1930s, a decade of dire economic conditions, but also one rife with opportunities for anti-capitalist revolutionaries.

### **Chapter 3: The Unpopular Front: Insurrectionist and Mass Anarchism during the Great Depression**

*The Road to Freedom* had never proven entirely satisfactory to any of its readers. As the only English language anarchist newspaper in the United States during the 1920s, it relied on the financial support and the written contributions of anarchists with divergent, and often competing, ideas on matters of vision, organization, and strategy. Yet *The Road to Freedom* served as an institution, no matter how imperfect, around which the dispersed forces of anarchism could recompose themselves after the Red Scare had subsided. The networks of correspondence, fundraising events, intellectual forums, summer camps, and the yearly conferences conducted under its auspices proved vital enough that by 1932 two of the opposing tendencies under this big tent were able to establish their own formations and publish periodicals that represented their beliefs more systematically and coherently than *The Road to Freedom* had.

In April young Jewish anarchists from New York declared themselves the Vanguard Group, and brought out a mimeographed journal with the intention of reestablishing an organizing, or syndicalist, tradition amongst U.S. anarchists. The following January, Italian anarchists in San Francisco collaborated with Marcus Graham to launch *Man!*, a monthly newspaper intended to revive the insurrectionist school of anarchism promoted by Luigi Galleani. These groupings and their organs

would serve as the primary means for anarchists to reach U.S. Americans throughout one of the most volatile decades of the century—a decade marked by economic depression, the emergence of the welfare state, the Spanish Civil War, and the beginning of World War II.

### ***Man!***

After *The Anarchist Soviet Bulletin/Free Society* ceased publication in 1922 its editor, Marcus Graham, relocated to the Stelton Colony. Abe Blecher remembered that “Graham was an individualist and naturist and raised his own vegetables.”<sup>1</sup> Graham farmed a one acre plot of land by hand since he had developed a political opposition to machinery and a moral revulsion to eating “animal foods” after visiting a meat packing plant as a young man. In the 1920s and 1930s Graham was apparently a vegan, eating “raw foods, mostly nuts and raisins.”<sup>2</sup> During his years at Stelton Graham also worked as a cloth cutter in the garment industry. Although he occasionally contributed to *The Road to Freedom*, he was not a particularly social member of the colony. Shaindel Ostroff lived next door to Graham in the 1920s. “There are some people who must needle others, pick out the bad points,” she remembered. “That was him.”<sup>3</sup> Jack Frager, a central figure in the Road to Freedom

---

<sup>1</sup> Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 352.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Graham, “Biographical Note” in Marcus Graham, ed., *‘Man!’: An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas, Essays, Poetry, and Commentary* (London: Cienfuegos Press, 1974), ix; Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 266, 423.

<sup>3</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 307

Group, noted that Graham never fully jived with the group politically or socially. “Marcus Graham was a member but on the fringe, always alone,” he explained.<sup>4</sup>

In 1929 Graham began hitch-hiking across the United States to promote *The Anthology of Revolutionary Poetry*, a book he had edited and self-published. Customs inspectors in Yuma, Arizona, arrested him in 1930 when they found two copies of the book in his suitcase, held him incommunicado for two weeks, and tried to deport him, using the old 1919 order, which had never been implemented. The intervention of literary figures whom Graham had met while working on the *Anthology* prevented his deportation.<sup>5</sup> On other cross-country lecture tours, Graham stumped on behalf of Mooney and Billings, San Francisco labor militants falsely convicted of throwing a bomb at a “Preparedness Day” parade in 1916. By way of these lecture tours, he developed contacts in cities throughout the United States, and became close with West Coast anarchists in Los Angeles and the Bay Area.

When the *Road to Freedom* ran aground, Italian anarchists in San Francisco who published the monthly *L’Emancipazione* (Emancipation) decided that production of an English-language anarchist paper should be prioritized. *L’Emancipazione* was edited during its five year run by Vincenzo Fererro, a restaurant owner heavily influenced by Luigi Galleani.<sup>6</sup> The group decided to discontinue *L’Emancipazione* and shift resources to a new newspaper, which they invited Graham to edit. In doing

---

<sup>4</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 432.

<sup>5</sup> Graham, “Biographical Note,” xvi-xvii.

<sup>6</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 165.

so, they likely assumed that *L'Adunata dei Refretarri* (The Summoning of the Unruly), the New York based newspaper established to replace *Cronaca Sovversiva* and edited by Galleani disciple Raffaele Schiavina, would prove sufficient to cohere Italian anarchists nationwide. It is not surprising that the Italians chose Graham as their English-language editor, nor that Graham enthusiastically accepted. Sam Dolgoff, who knew Graham in his Stelton days, recalled, “Marcus Graham was always spoiling for a fight...He was supported mostly by Italian anarchists of the Galleani school, who admired his militancy, rather than by the more moderate Jews.”<sup>7</sup> Graham moved to Oakland in 1932, and leased a small fruit farm overlooking the San Francisco Bay shortly thereafter.<sup>8</sup>

Writing in the 1970s, Graham recalled that Ferrero “proposed the name for the new paper, *Man!*, as well as the subtitle, ‘Man is the measurement of everything.’ An International Group was formed to sponsor it, which included English, Chinese, Italian, and Yiddish speaking comrades.”<sup>9</sup> The fact that *Man!*, like the *Road to Freedom* before it, was supported by an “International Group” is indicative of a number of features of U.S. anarchism in the 1920s and 1930s. First, it suggests that an insufficient number of anarchists who were native born or counted English as their first language existed to produce a viable English-language press on their own. Secondly, it demonstrates the rhetorical commitment most anarchists made to a wide-

---

<sup>7</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 421.

<sup>8</sup> Graham to Inglis, February 14, 1934, Box 9, Agnes Inglis Papers, LC.

<sup>9</sup> Graham, “Biographical Note,” xvii.

reaching internationalism was at least attempted in practice.<sup>10</sup> Finally, it suggests that the ethnic anarchist groups in the United States had begun to recognize that the anarchist movement would not survive if it was isolated to foreign language speaking groups; reaching English speakers was more crucial than ever.

The first issue—an eight page tabloid with small type but a visually appealing layout—rolled off the press in January 1933. *Man!*'s tone was decidedly more strident and less patient than that of *The Road to Freedom*. However, Graham also committed from the outset to “reprint contributions that were created long, long, ago.”<sup>11</sup> The paper, he hoped, would serve as an educational resource that would present the ideas and life stories of important contributors to the libertarian tradition. Graham revered the great names of anarchist communism: Kropotkin, Malatesta, Reclus. Yet he also drew inspiration from and printed selections from anarchist individualists such as Max Stirner, John Henry Mackay, and Benjamin Tucker. The editor ranged widely in these archeological efforts: procuring translations of foreign language materials, highlighting radical moments in the thought of revered liberals, and recovering the work of minor figures such as Kate Austin, a Midwestern anarchist and feminist born in 1864.<sup>12</sup> Graham also had a penchant for collecting and compiling datum to demonstrate a point. The entire back page of the first issue of *Man!* consisted of a

---

<sup>10</sup> Dominick Sallitto tells the story of a Chinese anarchist named Red Jones. “Jonesie came before everyone else, set up the chairs, listened attentively to [Italian anarcho-syndicalist Armando] Borghi’s lecture—never understanding a word—then put away all the chairs and was the last to leave.” Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 167.

<sup>11</sup> Marcus Graham, “Man!” *Man!*, January 1933, 1.

<sup>12</sup> Carl Nold, “Anarchists: Kate Austin,” *Man!*, June-July 1934.

listing of persons injured or killed by law enforcement officials in the previous two months, which he produced to prove the state was an institution based on violence. Graham later tallied the earnings of major corporations and the distribution of federal funds to banks, business interests, and working people during the years of the New Deal intent on debunking the claim that FDR's policies were designed with workers' interests at heart.<sup>13</sup> Though by all accounts he was an exasperating activist, Graham would have made an excellent reference librarian.

The specific politics *Man!* promoted could be difficult for new readers to grasp. Graham presented the tradition of anti-authoritarian thought as a unified whole, choosing to brush over differences on fundamental matters that divided its greatest proponents. The editor and his support staff in the International Group held strong opinions on matters of organization, strategy, and vision, but they rarely presented them systematically. Rather, these positions emerged in editorial decisions, in short articles commenting on current events, in published responses to reader mail, and in the paper's approach to movement activity.

Tellingly, Graham's vision of the ideal revolutionary was the poet. When the editor of a poetry magazine expressed her negative opinions of anarchism to him, he feigned surprise. "Yes-indeed! Anarchists don't support the so-called sane, practical movements... For the anarchist is the prophetic fiery denouncer of everything unjust and unfree holding forth the Day of Liberation." Who, asked Graham, "has it been in

---

<sup>13</sup> Marcus Graham, "A Year of the New Deal," *Man!*, April 1934.

the history of mankind that rebelled foremost against the compromise of idealism to practicability—if not its greatest poets?” Given this position and his earlier devotion to compiling radical poetry, it is not surprising that *Man!* devoted considerably more attention to cultural matters than *The Road to Freedom* had. Graham dedicated the penultimate page of each issue to a regular “Arts and Literature” section featuring poetry, book reviews, and commentary on the arts. Despite the column inches devoted to literature, *Man!* didn’t display a particularly deep or attuned attitude towards recent trends in literature and art, as the Progressive Era publications had and as 1940s anarchist cultural journals such as *Retort* and *The Ark* would. The radical avant-garde of the Dadaists and Surrealists that arose in interwar Europe didn’t find their way into its pages. By the 1930s U.S. anarchism had grown divorced from the Modernist art movement scene, and Graham didn’t hold the cache with artists and cultural critics that Goldman, Havel, and other New Yorkers had painstakingly developed in the pre-war period.

*Man!* was, in all important respects, an Italian anarchist paper of the Galleani tradition published in English. Ferrero called it “a successor to *L’Emancipazione* in a new language.”<sup>14</sup> *Man!*’s masthead, a woodcut of a muscled, shirtless man with arms outstretched and a broken chain dangling from one wrist, served as a visual cue to anyone familiar with movement history—it duplicated almost exactly the masthead adorning Galleani’s former newspaper, *Cronaca Sovversiva*.

---

<sup>14</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 163.



A Journal of the Anarchist Ideal and Movement

Figure 7: Mastheads of *Cronaca Sovversiva* and *Man!*

*Man!*'s first issue opened with a statement of purpose that read, in part:

In making the initial appearance *Man!* offers no programs, platforms or palliatives on any of the social issues confronting mankind.

*Man!* has and shall have ideas to place before those who are willing to face the truth, and act for themselves. If it aims at anything at all—it is—for *Man* to regain confidence in himself, in his own great power to achieve liberation from every form of enslavement that now encircles him. *Man!* is a journal of the Anarchist ideal and movement. Every social question will be met consistently, without offering any quarter to compromise, the doom of so many ideals and idealists.

The statements' rejection of any compromise, dismissal of reforms, and rejection of organization and strategy placed the newspaper clearly in the camp of insurrectionary, anti-organizationist anarchism. The anti-organizationists upheld a tradition of Italian anarchism that emerged in the 1880s that rejected formal organization of any type, even directly democratic ones composed solely of anarchists. As Ferrero explained, "Galleani was not an individualist but was opposed to formal organization. He was for spontaneous cooperation and spontaneous action."<sup>15</sup> A deeper examination of the history and defining characteristics of this school of anarchist thought is helpful for making sense of the views advocated in *Man!*. Such consideration is further warranted by the fact that U.S. anarchists in the 1970s and 1980s, including the editors of the journals *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*, drew heavily on this tradition in ways that have significantly impacted recent anarchist thinking and activity.

\*\*\*

---

<sup>15</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 165.

Nunzio Pernicone has carefully documented the roots of the anti-organizational, insurrectionist approach to achieving anarchism.<sup>16</sup> He explains, “Fear of infiltration and persecution constituted much of the basis for the anti-organizationist tendency that emerged in the late 1870s and 1880s, of which Galleani was the classic exemplar.”<sup>17</sup> Italian disciples of Bakunin had organized one of the strongest national federations of the First International beginning in 1872, reaching an estimated peak of 20,000 to 30,000 members.<sup>18</sup> Siding with their mentor in his conflict with Marx and Engels, they adopted the organizational form of public local chapters confederated at the national level. Throughout the decade they mounted a series of small, ill-fated, insurrections that, according to the theory of propaganda of the deed, were to have triggered massive popular uprisings. Instead they only brought massive repression by authorities. Groupings of the International were banned and prominent figures arrested. In response, one of the outstanding figures of Italian anarchism, Andrea Costa, decided insurrection was a tactical dead end and moved into the parliamentary socialist camp, where he attempted to parlay his reputation into electoral support amongst recently enfranchised working people.

---

<sup>16</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>17</sup> Pernicone, “War Amongst the Italian Anarchists” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, ed. Phillip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003), 86-87.

<sup>18</sup> Cary Levy, “Italian Anarchism” in *For Anarchism: History, Theory, Practice*, ed. David Goodway (London: Routledge, 1989).

Other anarchists took different lessons from the experience of First International years. Lambasting Costa, they maintained their strategic faith in the ability of propaganda of the deed to unleash the insurrectionary impulses of the masses. The problem, to their minds, was simply that the form of organization anarchists had adopted, despite its decentralization, created too easy a target for police repression. Another prominent anarchist, Carlo Cafiero, asked rhetorically, “Why must we display all our force to the public, i.e., to the police, so that they can know how and where to strike us?”<sup>19</sup> Secret, temporary groupings of militants, they argued, would prove safer than open, mass membership organizations. Costa’s conversion to socialism provided an additional rationale for organizing only tiny conspiratorial cells. Stable, public groupings that sought to develop mass appeal, according to Cafiero and his followers, would simply serve as breeding grounds for more “ambitious opportunists,” sure to betray the movement as soon as they had a chance.

Pernicone argues that “Costa’s defection—in combination with fear of persecution—precipitated an antiauthoritarian reaction that generated a phobic aversion to leadership and organization.”<sup>20</sup> This led many anarchists to begin conflating “authoritarianism and the principle of leadership itself.”<sup>21</sup> The paper *Humanitas* of Naples wrote in 1887, “A vast association is a state in miniature. It kills the spirit of initiative in individuals, who expect everything from this

---

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 169.

<sup>20</sup> Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 176.

<sup>21</sup> Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 177.

organization... Within an association one finds a charlatan who will deceive, an ambitious person who will exploit, and a spy who will denounce.”<sup>22</sup>

Already by 1881, anti-organizationists “envisioned a movement in which anarchists would remain aloof from the unconverted masses, associating only with other anarchists, and constituting a revolutionary elite uncontaminated by the authoritarianism and reformism supposedly inherent in any formal large-scale organization.”<sup>23</sup> Errico Malatesta, perhaps the most respected Italian anarchist of all time, was quick to point out the deleterious consequences such thinking held for the movement. The anti-organizationists “began to preach and to practice disorganization; they wanted to elevate isolation, disdain for obligations, and lack of solidarity into a principle, as if these were a function of the anarchist program, while instead they are its complete negation.”<sup>24</sup>

It is not surprising that eventually some of the anti-organizationists, who trumpeted the virtues of individual actions and so zealously defended against the authority entailed in political groups, developed an interest in the writings of the arch egoist Max Stirner and American individualist anarchists such as Josiah Warren and Benjamin Tucker. In a discussion with historian Paul Avrich, an individualist anarchist born in Italy who went by the name Brand provided insight into the way in

---

<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 216.

<sup>23</sup> Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 191.

<sup>24</sup> Malatesta in *L'Associazione*, December 7, 1889, quoted in Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 177.

which individualist and anti-organizationist ideas overlapped and sometimes became hard to distinguish:

We [individualist anarchists] believe in temporary organizations for specific functions that, once, accomplished, the organization disappears. We don't accept permanent organizations because they tend to become authoritarian in spite of the good will of their members...But it is not only the question of organization that separates us from the anarchist-communists. We also have a different conception of freedom. For us freedom is the greatest good, and with freedom we make no compromises. Thus we reject all institutions with even a tint of authority.<sup>25</sup>

The turn away from organization coincided with the rise of anarchist terrorism throughout Europe in the 1880s. In July of 1881, anarchists held an International Congress in London with most of the leading lights of the movement, including Peter Kropotkin and Emile Pouget, serving as representatives. The Congress adopted a resolution proclaiming that the assembled delegates “place great store by the study of the technical and chemical sciences as a means of defense and attack.”<sup>26</sup> This proclamation announced a subtle but important shift in the meaning of propaganda of the deed. In the previous decade, the preferred method for instigating the revolution was an insurrection carried out by bands of militants. It supposed the active participation of hundreds, if not thousands. Though armed, these bands did not specifically seek to kill elites and government officials. Rather they took symbolic action, such as openly burning public records and taking possession of town halls—

---

<sup>25</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 174.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Alexander Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, (Oakland: AK Press, 2002), 47.

acts meant to inspire and demonstrate to the watching towns' people that economic independence and self-governance were within their grasp. In contrast, the dominant practice of the 1880s was terrorism: single individuals, or small action squads, explicitly targeting powerful individuals—and sometimes public gatherings of the bourgeoisie—for death.

Kropotkin ideologically supported anarchist terrorism, though never with the vicious jubilation of some of its French and Italian practitioners. The logic and appeal of such methods was bolstered in significant measure by the rising popularity of his teachings.<sup>27</sup> Kropotkin was a strong proponent of fatalistic and teleological notions of history rooted in his acceptance of Enlightenment thought and the emerging positivistic social science of his day. Kropotkin, like Marx, believed that humans' natural inclinations, their rationality, and natural laws made revolution inevitable.<sup>28</sup> He frequently likened revolution to a storm that would prove unstoppable. This created ambiguity about the role radicals might play in creating change. Sometimes they envisioned themselves as catalysts, other times as midwives that would assist, direct, and ease the inevitable, total change that would soon come. For some, such

---

<sup>27</sup> Pernicone, *Italian Anarchism*, 241-243.

<sup>28</sup> See George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994); Saul Newman, *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001).

thinking suggested the need to take violent action, for others it recommended taking almost no action at all.

Hence this combination of essentialist assumptions about the libertarian instincts of “the people,” deterministic thinking about the progress of history, fear of repression, and simplistic thinking about the pitfalls of leadership combined in a potent ideological stew that worked to dissuade many Italian anarchists from organizing people to act collectively for more than a decade. Though Malatesta, Kropotkin, and others worked diligently to realign anarchism with the struggles of working people after the turn of the century, the anti-organizationist perspective left a major impact on the movement.

Luigi Galleani carried anti-organizationist ideas to the United States when he emigrated in 1902. He advocated them plainly in *Cronaca Sovversiva* and in his bomb making manual *La Salute en Voi!*. It was his promotion of terroristic propaganda of the deed that lead Italian anarchists to launch the series of bomb attacks that precipitated the Palmer Raids in 1919. In the 1920s, as we have seen, Galleanisti remaining in the United States focused their efforts on confronting fascist Italians in America and freeing their co-conspirators, Sacco and Vanzetti. By the 1930s their public activities had begun to wane, however. Many, including their new de facto leader, Schiavina, remained in the country illegally and were threatened with deportation if they were publically identified. This history formed the most significant ideological current undergirding *Man!*

\*\*\*

Though Galleani and his West Coast disciples in the *L'Emancipazione* group considered themselves anti-organizationist anarchist-communists, Graham brought his own individualist leanings to the mix and the International Group gave him almost total freedom to express his opinions. Graham's utopia, which was much closer to Josiah Warren's vision than Galleani's, consisted of individuals who could remain self sufficient and independent, rather than communities which made it a principle to practice mutual aid. Graham exposed his romantic and individualistic tendencies in an early issue of *Man!*. He editorialized that once anarchism "is achieved, man will begin to unfold undreamed of great latent powers within himself. Powers that shall make it possible to usher in an era of genuine happiness and liberty without exploiters and rulers of any form. A society where all men and women shall have the equal opportunity to live as free artisans and natural human beings."<sup>29</sup>

These lines are indicative of multiple components of Graham's thought. First, he upheld the core philosophical tenet of anarchist-communism: an essentialist belief in a beneficent human nature that, if left unfettered, could create equitable social relations and institutions not possible to imagine under current conditions. Graham admitted he subscribed to a "planless anarchy" and refused to describe what institutions would replace the state and capitalist economy, believing, as Galleani had, that egalitarian social structures could only be conceived once human nature was

---

<sup>29</sup> Marcus Graham, "Liberation," *Man!*, January 1933, 1.

freed.<sup>30</sup> Yet Graham also urged humans to live closer to nature. His naturalism and vision of a human community of artisanal small producers were closely tied to his ardent rejection of technology and technological culture. Graham articulated his critique of industrial development in a 1934 article, “What Ought to be the Anarchist Attitude towards the Machine?” Admitting that his opinions were “at variance with the generally accepted attitude of our movement,” Graham nonetheless, asserted that “man will never be able to master the machine without the sacrifice of endangering human life.” He first argued the point literally, claiming the power of large scale machinery increases immensely the power of the single individual operating it to hurt or kill people in large numbers. Graham rejected the notion that machines were developed willfully by human groupings to escape the limits of primitive civilization. After all, he reasoned, pre-industrial societies were responsible for the great, canonical works of culture that humanity celebrates. Instead, Graham asserted, it had been “commercialism, signifying, of course, exploitation and rulership, at the helm of fostering the machine.” Graham rejected claims that machinery could create happiness by alleviating toil and maintained that laboring for oneself was inherently joyful and rewarding. Instead, machines were “an attempt to mechanize life,” to impose a rigid rhythm upon individuals.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> Marcus Graham, “About Planless Anarchy,” *Man!*, May-June 1935, 5.

<sup>31</sup> Marcus Graham, “What Ought to be the Anarchist Attitude towards the Machine?” *Man!*, March, 1934.

Graham had advanced similar ideas for close to a decade. He wrote short pieces on the subject of technology in *The Road to Freedom*, and he also offered a lecture on the subject during his cross-country speaking tours. The *Albany News* of December 18, 1931, described Graham's lecture in that New York city under the heading "Machine Age Doom of Man, Poet Asserts—Marcus Graham Finds Civilization of Today Sterile—Speaks in Albany Tonight at Workmen's Circle Institute." The article explained:

Civilization is doomed by the machine. In taking man away from the soil and depriving him of the sense of shaping the means of his existence with his own hands it has robbed him of his sole chance for happiness. These are the views of Marcus Graham, poet and writer...

"Proof of the sterility of machine civilization is seen in the fact that we have no more Shakespeares, Poes or Whitmans," Mr. Graham said today. "Not only have we produced no artists of note in the last 50 years, i.e., since the machine gave the dominant note to our culture, but we have been unable to compensate for its increasing maiming of life, in accidents, as well as for technological unemployment."<sup>32</sup>

In his talks, Graham deftly linked the expansion of machine production to the deepening economic Depression that his audience was experiencing at the time. He claimed overproduction was the root cause of the Depression. Foreign markets would not suffice to pull the United States economy out of its slump. According to Graham, "Europe, South America and Australia have learned enough of America's technology

---

<sup>32</sup> "Machine Age Doom of Man, Poet Asserts—Marcus Graham Finds Civilization of Today Sterile—Speaks in Albany Tonight at Workmen's Circle Institute," *Albany News*, Dec. 18, 1931, newspaper clipping, Vertical File: Anarchism—Marcus, Shmuel-Lectures, LC.

to produce sufficient for their own needs and have goods left over for exportation.”<sup>33</sup> War, he presciently asserted, would be the only way to reverse the trend. In Austin, Texas, Graham urged his audience not to wait for federal assistance, but to seize and begin working uncultivated land around them with the aim of supporting themselves. In Memphis, he was even more direct: “Abandon the cities; leave them as monuments to the folly of man.”<sup>34</sup>

In each of these arguments, Graham presaged contemporary anarcho-primitivist thought. Like many contemporary anarcho-primitivists and “green anarchists” do today, Graham saw a silver lining in the catastrophic events roiling the world in which he lived; he viewed them as a possible new means of bringing about an anarchist social order. The coming war would bring devastation, he admitted, but “out of these ruins humanity will evolve the pre-ancient, more experienced man, a self-reliant individual, striving to bring back the ancient civilization of the artisan, working out his destiny for the principles of voluntary co-operation, which in turn can only come through understanding, toleration and respect between human beings.”<sup>35</sup>

Like other Galleanisti, Graham was decidedly anti-capitalist, but also rejected the labor movement, including anarcho-syndicalism, as a means of achieving freedom.

---

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> “Speaker Urges Idle Men Take Up Farming,” *Austin Statesman*, March 18, 1932; “Poet Will Lecture on Mooney Defense,” *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, February 24, 1932, newspaper clippings, Vertical File: Anarchism—Marcus, Shmuel-Lectures, LC.

<sup>35</sup> “Machine Age Doom of Man, Poet Asserts—Marcus Graham Finds Civilization of Today Sterile—Speaks in Albany Tonight at Workmen’s Circle Institute,” *Albany News*, Dec. 18, 1931, newspaper clipping, Vertical File: Anarchism—Marcus, Shmuel-Lectures, LC.

On this matter, he did not mince words. “The organized labor movement throughout the world is by its very nature and purpose a protective barrier against any spontaneous revolutionary action that may arise from among the exploited toilers.”<sup>36</sup> Moreover, unions were by nature authoritarian. This, he claimed, was as true of the syndicalist French CGT or the avowedly anarchist Spanish CNT as it was for the liberal AFL of the United States.<sup>37</sup> Graham denounced President Roosevelt’s National Recovery Act as a “debacle.” The “anarchist movement has, of course, taken an uncompromising stand toward the attempted N.R.A. fascist scheme,” he claimed, though he did not make it clear in what capacity the movement did this. Yet, a few traitors had supported the legislation and Graham felt it his duty to denounce them.

In the early 1930s Rose Pesotta and Anna Sosnofsky had taken jobs as union organizers in the ILGWU. After a string of successful organizing campaigns, Pesotta began to rise through the union’s ranks and eventually accepted a position as International Vice President. Marcus Graham announced to readers, “Rose Pesotta has accepted a paid position to aid, through the NRA scheme, in bringing back to power the same discredited officialdom of the International Garment Workers Union which she had at one time denounced and exposed as a band of careerists and crooks.” Likewise with Anna Sosnofsky. “In mentioning these two instances, *MAN!* wishes to show that the Anarchist movement holds no brief for such desertions from Anarchist

---

<sup>36</sup> Marcus Graham, “Anarchists and the Labor Movement,” *Man!*, January 1934, 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> *Man!* received “protest resolutions” from the Free Society Group of Chicago, the Spanish Anarchist Groups of the U.S., and the Spanish CNT regarding this position. See “Can Organization be Anti-Authoritarian?” *Man!*, June-July 1934.

principles. On the contrary, it stands ready at all times to expose and denounce them,” asserted Graham.<sup>38</sup>

Though contributors to *Man!* expressed nothing but contempt for labor leaders, working people moved to strike or take other actions on their own behalf won their admiration, words of encouragement, and financial support. Graham took particular interest in Kentucky coal miners in the midst of a series of bloody wildcat strikes in Kentucky, calling them “fierce,” “sincere,” and “brave.”<sup>39</sup> In perfect step with the insurrectionist tradition, *Man!* staunchly supported resistance and rebellion at point of production, but adamantly maintained that unions themselves were useless or detrimental.

*Man!* acknowledged that not everyone was oppressed in the same way. Graham sporadically published short, condemnatory, reports on the racist treatment of “negros,” including commentary on the Scottsboro Boys case. The September 1935 issue opened with an account of the persecution of Angelo Herndon, a black labor organizer sentenced to twenty years on the chain gang for possession of subversive literature.<sup>40</sup> The article, by Harold Preece, recognized that African-Americans faced particular forms of discrimination that whites did not. “Indictment of a Negro,” he

---

<sup>38</sup> Graham, “Anarchists and the Labor Movement.” See also, “The Evils of Organization,” *Man!*, November-December 1934; Edwin Cunningham, “Whom Does Organized Labor Benefit?” *Man!*, November-December 1935, 3.

<sup>39</sup> Marcus Graham, “Labor’s Enemies,” *Man!*, January 1933, 1. See also, Candido, “Miners,” *Man!*, April 1933, 5. On the mine wars, see William C. Blizzard, *When Miners March* (Oakland: PM Press, 2010).

<sup>40</sup> On Herndon, see Robin D.G. Kelly, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1990).

wrote, “is practically tantamount to conviction anywhere below the Mason-Dixon line.”<sup>41</sup> In the same issue, Graham reprinted a short piece on the exploitation of Africa by European colonial powers. But *Man!* did not venture a systematic or theoretical treatment of white supremacy. The paper’s standing blanket opposition to instances of authority and coercion was, apparently, deemed sufficient a statement of principles on the matter.

Perhaps what is most striking about *Man!*, like *The Road to Freedom*, is that it contains virtually no accounts of anarchists in the United States doing anything other than holding lectures and fundraising events. The International Group that sponsored *Man!* dedicated itself to hosting educational forums and social outings that doubled as fundraisers for their own paper, other anarchist periodicals in the U.S. and abroad, and the defense funds of imprisoned activists. The May-June 1933 issue, for example, noted that the San Francisco International Group had been supporting its publication through “monthly affairs which have become well known for their interesting programs.” Besides funding *Man!*, proceeds from these events were donated to political prisoners to political prisoners in the United States and Europe, to *L’Adunata*, and to the Russian language *Dielo Truda*, edited by G.P. Maximoff in Chicago. Similar international gatherings were held in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Detroit, while smaller “affairs” took place in Paterson, New Jersey; Manakin, Philadelphia,

---

<sup>41</sup> Harold Preece, “Georgia – A Symbol of Injustice to the Negro,” *Man!*, September 1935, 1; Dr. J. Globus, “The Racial Myth and Internationalism,” *Man!*, August 1934.

Riverside, and Old Forge, Pennsylvania; as well as White Plains and New York City.<sup>42</sup> Yet demonstrations, organizing campaigns, the creation of mutual aid organizations, expropriations of food, or other actions were rarely reported on.

The group's limited repertoire of proactive tactics did not amount to idleness, however. Ensuring the regular publication of *Man!* itself consumed a large amount of time and energy. Beyond the standard efforts to write, edit, and typeset the paper, beginning in 1934 *Man!* was subject to a campaign of pressure and intimidation from federal authorities. Graham maintained an office located above the small restaurant in Oakland, California, owned and operated by Vincenzo Ferrero and another mainstay of the International Group, Dominick Salitto. On April 11, immigration officials "ransacked" the homes of Ferrero and Salitto and arrested the men for supporting criminal anarchy on the grounds that they were willing to rent space to *Man!* As non-citizens, Ferrero and Salitto were subject to WWI-era immigration statutes that prohibited immigrants from holding anarchist beliefs. A board of review recommended deportation to Italy. The men argued that as anarchists, they would be jailed, if not executed outright, when handed over to the fascist government of their home country. Anarchists, civil libertarians, and other progressive organizations launched a nationwide campaign on their behalf.<sup>43</sup> On advice of lawyers, Ferrero and

---

<sup>42</sup> "The Movement Around *Man!*" *Man!*, May-June 1933,5.

<sup>43</sup> Marcus Graham, "A Statement of Facts," *Man!*, August-September 1936, 4; Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee, "Freedom of Thought Arraigned: Four Year Persecution of MAN!, 19 Year Persecution of Marcus Graham," (Los Angeles:

Sallitto agreed to surrender to authorities at Ellis Island instead of in California.

According to Valerio Isca, fellow anarchists tried to raise \$2,000 in bail money to free the men pending an appeal, but fell far short. Rose Pesotta stepped in at this point.

Despite being harshly condemned in the pages of *Man!* for accepting a staff position with the ILGWU, Pesotta phoned her union's joint board, which posted bail in full for both men the next morning.<sup>44</sup> Sallitto and Ferrero accepted the money; it is unclear if they or Graham revised their opinions on benefits of anarchists holding influence within mass trade unions. Owing to pressure from the defense campaign, Sallitto's case was dropped and Ferrero's was put on hold. Ferrero went underground and, known by the name "John the Cook," was harbored by comrades in California for the rest of his life.<sup>45</sup>

During the same month, immigration officials moved to deport its publishers, subscribers to *Man!* in cities across the country were interrogated by federal agents.

Graham reported in the May 1934 issue:

These readers were in each case asked to accompany the agents to the offices of the local branches of the Department of Justice. Behind closed chamber doors they were plied with questions, and given information for their 'benefit.' Explanations were demanded of the readers as to why they read and lent material aid to an Anarchist journal such as *Man!*...The questioning was ended by threatening with

---

MGFPC), 1939, 3. In Vertical File: Anarchism – Marcus, Shmuel – Arrest and Trial – Marcus Graham Freedom of the Press Committee, LC.

<sup>44</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 148.

<sup>45</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 163.

deportation the alien readers and criminal prosecution of native ones, should they continue to render moral and material aid to *Man!*<sup>46</sup>

These threats having failed to silence the newspaper, Graham himself was arrested in October 1937, once again on the basis of the now 18 year-old deportation orders stemming from his first arrest in 1919. Supported by a lawyer from the American Civil Liberties Union, Graham argued that the statute of limitations had expired on the deportation order and again refused to reveal his country of birth. He was jailed for contempt of court but released on a one thousand dollar bond awaiting appeal.<sup>47</sup> The conviction upheld, Graham failed to surrender to authorities, electing to join Ferrero underground. This final act of repression eventually had the desired effect. On June 16, 1940 *Man!* issued a mimeographed letter to subscribers explaining that it was forced to cease publication when, submitting to an “artificially created War Hysteria scare,” its usual printer refused to produce the next issue, and a new printer could not be secured. The letter concluded on a defiant note:

Forced into momentary silence –our voice for the dawn of a liberated mankind shall and will reverberate anew at the first opportunity – more firmer and effectively than ever before. And our parting words can only be: Down with all wars – the senseless slaughter between man and fellowman! Long live Freedom – Freedom for all the children of mankind!<sup>48</sup>

### **The Sunrise Co-operative Farming Community**

---

<sup>46</sup> Marcus Graham, “Government’s Foul Conspiracy to Destroy *Man!*” *Man!*, May 1934, 1.

<sup>47</sup> MGFPC, “Freedom of Thought Arraigned”

<sup>48</sup> “Man Forced to Cease Publication,” mimeographed letter, June 16, 1940, Vertical File: Anarchism—Marcus, Shmuel, LC.

Marcus Graham was not the only anarchist who felt the best response to the mass unemployment of the Depression era was for working people to move to the countryside and become self-sufficient farmers. In the Fall of 1932, Joseph Cohen announced his intention to organize a large scale cooperative agricultural colony. While Graham's exhortations for workers to fan out to the countryside and raise their own food carried the mark of his individualism, Cohen's plan was from the beginning explicitly collectivist. Cohen had been a founding member of the Stelton Colony and had lived there with his wife, Sophie, until he was called to take over editorship of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* in 1923. Cohen was disappointed that both the Stelton and Mohegan colonies were comprised of individually owned plots of land and that their residents did not provide for themselves in some form of cooperatively owned and managed enterprise. A self-sustaining and truly collective community, he hoped, could avoid many of the conflicts and tensions that had marred the anarchist living experiments of the previous 17 years. After gathering a small group of friends supportive of the idea, he outlined the features of his plan in a prospectus published in the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* and other radical and Yiddish-language periodicals. Cohen imagined purchasing a farm of at least 1,000 acres on which approximately 150 families would live. He wrote:

The land, the means of production and the things that are in common use must belong to the community as a whole; all the members must be provided for by the community, in accordance with its ability, with the necessities of daily life; the individual should own only objects of

personal use (clothes, furniture, books, works of art) and share of the common income.<sup>49</sup>

Cohen hoped to attract teachers, cooks, and skilled tradesmen in addition to those willing to try their hand at farming so that the community could provide for its own needs with minimal hired help. Members were “to live together as one large family, with a single common kitchen and dining room, carried on in the manner of a well-regulated restaurant.” The community, as he imagined it, would include “recreation rooms, libraries, gymnasium, theatre and instruction facilities,” as well as “sleeping quarters, with modern conveniences” prepared before the colonists arrived. Each year members would share equitably all profits made on the farm after reserving funds for the improvement of the community and its farming equipment. To participate in this exciting experiment, individuals and families were instructed to apply to an admissions committee and pledge a \$1000 dollar investment.

With nearly one third of the U.S. population out of work, interest in the project grew rapidly. Cohen tendered his resignation at the FAS and began travelling to major cities to drum up prospective colonists and monetary support. In April, one of Cohen’s initial collaborators, a Detroit-based anarchist named Yoine, urgently reported that he had discovered a 10,000 acre farm, replete with buildings, equipment, and livestock, selling for the low price of \$100,000. Excited by the prospects, the planning committee moved quickly, reducing the investment cost to \$500 in order to

---

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Cohen, “Project for a Collectivist Co-operative Colony” reprinted in Joseph Cohen, *In Quest of Heaven: The Story of the Sunrise Co-operative Farm Community* (New York: Factory School, 2008 [1957]).

rapidly draw in enough participants to cover a down-payment on the farm. Recruits were primarily Jewish and drawn from the ranks of organized labor, the Arbeiter Ring, and other progressive institutions. They were not all anarchists, but learning from prior experiments, Communists Party members were barred from joining the new colony.

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the Sunrise Co-operative Farm Community was born, with approximately 40 families, primarily Jewish and nearly all life-long city dwellers, taking over a working farm mid-season. The theatre, gymnasium, and library originally envisioned were nowhere in site, nor were prepared sleeping quarters. The colonists crowded into a cramped rooming house built for migratory laborers until the farm's former management and laborers decamped from the few existing houses and a set of small wooden shanties that dotted the massive property. They did, however, establish a rustic kitchen and dining room in which they shared meals together. Despite their inexperience, the inspired crew managed to bring in a crop of peppermint, sugar-beets, and grains worth nearly \$50,000 during its first season under the guidance of a few hired advisors. Visitors from Detroit and further afield flocked to the land throughout the summer, adding to both the excitement and chaos of the venture. New members continued to arrive throughout the Fall and then again the following spring, bringing the population in May of 1934 150 adults and 56 children, as well as a couple dozen visitors volunteering their labor at any given time.<sup>50</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Cohen, *In Quest*, 100.



**Figure 8:** The author in front of a barn used by the Sunrise Colony. This is the last remaining structure from the period. Alecia, Michigan, 2009. Photo: Julie Herrada.

Despite its promising beginnings, however, difficulties and conflicts arose quickly at Sunrise, dooming it after only four years. Promotional meetings for the colony had been conducted in Yiddish and a significant number of the residents had assumed the colony would function with Yiddish as its primary language, as a means of retaining Jewish identity. Other members, including Cohen, argued that the colony had “several” non-Jewish members and was home to dozens of children who spoke

little Yiddish, having grown up speaking English. Though the membership agreed to conduct meetings and keep records in English, with language choice a personal matter at other times, the debate remained an open sore.<sup>51</sup> Sunrise was managed during its first summer by a temporary committee, but after the first harvest the group set about establishing its permanent structure. In the process disagreements welled up over how large of a “Board of Management” should be established, and whether colonists should be required to demonstrate any specific qualifications to stand for election to that board. Factions grew and hardened, one led by Cohen and supported, in his words, “by the majority of the Anarchists and also by some non-partisan members” and another “led by S., a dissident Anarchist, and supported by the Yiddishists and all those who had any real or imaginary grievance against the administration.”<sup>52</sup> The colonists eventually elected a large Board with members from both factions. However, acrimony persisted, and after six weeks the board resigned, recognizing it was unable to settle the many real problems of the community. An emergency committee was elected to replace the failed board, but yearly elections remained divisive. Sunrise members also struggled with how to fairly distribute the insufficient housing available to them and divvy up the abundant amounts of work required to make the farm profitable.

Acts of nature also created unanticipated set-backs for Sunrise members. The colony’s second season was marred by a severe drought that severely reduced

---

<sup>51</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 435.

<sup>52</sup> Cohen, *In Quest*, 89.

expected income. The next summer the farm faced the opposite problem: heavy rains which flooded the low-lying land. The spring rain was followed by an invasion of “army worms,” or crop-eating caterpillars.

All told, Sunrise was never able to gross much more than \$50,000 a year, the primary source of income for an average of 200 people living there at a given time. As the economy began to improve after 1936, a steady stream of abandoned the farm to return to wage labor and the city life with which they were more familiar. Faced with financial disaster, the remaining colonists decided to seek a federal loan under the auspices of a New Deal agricultural program, in spite of their anarchist opposition to government. The loan process bogged down in a bureaucratic morass. By the time it was approved so many financial problems and personal conflicts had accrued that the colonists agreed, instead, to sell their entire operation to the government as a means of financially extricating themselves from the venture. A few dozen die-hards, including Cohen, relocated to what they hoped would be a more hospitable tract of land in Virginia in 1937, but this venture also collapsed due to factional disputes within a year.<sup>53</sup>

The Sunrise Colony was one of the most auspicious projects anarchists in the United States embarked on in the period after the First World War. Had it been more successful, it would have served as a model of the anarchist strategy of building independent institutions that modeled new and desirable social relationships, in order

---

<sup>53</sup> Cohen, *In Quest*, 99, 109-110, 120, 196.

to meet the immediate needs of participants and inspire imitation by others. Its failure, instead, hurt the already weak anarchist movement in a variety of ways. First, anarchists who chose not to participate in the colony complained, with good reason, that it drew hundreds of dedicated activists away from the cities at just the moment when workers' struggles were growing rapidly and had the greatest chance of making a significant impact. Secondly, the Sunrise experiment caused great personal animosity within the community of Jewish anarchists, as each faction at the farm sought support amongst friends and comrades in the cities they came from. Finally, the realities of living communally on a limited budget of worker self-management challenged many participants' convictions about the ease and desirability of enacting, on a mass scale, the anarchist social order that had, until then, existed more as an ideal than a daily practice structuring their lives.

Though opposition to the Sunrise Colony arose from many quarters, one of the strongest voices against anarchist colony-building, in general, came from the New York City-based Vanguard Group, formed in 1934. The critiques of anarchist colonies forwarded by Vanguard were not wholly theoretical—two of the group's most active and outspoken participants had considerable personal experience living in the Stelton Colony.

### **Abe Bluestein and Sam Dolgoff**

As Marcus Graham was tilling his plot at Stelton in the early 1920s, his young neighbor Abe Bluestein was enjoying the benefits of the “modern” education provided

by the colony's Modern School. Bluestein was the son of anarchist garment workers who had been active members of the Radical Library in Philadelphia. In 1917, the family moved to Stelton. Abe's mother held a job in a garment shop in New Brunswick, to which she commuted daily.<sup>54</sup> His father, Mendel, also known as "Max" worked as a dressmaker and became a leader of the New York City Dressmaker's local of the ILGWU. As we saw in Chapter 2, Max was a prominent member of the anarchist faction during the "civil war" between the union's Communists and social democrats in the 1920s. In the 1930s he became a general organizer for the union.<sup>55</sup>

While the Modern School had a remarkable record of turning out creative and intelligent students who did well in their later educational efforts, it did not produce many young people eager to become active participants in the anarchist movement. Bluestein was perhaps the most remarkable exception to this trend. As a young man he engaged in long discussions about politics with his father. "Our house was filled with anarchist literature," Bluestein recalled, "and Kropotkin's works...made the strongest impression on me. Thus all three sources—my father, the Modern School, and Kropotkin's writings—combined to shape my anarchist upbringing."<sup>56</sup> If his surroundings made an impression on Abe, the young man in turn impressed the community. Morris Greenshner, an anarchist from Russia, remembered that "In

---

<sup>54</sup> Abe Bluestein Oral History, B-1, Abe Bluestein Papers, LC.

<sup>55</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, H-30 to H-31.

<sup>56</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 436.

Stelton, they all thought that young Abe Bluestein would become a second Bakunin.”<sup>57</sup>

When Bluestein left Stelton in 1925 he remained committed to anarchist ideals, and much of his social life revolved around the anarchist community’s social calendar. After attending junior and senior high school in New Brunswick, the family moved to Coney Island and Abe enrolled at Brooklyn College. When the family moved to the Amalgamated Co-ops in the Bronx, Abe transferred to City College. He met his future wife at a dance thrown by the Modern School Association in the early 1930s. As a fundraiser, the Modern School held a costume ball at a large hall in Manhattan every year. Bluestein remembers, “The dance was a popular social activity and the Webster Manor was crowded every year to the gills. There was hardly room to dance. All you could do was stand around with your partner.”<sup>58</sup> There, he met Selma Cohen, the daughter of a progressive school teacher and a doctor who was a follower of the Socialist Labor Party leader Daniel DeLeon.

In the 1930s City College was notorious for attracting a student body comprised in large part of working class students who were the first members of their families to attend college. These budding working class intellectuals were attracted to Left politics of every hue, and debated one another vociferously day after day in the

---

<sup>57</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 380.

<sup>58</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, H-1.

college's cafeteria.<sup>59</sup> When he arrived in 1932, Abe gathered a small anarchist contingent. As he later recalled,

The Depression was on. The radical movement was more vigorous than it had been earlier and would be later. The socialists had a student organization with several hundred students and the Communists had an organization with several hundred students and the Anarchists had four students. We would have lots of stimulating discussions and arguments.<sup>60</sup>

The City College anarchists attempted to organize a student strike by themselves—against what, precisely, is not clear—but found their numbers inadequate. “When classes began, there were only four of us out on campus, at the flagpole,” Bluestein admitted. Despite their significant differences, the anarchists decided to collaborate with the student socialists and Communists on anti-militarist activities. Bluestein remembered, “We had a very active anti-ROTC activity going on. We would have student meetings of 1000 people out on the campus.” At such meetings the anarchists were assigned the task of preventing heckling by members of a Catholic student group. They formed squads of six people who would surround individuals disrupting the meetings and threaten to forcefully eject them if they persisted.<sup>61</sup>

Fortunately, the small group at City College was not Bluestein's primary vehicle for reviving the fortunes of the anarchist movement; in 1932 he co-founded the

---

<sup>59</sup> Robert Cohen, *When the Old Left was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>60</sup> Bluestein Oral History, B-12 to B-15.

<sup>61</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, B-12 to B-15.

Vanguard Group, which would become the leading English-language voice of anarcho-syndicalism in the interwar period. Vanguard began as a circle of a half-dozen anarchists in their twenties and early thirties who met under the auspices of the Road to Freedom Group and through their parents' involvement in New York's Jewish anarchist milieu. The political direction of the group was shaped primarily by Abe Bluestein and his friend Sam Dolgoff, working under the tutelage of an older activist, Mark Schmidt.

Sam Dolgoff was born in Russia in 1902 and immigrated with his family to New York's Lower East Side at the age of three or four. After completing elementary school, he began to work full time as a factory hand to supplement the income his father made as a house painter. Dolgoff joined the Young People's Socialist League at age 15, but was expelled a few years later when he decided that participating in electoral politics was actually detrimental to the workers movement. Dolgoff joined the Road to Freedom Group when it was formed, but spent much of the 1920s as an itinerant laborer and soapbox orator for the Industrial Workers of the World. The most formative period in his life began in 1926 when Dolgoff moved to Chicago and joined the Free Society Group. There, Dolgoff met G.P. Maximoff, the man he considered to be his "mentor."<sup>62</sup>

As an anarchist trade unionist in Russia after the revolution, Maximoff was imprisoned for refusing to carry out Bolshevik edicts in the Red Army. In 1922 he

---

<sup>62</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 422.

was deported with other anarchist prisoners, including Mark Mratchny and Voline, to Germany.<sup>63</sup> In Berlin Maximoff supported the attempt of Peter Arshinov and other Russian exiles to create a “Platform” that would bring organizational and tactical coherence to the international anarchist movement.<sup>64</sup> In 1924 the Russian language Platformist newspaper *Dyelo Truda* (Labor’s Cause) was suppressed in Paris. Maximoff and his wife Olga reestablished it in Chicago, where they had secretly emigrated.<sup>65</sup> Dolgoff remembers that when he arrived in Chicago, “Maximoff took me in hand. He taught me about Bakunin and about anarcho-syndicalism.”<sup>66</sup> Dolgoff was impressed with the older man’s perspective on the anarchist tradition. “For Maximoff, anarchism was not only a standard of personal conduct ([though] he always stressed its importance). Anarchism is a social movement—a movement of the people....He insisted that we must work out a constructive, realistic approach to the problems of the Social Revolution and relate anarchism to the socio-economic problems of our complex society.”<sup>67</sup>

In 1930, Dolgoff met and fell in love with Esther Miller, a Russian immigrant three years his junior and a member of the Cleveland, Ohio, Anarchist Forum. The couple moved to the Stelton Colony and gave birth to a son the next year. Back on the East Coast, Dolgoff began contributing articles to *The Road to Freedom*, but was

---

<sup>63</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Cambridge: Refract, 1986), 43-49.

<sup>64</sup> Skirda, *Facing the Enemy* 121-143.

<sup>65</sup> Skirda, *Facing the Enemy*, 140; Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 47.

<sup>66</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 422.

<sup>67</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 47.

dissatisfied with the paper and its editorial group. Dolgoff found that Bluestein and other young anarchists were also frustrated with the inconsistency of the politics espoused in the paper and with self-limiting aspects of the way the group functioned. He remembered, “In the Road to Freedom Group as well as in many anarchist and other groups, sectarianism and petty personal quarrels broke up the groups, making any concerted action impossible. There were no qualifications for membership. People whom we did not know, anyone who happened to be passing through, participated in group affairs.” The Road to Freedom Group was frequently paralyzed by disagreements over how to structure the organization to ensure work was completed efficiently. In Dolgoff’s opinion, “There was practically no coordination. The extreme ‘individualists’ who, in the pungent phrase of Luigi Fabbri, ‘idealized the most anti-social forms of individual rebellion’ were against everything. Even a temporary committee of two or three comrades was denounced as a ‘bureaucracy.’”<sup>68</sup>

### **The Vanguard Group**

The Vanguard Group formed and launched its organ, *Vanguard: A Libertarian Communist Journal*, to counteract these tendencies. Clara Freidman, a founding member, explained, “Our purpose was to work out a positive program, to deal with anarchism in less amorphous and more concrete terms, to show it was a viable social philosophy.”<sup>69</sup> Dolgoff elaborated :

---

<sup>68</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 10.

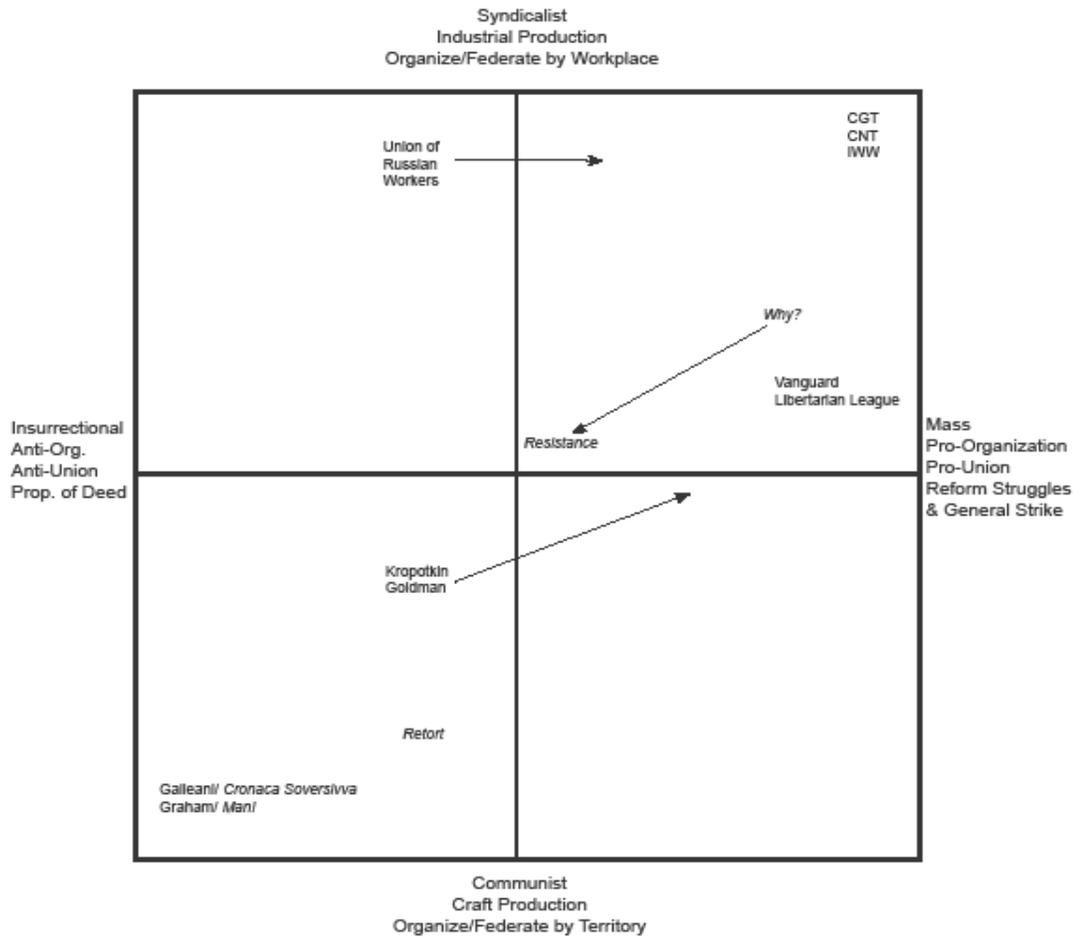
<sup>69</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 448.

We wanted a paper which would appeal to people who have a modicum of common sense and who actually want to read an explanation of what's going on that will give a feasible and intelligible approach to the problem of socialism. To present the classic anarchism of Kropotkin and Bakunin, and to some extent Prodhoun, and the real anarchist movements that have roots among the people, among the masses and the labor movement, and that puts anarchism in the perspective as a part and parcel of the socialist movement. We considered ourselves to be the left wing of the socialist movement. We were *socialist* anarchists, we were not individualists, or all sorts of things. So we called ourselves an anarchist-communist journal to differentiate ourselves from the others.<sup>70</sup>

The Vanguard Group also included Dolgoff's wife, Esther, and his younger brother, Tommy. Bluestein's wife Selma, and his City College friends Sidney Soloman and Roman Weinrob participated in the founding meeting, which took place in the home of Clara Friedman. Friedman's father was an officer in the ILGWU and served, for a time, as secretary of the Jewish Anarchist Federation. Friedman served as the Vanguard Group's secretary, and, according to another member, "did fives times as

---

<sup>70</sup> Sam and Esther Dolgoff, interview, 1975, compact disc, LC.



Dual Axis Model of Comparing Mass vs. Insurrectionary and  
Syndicalist vs. Communist Anarchism

**Figure 9:** Dual Axis Model of Comparing Mass vs. Insurrectionary and Syndicalist vs. Communist Anarchism.

much work as anybody else: correspondence, selling papers, organizing meetings, debates, and lectures.”<sup>71</sup> Though the group was formed by the children of Jewish immigrants, it eventually attracted some members with different ethnic and racial backgrounds. Eddie Wong, according to Bluestein, was “an Anarchist from China. He had to escape from China because otherwise he would have been executed.”<sup>72</sup> In New York, Wong joined the Vanguard Group and translated works by Kropotkin into his native language. Together with Vanguard member Yat Tone and other Chinese anarchists, Wong established a cooperatively-owned Chinese restaurant located near Union Square that hosted fundraising dinners for the movement.<sup>73</sup> The Vanguard Group also claimed a few Italians, a handful of Irishmen, and a single African-American member, Glenn Carrington. Carrington, who was gay, worked as a parole officer, and occasionally wrote short articles for *Vanguard* on “the negro question” under the name George Creighton.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 450. Solomon later married Freidman, so his recollections may not be wholly unbiased. Nonetheless his comments indicate that although the group’s men did the preponderance of speaking and writing in the Vanguard Group, the unsung efforts of women were fundamental to keeping the Group’s projects operating smoothly.

<sup>72</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, K-5 to K-6.

<sup>73</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 424, 444

<sup>74</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 423-424, 450-451. Cf. George Creighton, “Self Determination for Black Belt,” *Vanguard*, April-May 1936, 12-14.

Abe Bluestein recalled, “We had one guiding teacher, you might say, who was older than us, a very intelligent, very well-read man.”<sup>75</sup> Mark Schmidt had lived in the United States for years, but had returned to Russia when the revolution broke out, only to sail west again after becoming disillusioned with the Bolshevik regime. Dolgoff acknowledged that Schmidt’s “erudition, his knowledge of anarchist ideas and history, his revolutionary experience, all helped to clarify and work out the orientation of Vanguard.”<sup>76</sup> Moreover, according to Bluestein, he “had great energy and drive and kept us together as a group more than we would have been if left to ourselves.” Schmidt, writing under the pen-name Senex, contributed some of the most original and sharply argued articles that *Vanguard* printed. However, some of his personal traits also proved to be liabilities for the organization. Louis Slater remembered, “When someone made a mistake, he laughed mockingly.”<sup>77</sup> Clara Freidman (Soloman) likewise found him “ungeblozn [puffed up], to use a Yiddish expression, unapproachable.” She recalled that “he would work on one person at a time and gain control of them...He took a dislike to certain people, and he had contempt for women, whom he considered inferior.”<sup>78</sup>

The principle work of the group was the publication of *Vanguard: An Anarchist Communist Journal*, which it issued monthly when funds allowed. The paper reached a peak circulation of 3,000 to 4,000 subscribers, many of them abroad.

---

<sup>75</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, C-5.

<sup>76</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 444.

<sup>78</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 448.

Dolgoff recalled that it maintained “a good circulation and a good reputation. We had a very good staff of foreign correspondents.”<sup>79</sup> Indeed, the journal carried regular contributions from the likes of Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, the German anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker, and officers of the French and Spanish syndicalist labor federations, among others. *Vanguard* was more of a theoretical journal than newspapers like *The Road to Freedom* or *Man!*; while *Man!* advocated a “planless anarchism” the Vanguard Group launched its publication with a vision of anarchist-communism so detailed it spanned three issues.

Vanguard believed in organizing working people to struggle for immediate demands in the short term and to organize a general strike or insurrection capable of instituting a self-managed communist society in the future. According to Sidney Soloman, “In Vanguard we made no hard and fast distinction between anarchist-communism and anarcho-syndicalism, but we were not anarchist-individualists.”<sup>80</sup> Like Kropotkin, the group desired a society that provided for each according to their needs, instead of according to their labor input. However, Vanguard believed, alongside figures like Rudolf Rocker and G.P. Maximoff, that the surest route to such a end goal under contemporary conditions was the via the creation of powerful, revolutionary labor unions. While *Man!* portrayed labor unions as a means of containing working people’s spontaneous rebellions, Vanguard saw radical unions as the primary instruments to initiate a self-managed industrial order. *Vanguard*

---

<sup>79</sup> Sam and Esther Dolgoff, interview, 1975, compact disc, LC.

<sup>80</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 451.

distinguished itself clearly, then, from avowedly individualist anarchists who insisted on the right to private property, as well as those that sought to straddle or synthesize individualist and socialist perspectives. While this established a clarity of vision, the editors' interpretation of what issues smacked of individualism left the contents narrowly focused: anything "bohemian," such as consideration of modern art, or the promotion of progressive gender roles, was out.

The editors of *Vanguard* insisted on presenting a more clearly defined vision for how to create change than their counterparts at *Road to Freedom* or *Man!*. To be effective, they believed, members of anarchist groups must go beyond "vague adherence to elementary generalities" and share a significant degree of political unity. "The members of such a group must agree upon the general tenets of its anarchist philosophy as well as upon its concrete form of expression in the field of social action; upon the general tactical line coming as the crystallized experience of the anarchist movement as a whole, as well as upon the local strategy, evolved in accordance with the specific needs of each and every place and historical moment."<sup>81</sup>

Despite its outspoken intention to organize and provide leadership in the movement, the group was conscious that taking the name "Vanguard" would be contentious, especially during a period when Communists were so intent on claiming that mantle. Demonstrating a clear grasp of Marxist philosophy, the group explained:

We want to revive here, in America, the great anarchist idea of a revolutionary Vanguard, the minority in the great mass struggles of

---

<sup>81</sup> "A Declaration of Policy," *Vanguard*, April 1932, 1-4.

today and the near future. The idea of an active revolutionary Vanguard is not a specifically communist idea. The communists distorted it, degraded it to the level of a hierarchical apparatus. We anarchists also believe in the idea of a revolutionary Vanguard, but we do not claim any divine rights. We do not claim to be the only true mouthpiece of the dialectical process of history, or the vicarious representatives of the will of the proletariat.<sup>82</sup>

Vanguard admitted it did not yet have a fully coherent program to present, but it did not dismiss questions of vision and strategy as unimportant or an imposition on future generations. Rather, contributors sought to chip away at hard questions in a practical manner. For example, group members dedicated a series of articles to theorizing an anarchist “transition program”—a concept likely to reek of Bolshevism to many of their contemporaries. The group also critiqued the idea of building anarchist colonies as a sufficient means of making change, and blasted anarchists content to spend their life conducting such “experiments.” Anonymous contributor wrote:

An experiment...cannot be indefinitely pursued, without taking stock of all previous failures and without introducing a certain variant in each and every attempt...The history of such attempts, for almost a century, to solve the social problem via colony building has clearly shown the futility of such a method. To keep on repeating the same attempts, without an intelligent appraisal of all the numerous failures in the past is not to uphold the right to experiment, but to insist upon one's right to escape from the hard facts of social struggle into the world of wishful belief.<sup>83</sup>

Against such strategic complaisance, *Vanguard* advocated a hard-nosed anarcho-syndicalist approach and asserted the need for wide scale organizing. As mostly

---

<sup>82</sup> “A Declaration of Policy,” *Vanguard*, April 1932, 2-3.

<sup>83</sup> “From Our Mailbag,” *Vanguard*, January-February 1936, 23.

second generation immigrants, who grew up speaking English and attending public school in the United States, the Vanguard Group presented a budding understanding of the toll the profound shift in the population of the United States, following the restrictive immigration laws of 1924, was taking on the anarchist movement. They declared themselves a “youth group,” not because they restricted membership based on age, but because they believed that their was a strategic necessity for the movement to focus on bringing young people into the fold.

We are of the opinion that the anarchist movement of America has woefully neglected the elementary task of building up a youth movement. Cooped up within the confines of little national colonies, broken up and fragmented into water-tight compartments of national movements, it never rose to the realization of the urgency of the youth movement. It could not think in terms of American life, its future and the place of the anarchist movement in it.<sup>84</sup>

For all its intention to develop an anarchism relevant to daily lives of Americans living outside of European immigrant enclaves, however, the group devoted increasing amounts of space to the consideration of events transpiring in Europe. This is not entirely surprising, given the international character of the economic depression and, especially, the spread of fascism and the deepening hold of Stalinism affecting Europe and the Soviet Union. *Vanguard* covered all these developments from an anti-authoritarian perspective. However, the editors also dedicated hundreds of column inches each year to the activities of anarchists

---

<sup>84</sup> “A Declaration of Policy,” *Vanguard*, April 1932, 3.

syndicalist unions in France, Spain, and elsewhere in Europe, even finding hope at one point in the burgeoning Bulgarian movement.

The Vanguard Group maintained a hall in the vicinity of Union Square. It had its own study and discussion circles, debated other New York City-based young left groups, and held entertainment events as fundraisers. Members took short trips throughout the Northeast seeking to recruit new members and presenting lectures on anarchism to college students. Bluestein recalled, “In addition to our magazine, we conducted forums and lectures and made soapbox speeches on street corners, getting into fights with the Communists all the time, protected by Wobblies with iron pipes wrapped with handkerchiefs.”<sup>85</sup> Vanguard sought to develop a network of young anarchist groups around the country as a contribution to a broader resurgence, but was generally unsuccessful in launching groups with much staying power outside of the New York region.

In 1933 Rudolf Rocker was forced to flee Germany under threat from the Nazis. Other anarchists residing there also left abruptly upon Hitler’s rise to power. Mollie Steimer and her partner Senya Fleshin relocated to Paris. Rocker emigrated to the United States and settled at the Mohegan Colony. The Vanguard Group was honored to host a lecture for him in New York—Rocker’s first public presentation in English—and to help him arrange a speaking tour to alert American workers to the dangers of Nazism. The Vanguard Group also began developing a close relationship

---

<sup>85</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 438.

with the legendary Italian anarchist, labor organizer, and anti-facist, Carlo Tresca, when it rented space in the same building as the offices of his newspaper, *Il Martello*. (The IWW also maintained an office in the building, 94 Fifth Avenue.) When the Vanguard Group was unable to continue funding publication of its periodical in 1934, Tresca offered the group one page in each issue of his Italian language newspaper, *Il Martello* (*The Hammer*). Vanguard provided content for this English language page until it was able to secure enough funds to return to printing an entire journal in March of 1935.<sup>86</sup>

Vanguard members, most notably Roman Weinrebe, contributed significant amounts of time to the legal defense of anti-fascist militants engaged in physical confrontations with Italian American fascists.<sup>87</sup> This partnership with Tresca ensured that members of *Vanguard* would be treated with hostility by the Italian anarchists grouped around *L'Adunata dei Refretari* and *Man!*.

Even though the Vanguard Group saw itself as a youth organization, in 1933 it established the Rebel Youth, a circle of anarchists “even younger” than the membership of Vanguard itself, sometimes also referred to as the “Vanguard Juniors.” Members of Vanguard helped Rebel Youth establish study groups and lectured to them on anarchism and contemporary events. Initiated in 1932 by Irving Sterling, the members of Rebel Youth were junior and senior high school students, many the children of anarchists and other radicals. Sterling, a high school student in

---

<sup>86</sup> “Why This Magazine?” *Vanguard*, March 1935, 1; Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 31.

<sup>87</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 450.

Brownsville, Brooklyn, had been raised in the anarchist movement. He grew up attending *Freie Arbeiter Shtime* dinners and participating in May Day parades. Among approximately twenty other members, the group also included David Koven, who would help lead anarchism in new directions during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>88</sup>

A second circle of Vanguard Juniors developed in the Bronx at about the same time. Audrey Goodfriend, a daughter of Jewish anarchists active in *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* circles, launched the Young Eagles with three friends when she was fourteen. Soon Abe Bluestein, who lived in a nearby housing co-op, began a Saturday morning study group with the Young Eagles which eventually attracted other neighborhood high school radicals, such as David Thoreau Wieck. The Young Eagles eventually became incorporated into the Vanguard network. Goodfriend remembers, “We would read [Berkman’s] *The ABC of Anarchism*; we would read an article from the *Vanguard* and discuss. And we read some Kropotkin or talked about Kropotkin.”<sup>89</sup> Rebel Youth organized fundraisers and social events with the Vanguard Group proper. The February 1933 issue of the journal, for example, advertised a “Dance and Entertainment” in which Rebel Youth was to present two one-act plays and an interpretive dance. Eventually some of the members joined the Vanguard Seniors, while others continued to attend the group’s events and operate on the periphery.

The creation of the Vanguard Junior groups were likely Vanguard’s most successful organizing effort. In principle, the the group maintained a commitment to

---

<sup>88</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 457-8.

<sup>89</sup> Audrey Goodfriend, interview with author, November 10, 2008.

organizing on two fronts simultaneously. It believed, first, in building the power of the labor movement by organizing all working people into radical industrial unions. Secondly it sought to expand the ranks of the anarchist movement itself, so that anarchists might intervene more effectively in all the progressive mass movements of the day. However, the group made certain decisions that stymied that commitment to organizing in practice.

In 1933 the new group was handed an opportunity to take part in a campaign to increase the number of New York City garment workers represented by the ILGWU. After the divisive “war” between Communists and socialists in the mid-1920s, the union had begun to fall under the influence of organized crime. In 1933, David Dubinsky, the union’s president, launched an effort reorganize the union “on a new, clean basis” while revitalizing it through a massive membership drive. Recognizing its core of organizers to be insufficient for the task, the union’s leaders requested the assistance of five leftist youth organizations from the city. The Young People’s Socialist League (youth group of the Socialist Party), the League for Industrial Democracy (another social democratic organization), The Young Circle League, the Youth Section of the Communist Opposition (former Communist Party leader Jay Lovestone’s organization), and the Vanguard Group were invited to a joint meeting in February. The youth groups of the Communist Party and the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party were not invited. Dubinsky and his colleagues appealed to the

assembled radical youth to encourage the members of their respective organizations to serve as volunteer organizers in the campaign.

The next issue of *Vanguard* carried a report about the meeting signed S. Morrison, the pen name of Sidney Soloman:

At the general conference on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, all the participating groups, except the Vanguard, pledged their support in the campaign, in strikes, in picketing, etc. Their attitude was apparently one of complete acceptance of the A.F. of L. principles and tactics... The Vanguard Group, however, was of the opinion that an unqualified acceptance of that which is handed down by the A.F. of L. would have resulted in an utter waste of its efforts, and the assistance in the continuation of the same useless and noxious work of organizing limited, ineffective, politically controlled craft unions.

The Vanguard members present declared their approval of the idea of the organizing drive in principle. However, they demanded that the ILGWU leadership first create a document committing the union to “full worker’s democracy within the union,” total rejection of using gangsters, “complete dissociation from any political clique,” commitment to organize on industrial rather than craft lines, and a commitment to revolutionary anti-capitalist goals. Not surprisingly the union leaders at the table did not immediately adopt the Vanguard Group’s resolution, but agreed to give it “careful consideration.” The report ended with a note of confidence that the issues members raised would be further debated at “subsequent discussion conferences,” and would eventually steer the campaign in a more revolutionary direction.<sup>90</sup> Apparently, however, no further conferences were held.

---

<sup>90</sup> S. Morrison, “The I.L.G.W.U Calls Upon Youth,” *Vanguard*, February 1933, 8-11.

Five years later, during an uptick in support for anarchism occasioned by the Spanish Civil War, the Vanguard Group held a meeting to strategize about expanding its own ranks. The assembled comrades agreed that it was unwise to undertake “practical work” until they had a larger membership and more resources at their disposal. Therefore priority was placed on increasing the combined membership of the groups to at least one hundred members in the coming months. The gathered comrades agreed that “Our efforts must be directed toward, mainly though not exclusively, those elements who are already sufficiently class-conscious. We do not have the facilities at present to undertake mass propaganda or mass educational work among new-comers to the revolutionary arena.” Instead, they decided that efforts should be aimed at “the many sincere and class-conscious revolutionists who are today disillusioned with the Marxist movements and who have libertarian tendencies.”<sup>91</sup> The Vanguard Group, then, adopted a strategy of increasing its membership by winning over members and sympathizers of other radical tendencies, by promoting its literature, hosting public events, and organizing study groups. The members believed, to paraphrase Proudhon, membership was the mother, not the daughter, of political engagement.

Reflecting back on his experiences in Vanguard forty years later, Sidney Soloman—author of the report on the ILGWU meeting—considered this approach

---

<sup>91</sup> *Vanguard Group Internal Bulletin*, no. 1, Vertical File: Anarchism—Vanguard, LC.

Vanguard took to campaign work to be the group's biggest error. Soloman believed the group refrained from action largely because Mark Schmidt discouraged it.

We were vigorous and wanted to do things...[Schmidt] never actually did anything. More than that, he prevented us from doing anything. He felt we were theoretically unprepared for action, such as labor-organizing or forming cooperatives. He stopped us from organizing for the ILGWU...Schmidt got us to decline. The YPSL accepted and did useful work; hence their big reputation today. It was this failure to act that led to the collapse of our group and of the anarchist movement in New York.<sup>92</sup>

In retrospect, Vanguard members realized that they had put the horse before the cart in a number of respects. First, they assumed taking action required a perfected theoretical analysis, rather than recognizing that activity and theory were mutually constitutive parts of radical activity that must constantly inform one another in a circular process. Secondly, the young anarchists mistook their *goals* for preconditions of participation. Rather than viewing the opportunity to participate in the ILGWU organizing drive as an opportunity for anarchists to continue shaping the union in accordance with their vision, they rejected the opportunity as too compromising to their principles.

### **Spanish Revolution**

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, U.S. anarchists were not in a good position to aid their Iberian comrades. *Freedom* had ceased publication four years before, leaving *Man!* and *Vanguard* as the only English language anarchist periodicals published on a consistent basis. Newspapers in Yiddish, Spanish, Italian,

---

<sup>92</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 451.

and Russian still catered to immigrant anarchist circles that were aging and dwindling in size. Still, recognizing that the Spaniards represented the movement's greatest hope for founding a new society based on anti-authoritarian principles, U.S. anarchists mustered what energy they had to support the resistance to General Francisco Franco and the social revolution unfolding behind the front.

To this end, anarchists in New York City organized an ad hoc group, the United Libertarian Organizations (ULO), to publish an English language newspaper, *Spanish Revolution*, devoted to providing regular news and anarchist interpretations of the events as they unfolded across the Atlantic. The ULO consisted of representatives from each of the anarchist organizations still active in the city: *Cultura Proletaria*, producers of the Spanish language paper of the same name; the remnants of the former Road to Freedom Group, such as Havel, Kelly, Pesotta, and Van Valkenberg; the Libertarian Workers Group; the General Recruiting Union and the Marine Transport Workers of the IWW; Carlo Tresca's *Il Martello* group; the Jewish Anarchist Federatio; the Russian Toilers; the Spanish Youth Group; and the Vanguard Group. For a short time even the *L'Adunata* group participated. This collection of names gives us the best picture we have of the state of the anarchist movement in New York in 1936, almost certainly the metropolitan region with the largest anarchist movement at that time.

The ULO chose former *Road to Freedom* editor W.S. Van Valkenburgh to helm the paper and sent out a nation-wide appeal for funds. The paper was published

out of the office on West 17<sup>th</sup> Street used as a meeting space by the Vanguard Group. Over the next three years *Spanish Revolution* would appear almost weekly. The paper relied on press releases issued by the Confederacion Nacional Trabajador (CNT), the anarchist trade union, and the Federacion Anarquista Iberica (FAI), the organization of militants coordinating anarchist activity at the front.<sup>93</sup> Further reporting was provided by U.S. anarchists in Europe such as Emma Goldman. The paper's most direct and reliable source of information, however, was the Vanguard Group's Abe Bluestein.

In early 1937 Abe and Selma Bluestein determined that they would travel to Spain to provide assistance to the CNT. Abe Bluestein made contact with the Spanish anarchists via Mark Mrachney, the editor at that time of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*. Mrachney, a Russian Jew deported from the Soviet Union in 1922 alongside Maximoff, was personally acquainted with key players in the Spanish movement. Mrachney sent a letter to CNT chair Augustin Souchy, vouching for the Blusteins' commitment and abilities. Abe and Selma set sail for France in April of 1937 and entered Spain through a border checkpoint staffed by loyalists before making their way to Barcelona. They were welcomed at the CNT Casa de Trabajo (Worker's House) and given accommodations in an anarchist-controlled hotel nearby. Abe was immediately assigned to work as an English radio announcer for CNT radio—a position he had no prior experience with. In addition to his radio broadcasts, which listeners with short-wave radios throughout Europe tuned in to, Abe sent written

---

<sup>93</sup> On the FAI, see Stuart Christie, *We, the Anarchists! A Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) 1927-1937*, (Oakland and Edinburgh: AK Press, 2008).

dispatches in English and Yiddish to the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* and *Spanish Revolution*, as well as the latter's British equivalent, *Spain and the World*.<sup>94</sup>

Meanwhile, back in the United States, anarchists dedicated their energies to aiding the Spanish fighters. Beyond publishing and distributing *Spanish Revolution*, the ULO raised money and collected supplies to send overseas. They also held public meetings in their halls and on street corners, sometimes alone, other times in shaky coalitions with other sectors of the left. As the war started producing refugees, the CNT requested sympathizers to establish local chapters of a new organization, Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA), to provide regular assistance to libertarians and

---

<sup>94</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, C-10 to C-38; Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 439.



**Figure 10:** Promotional leaflet for United Libertarian Organizations event. Image courtesy of the John Nicholas Beffel Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

republicans escaping the violence and repression in Europe.<sup>95</sup> The Spanish anarchists of New York complied and established a hall that was used by anarchist organizations for decades to come.

Following the example of the ULO, solidarity committees formed in Philadelphia, Chicago, and Detroit. Detroit anarchists established the International Libertarian Committee Against Fascism in Spain at the end of July 1936. By August 1937, when the organization issued a financial statement for its first year's activities, it had raised \$8,702.97 and sent \$8,070.95 of that to the CNT-FAI. The remainder was used for expenses incurred hosting fund-raising "entertainments"—"Pic Nics, socials, dramas, etc."<sup>96</sup>

Likewise, the Free Society Group convened "a special meeting of all Chicago libertarians" to coordinate support for the Spanish anarchists. The group's secretary, Boris Yelensky, expressed pride in what his group had contributed to the effort:

With the help of subscription lists, raffle tickets for art albums sent to us from Spain, eye-arresting posters, and special bulletins about the Spanish Civil War, we not only raised substantial funds for our beleaguered comrades who were resisting Franco, but also spread a great deal of enlightenment about the issues in that bloody conflict. Too, we organized several highly effective protest meetings, and sponsored the presentation of a dramatic Spanish anti-Fascist film in a downtown theatre for a whole week. Despite bitter cold weather that week, and the hostility of the Catholic Church, we succeeded in

---

<sup>95</sup> Vanguard Group Internal Bulletin no. 1, 4.

<sup>96</sup> "Financial Report of International Libertarian Committee Against Fascism in Spain," Vertical File: Spain—Civil War—International Libertarian Committee Against Fascism in Spain, LC.

raising—through the foregoing affairs and the sale of literature—nearly \$9,000 for this cause.<sup>97</sup>

As the Communists in Spain turned their guns from the fascists to the anarchists, Trotskyists, and other left forces not under their control, members of the CP-USA began to clash openly with anarchists in the United States. In 1937 the ULO held street meetings where Van Valkenburgh and others addressed passerby about the situation in Spain from a small platform. In August of that year Communists disrupted one such meeting by heckling the speaker, pushing through the crowd, and upending the platform. With relatively few supporters on hand, the organizers felt unable to respond adequately to this provocation. The ULO issued an appeal for assistance:

Our STREET MEETINGS must be protected. In spite of, and because of the fascist tactics of Communist Party hoodlums in attempting to break up our street meetings, we have been gaining much sympathy and large audiences at our propaganda meetings. These meetings must therefore be continued and this can only be done if we have a large defense body to protect our meetings...ALL OUT FOR THE DEFENSE OF OUR RIGHTS AND THE RIGHTS OF OUR COMRADES IN SPAIN.<sup>98</sup>

Organizers did not immediately receive the support they felt they needed. Two weeks later, Van Valkenburgh issued personal appeals to editors of the various newspapers and circles, pleading for them to send men to guard the speakers.

---

<sup>97</sup> Boris Yelensky, “25 Years of ‘Free Society’ Activity in Chicago” in *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View*, eds. Free Society Group (Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951), 93.

<sup>98</sup> Form letter, August 19, 1937, Vertical File: Anarchism—United Libertarian Organizations, LC.

Eventually Tresca and others did send supporters. In a September 1937 letter to Maximilian Olay, a Spanish anarchist who provided translations for *Spanish Revolution*, Van Valkenburgh noted, “Our street meetings are keeping the local Stalinites standing on their hind legs. Each week more of the comrades come to protect the stand which they smashed on one occasion. The most they do now is call us liars, Fascists, Franco 5<sup>th</sup> Column men and so and so.” Still, the episode indicates the low capacity in which the anarchist movement was operating, even in this moment of crisis and excitement. An editorial in *Spanish Revolution* argued that the low level of agitational work “flows from the mistaken notion now held by many a sympathizer with the Spanish revolution, that the only way to discharge his duty toward the latter is to send some money to the anti-Fascist forces of Spain.”<sup>99</sup>

### **From Anarchists to Libertarian Socialists**

The exigencies of the Depression, the conflict in Spain, and the upswing in radical activity during the Popular Front period in the United States created contradictory tendencies for the anarchist movement. During the late 1930s, the morale of the U.S. movement fluctuated in rhythm with the fortunes of the anarchists of Spain. The achievements of the rebels and the depredations of the fascists prompted more interest and sympathy for anarchism than activists had seen in many years. At an August 1938 meeting, the Vanguard Group noted “the present

---

<sup>99</sup> “Why the ‘Spanish Revolution,’” *Spanish Revolution*, December 23, 1936.

reawakening within our own movement,” and “an influx of new members into our ranks.” Yet by the Spring of the following year it had disintegrated completely.

In late 1938, Vanguard split into two groups. Many members of the Vanguard Group dated one another. When couples split and then began dating other members of the group, jealousy and resentment flared.<sup>100</sup> Soloman notes that tensions also developed when the group’s “association with *Il Martello* was opposed by a few who preferred *L’Adunata*.”<sup>101</sup> Audrey Goodfriend, who came to Vanguard from the Bronx Vanguard Juniors, was likely one such member, as we will see in the next chapter. Finally, the younger members respect for Mark Schmidt began to fade by the late-1930s on grounds both personal and political. In addition to his manipulative behavior, Schmidt was drifting towards support for the Communist Party. He urged the Vanguard Group to join United Front organizations, which they refused to do.<sup>102</sup> The threat of a fascist victory in Europe eventually moved Schmidt fully into the Communist camp. Later, Schmidt explained, “Without the rapid industrialization of the thirties, and even without collectivization, Russia could not have defeated

---

<sup>100</sup> Clara Freedman left Lou Slater for Sidney Solomon. Then, when Slater began dating Elsie Milstein, Slater’s “own mentor,” Mark Schmidt, succeeded in winning Milstein away from him. Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 458. Schmidt launched personal attacks against Slater as part of his campaign to win Milstein’s affections. Sam Dolgoff later explained, “As far as I and the comrades were concerned, she had every right to live with whomever she pleased without interference. But Schmidt had no right whatever to try to drive this sincere comrade out of our movement by labeling him a scab without the slightest evidence to support his false charges.” Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 24.

<sup>101</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 451.

<sup>102</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 23-24.

fascism...It was Russia's struggle against Hitler and fascism that led me to support it."<sup>103</sup>

Abe and Selma Bluestein had returned to the United States in January. Sick of the petty quarrels, Abe and Lou Slater launched a new group with its own publication, a weekly newspaper called *Challenge*. Bluestein recalls, "The two papers didn't disagree or fight with each other, we were just running in different ways. The main difference was that we wanted to work with the unions, and appeal to the unions, whereas the *Vanguard* was a theoretical journal exclusively."<sup>104</sup> The Challenge Group sought to create an agitational weekly that saw union members as a potential base to recruit more active militants from. Although ostensibly the responsibility of a collective, responsibilities for editing the new paper quickly fell largely into Bluestein's hands. Working by day as a shipping clerk in the garment industry, and partially supported by Selma's job as a painter under the auspices of the Works Progress Administration, Abe worked into the night to turn out an edition of *Challenge* every week. The paper was focused, more than any other anarchist paper since World War I, on being relevant to left leaning working people. It was partially subsidized by locals of the ILGWU and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, which, even in 1938, retained a coterie anarchists in their ranks.<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>103</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 453.

<sup>104</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, C-5 to C-7.

<sup>105</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, H-8 to H-10, H-19, K-36.

The final issue of *Vanguard* was distributed in February 1939. Less than two months after the demise of *Vanguard*, *Challenge* also folded due to mounting debts with its printer. Always financially tenuous projects, contributions fell to almost nothing following the defeat of the Spanish anarchists. “The fascist victory disastrously undermined not only the morale of the readers but the morale of the members of the Vanguard Group itself,” Dolgoff admitted.<sup>106</sup> Despite the knowledge that the anarchist movement was an insignificant force in U.S. social life, members had managed to continue their work through a faith built on hopes for the movement abroad. The defeat of the Spanish anarchists by Franco and his fascist allies, then, dealt a lethal blow.

The declining morale amongst U.S. anarchists can also be glimpsed in a letter Agnes Inglis of the Labadie Collection penned to Marcus Graham, responding to a request for her participation in defense committee. Inglis wrote,

Its absurd advice I might give, and all wrong, but it does seem to me that the world today is so mixed up that I don't think so much can be expected in defense cases. Money is so very necessary and a solidarity that existed in 1917 but not now...I don't know just what should be done. But somehow organization work has been so overshadowed by defense that now defense has no backing, I sometimes think. I hope you will consider the situation and not get onto anymore trouble than you can help. Its no use being a martyr, and hoping for appreciation...I wouldn't have said that in 1917 when working night and day for Tom Mooney and the political prisoners! But today I do not think people want martyrs, they are all so floored on their own account and are up against it.

<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>106</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 21.

<sup>107</sup> Inglis to Graham, May 9, 1938, Agnes Inglis Papers, Box 9, LC.

With *Man!*, *Vanguard*, and *Challenge* all expiring in 1939, the country was left without a regularly published English-language anarchist newspaper on the cusp of the United States' entry into World War II. Foreign language speaking anarchist groups would continue to publish papers in Russian, Spanish, Yiddish, and Italian for years to come, but the public activity of the groups supporting these papers ground to a virtual halt during and after the war.

The previous fall, veteran anarchists had made a last ditch effort to become relevant, but it proved too little, too late. In September of 1938, East Coast anarchists called a conference at the Mohegan Colony in an attempt to gain their collective bearings in “a world half-mad and wholly chaotic.” At the conclusion of the conference, the “fifty-odd” participants established a new organization, the Libertarian Socialist League, elected Harry Kelly its “Temporary-Secretary,” and composed a three page statement of principles. The conference statement is perhaps the best indication of the collective sentiments of the U.S. anarchist movement as a whole in the late 1930s, save for the anti-organizationists who, unsurprisingly, did not participate.<sup>108</sup>

---

<sup>108</sup> The statement notes that, “Fifty-odd men and women participated [in the conference]. Their conclusions represent fairly accurately the libertarians of America even though they were not actually delegated by the groups they came from.” Libertarian Socialist League statement, Vertical File, Anarchism—Kelly, Harry, LC Although it is unclear who all attended, Harry Kelly noted that they were of “seven different nationalities and probably none of them had been in the movement less than ten and some as long as forty-five years.” Harry Kelly, “Ersatz Anarchists,” Folder: Kelly, Harry, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, LC.

Hoping to reverse their movement's fortunes, the assembled anarchists decided to begin describing themselves as "libertarian socialists" and to distance themselves from the term "anarchism." The Libertarian Socialist League (LSL) statement adopted a definition of "libertarian-socialism" that drew directly from classic definitions of anarchism used by Peter Kropotkin and Emma Goldman: "Libertarian-Socialism: The philosophy of a new social order based on liberty unrestricted by man-made law; the theory that all forms of government rest on violence, and are therefore wrong and harmful, as well as unnecessary." Despite the political continuities indicated in this definition, some anarchists saw the terminological shift as a betrayal.

In a letter to *Man!*, Hippolyte Havel denounced the decision of his comrades to avoid the term "anarchism." In a response, Harry Kelly explained the decision in the following manner:

Those who favored the change...felt that spreading the ideas of freedom was vastly more important than their personalities or even a name that happens to be one hundred years old...An honest, and, I hope, intelligent, appraisal of our movement for the past thirty or forty years suggests the following: The failure of the masses of all countries to accept our ideas and to help us spread them is due either to our methods of presenting them or [because] they are too far in advance of mankind to be understood or related to the life of the individual, especially as applied to the daily economic struggle. Those participating in the conference at Mohegan believed the trouble lies in our method of presentation and felt their was nothing cowardly, shameful, or inconsistent in adopting the name libertarian socialist instead of anarchist or anarchist-communist.

Kelly finished by noting, "A favorite expression of Havel is 'Anarchists are born!' That does not and never did suit me." If anarchism wasn't an instinct people

were born with, it was a set of values and ideas that had to be inculcated. For Kelly this meant it was time to “revalue our methods of propaganda in the hope that our ideas might be more widely accepted.”<sup>109</sup> Yet beyond the new moniker, bold departures in thinking and activity were not indicated by the LSL statement.

The LSL upheld the traditional anarchist belief that humans have the potential to become increasingly civilized through the use of reason. It retained the movement’s longstanding focus on economics, war, and the oppressiveness of government, while fully neglecting race, gender, and sexuality as aspects of inequality and domination. Disagreement about mutualism, communism, syndicalism remained unresolved, but given the movement’s deplorable conditions, delegates deemphasized their differences, agreeing each was “libertarian” and thus acceptable.

Yet the statement also indicated significant changes in the movement. Chastened by consistent failures, the signatories could no longer assume the inevitability of revolution nor blithely believe that social problems would work themselves easily once the state was dismantled. “We have no slogans to submit and no short cuts to Utopia to offer,” they acknowledged. Such uncertainty led to a shift in what tactics were emphasized. The LSL said nothing of propaganda of the deed,

---

<sup>109</sup> Harry Kelley, “Ersatz Anarchists.” The east coast anarchists evidently took this decision seriously, at least for a time. In 1942, Ammon Hennacy complained to Holley Cantine, “The New York Anarchists are mostly afraid to use the name and called themselves Libertarians. I wrote an article by request on “Why Anarchists Do Not Vote” They printed it but changed the word Anarchist to the word Libertarian without asking me. I refused to write for them anymore.” Hennacy to Cantine, August 6, 1942, Box 8, Dachine Rainer Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University.

accepted the importance of reform struggles, and suggested a strategic focus on education work and building cooperatives. It was conciliatory towards progressives and other sectors of the Left. The statement noted, “The attitude of libertarian socialists on the subject of cooperation with other groups of honest radicals and reformers in working for the release of political and labor prisoners, with peace societies and in trade unions is one of entire sympathy.”

The most notable aspect of all regarding the Libertarian Socialist League, however, is that it was a dead letter from the start. There is no indication that the organization engaged in public activity or even met again. Moreover, prominent figures in the movement, including the group’s own Temporary-Secretary, soon abandoned the LSL’s stated opposition to “all wars” and its pledge to resist conscription.

### **Taking Sides in World War II**

In 1939, Abe and Selma Bluestein returned to the Stelton Colony to give their newborn son a comfortable space to spend his first years, while they waited to assess the impact of the war. One effect was immediately clear: friends in Europe faced unremitting danger. In a series of letters, Mollie Steimer informed the Rockers, the Blusteins, and Rose Pesotta of her personal experience of fascism on the march. In May 1940, “women of different foreign nationalities,” including Steimer had been sent to “concentration camps” originally built to house refugees of the Spanish Civil War. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of June, Steimer wrote, her partner “Senya evacuated Paris together with

other friends. But no sooner did they reach their destination when the village and its entire neighborhood was terribly bombarded.” Unable to locate one another for days after Steimer was released from the camp, she and Senya miraculously crossed paths at the train station in Toulouse. Fortunately their friends in the United States were able to provide funds with which to escape to Mexico.<sup>110</sup>

The war was a profoundly confusing and dispiriting experience for Abe, as it was for most of the anarchists who remained active at its onset. “As antimilitarists we could not support the war,” he explained, “but we regarded Hitler and fascism as the greater danger.”<sup>111</sup> Rudolf Rocker, however, had determined that anarchists had no choice but to support a war against fascism. Having arrived at this conclusion, he embarked with his wife Millie on a nationwide speaking tour, determined to win anarchists over to his position. Due to his stature in the international movement, Rocker’s lectures swayed many U.S. anarchists to abandon their traditional anti-militarist position and support war against Germany. In a personal letter, Millie Rocker noted, “Rudolf’s lectures are very well attended and the people are this time more attentive than ever and were eager to hear our attitude to all the happenings during the past few months.”<sup>112</sup> Abe Bluestein later recalled the impact of Rocker’s lectures.

---

<sup>110</sup> Mollie Steimer to Millie and Rudolf Rocker, August 9, 1940, enclosed with letter from Milly Rocker to Abe Bluestein, Sep. 12, 1940, Box 1, Abe Bluestein Papers, LC.

<sup>111</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 439.

<sup>112</sup> Millie Rocker to Abe and Selma Bluestein, November 29, 1939, Box 1, Abe Bluestein Papers, LC.

Rocker had been fighting the Nazis all his life, ever since they had come up in 1923. Here he was now defending the idea of [anarchists] not opposing an imperialist war, and I remember him putting it this way: ‘We live in a house with many people who are not our friends, with whom we disagree and have always disagreed. I think of the British Empire, I think of the French government, I think of the American government. We have always opposed their polices and opposed their imperialism. I now see the Nazis across the table from us. And I see the Nazis as threatening our lives. And I therefore say to you that it is better to work with opponents whom we can criticize and live than with opponents who will kill us as soon as they can get their hands on us.’ He defended very strongly the idea that we have to support a war against Nazi Germany, and not oppose such a war, and we all accepted this.<sup>113</sup>

The shift in opinion was abrupt and often adamant. In a letter to his anarchist-pacifist friend, Ammon Hennacy, Harry Kelly stated, “I am unregenerate and pro-war for unlike you my anarchism is and has always been based on self-defense and I see no reason to commit suicide because of some Germans, Nazis or otherwise who prefer to commit murder rather than taking chances on their own lives or out and out barbarians like the professing Nazis.”<sup>114</sup> The Vanguard Group’s Irving Sterling joined the U.S. army to contribute directly to the defeat of fascism.<sup>115</sup> Still, it was not true that *all* the anarchists accepted Rocker’s support for the Allies. Paul Avrich has argued, “In 1939, while the Jewish anarchists overwhelmingly supported the war effort, most of the Italians and Spaniards remained true to their antimilitarist convictions, denouncing the war as an imperialist struggle for power and profit, with the workers serving as cannon fodder, so that it was absurd to favor either side against

---

<sup>113</sup> Bluestein, Oral History, H-15 to H-18.

<sup>114</sup> Harry Kelly to Ammon Hennacy, April 21, 1942, Ammon Hennacy Papers, LC.

<sup>115</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 459.

the other.”<sup>116</sup> Not surprisingly, given its affiliation with the Italian insurrectionists, *Man!* remained adamantly opposed to participation in the U.S. military until its demise. In 1935, Graham outlined the paper’s position regarding war.

In the economic and political system that the greatest part of the human race finds itself ruled by today the anarchist sees but a continuous ravaging war in so-called times of “peace,” that causes no less murder and crippling of humans than on the battle fields of the brazenly-open and well-prepared wars, engendered for perpetuating the very same system. With such a system, be it peace or war, on cannot, one should not compromise... We are then: against war just as much as against the so-called peace under the present system. We are tho at all times for the social revolution, which is the only force, able to wipe off from the face of this chaotic earth, the ignoble things of injustice called now peace or war.<sup>117</sup>

As in other matters, the insurrectionists refused to make strategic concessions based on the threats they faced at a given moment. At all times they were driven by a strict adherence to principle. As one anarchist coal miner put it, “Marcus Graham never vacillated from one side to another. He chose his road and stuck to it.”<sup>118</sup>

Already a tiny minority by 1939, the outbreak of the war further split and demoralized the remaining anarchists. This was literally the case in regards to the Stelton Colony. Although the majority of the remaining anarchist colonists sided with Rocker and supported the war effort in principle, the entry of the United States into the conflict had unanticipated consequences. In 1941 the federal government bought a large tract of land immediately adjacent to the colony and quickly erected Camp

---

<sup>116</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 417.

<sup>117</sup> Marcus Graham, “Our Position Toward War,” *Man!*, November-December 1935, 1.

<sup>118</sup> Guy Liberti quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 158.

Kilmer, an army base that at its peak housed 75,000 troops. A series of robberies and sexual assaults committed by soldiers, above and beyond the general martial atmosphere, prompted most of the remaining Stelton residents to relocate, often to retirements in warmer climates. There was a silver lining to the demise of the Stelton Colony. Many of the troops stationed at Camp Kilmer were African Americans who were subjected to considerable discrimination by many people living near the base. The anarchists moving out of Stelton were happy to sell their homes and land to black soldiers denied the opportunity to buy property in the surrounding towns. This led, over the course of the next decade, to the Stelton area becoming a thriving working-class African American community.<sup>119</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Throughout the decade of the 1930s, U.S. anarchists more clearly articulated their ideas in English than they had in the previous decade. However, the movement remained plagued by many of the same limitations it had suffered from since 1920. The safety of anarchists threatened with violence abroad—especially at the hands of fascists in Italy, Spain, and Germany—continued to absorb the attention and resources of U.S. anarchists. Stated most bluntly, the 1930s pitted a mass anarchism without organizers against an insurrectionary anarchism without insurgents. Though the former argued for the need to build durable organizations that could win improvements in the lives of working people, and the latter insisted on the

---

<sup>119</sup> Veysey, *Communal Experience*, 171-172; Avrich, *Modern School*, 349.

spontaneous character of revolt, neither tendency played a major role in the mass struggles that defined the decade. Despite the bitter polemics waged against one another, both traditions focused on producing newspapers, holding public lectures, and raising funds for the defense of endangered or imprisoned comrades.

The rise of the welfare state, the emergence of a reformist industrial unionism, and the harsh realities of World War II overwhelmed the theoretical apparatus classical anarchism had constructed. The defensive posture of the movement for more than two decades helps account for its theoretical stagnation in the years following World War I. The period just prior to that war had been one of intellectual excitement, generative debate, and new departures. In the interwar years, however, many of the movement's respected theorists were imprisoned, exiled to unstable living conditions, or killed. When they did have the opportunity to write, they tended to focus their efforts on exposés and critiques of other political systems, rather than developing their own. Accordingly, anarchist newspapers of the 1920s and 1930s retrenched on their analyses of gender, sexual, and racial oppression, as well as their engagement with emergent trends in philosophy and cultural production. Instead their pages were frequently filled with biographical sketches of 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist heroes alongside reprints of classic essays.

The critical and defensive character of anarchist thought during the interwar years is also evident in the major books published by anarchists. *The Bolshevik Myth*, *My Disillusionment with Russia*, and *The Guillotine at Work* all focused on exposing

Bolshevik repression. The work of Rudolf Rocker represents a partial exception. His short *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* systemized the syndicalist position for the first time in the English, though it was hastily penned in 1937 in response to a request from an English publisher sympathetic to the Spanish anarchists then under heavy fire from Franco's troops. Rocker's *Nationalism and Culture* contributed to anarchist theories of race, nation and religion in its critique of Nazi and Communist ideology, but was not read by U.S. anarchists until the 1940s.

Although they sharply disagreed on the means by which anarchists should oppose the fascist conquest of Europe, neither the mass nor the insurrectionist wing of the U.S. movement had a significant impact on the war or the dominant interpretations of its causes and significance. The war proved the last straw for veterans of anarchism's heyday before the First World War, weary from the previous twenty years of defeats. WWII also proved a turning point in the lives of the generation that had founded *Vanguard*. Few remained actively involved in political life after the war.

Within a few years, however, the anarchist movement reemerged in a new guise. When it did, some of the Vanguard Juniors who had been mentored by the syndicalists—but had developed a growing affinity for the insurrectionists—were leading the way.

## Chapter 4: ‘Daily Acts of Life’: Pacifism, Poetry, and the New Anarchism, 1940-1954

As the First had done two decades before, the Second World War dealt a blow to what remained of the U.S. anarchist movement that would change its face fundamentally and permanently. A variety of scholars have suggested, either by omission or commission, that the defeat of the Spanish anarchists and the entrance of the United States into WWII marked the end of the U.S. anarchist movement as such. Writing in 1979, for example, Terry Perlin noted, “The anarchist challenge to authority and the anarchist promise of freedom and peace did not die with [Alexander] Berkman. It resurfaced, in America and Europe, during the 1960s and early 1970s.”<sup>1</sup> By implication, no anarchist initiatives, to speak of, took place during the intervening decades. It is undeniable that U.S. anarchism was at a low point—perhaps the lowest since its inception—from the onset of World War II in 1939 until the mid-1960s, if judged by numbers of participants, organizations, and activities. Yet, this picture neglects the continuous existence of anarchist periodicals and groups across that twenty-five year period. Although anarchism was a tiny and marginal political current during the 1940s and 1950s, it was not at all static. Rather, anarchists spent these years developing new political analyses, strategies, and aesthetics which fundamentally shaped the forms anarchism took when it again gained wider currency in the late 1960s and the 1970s. Moreover, 1940s and 1950s anarchism influenced the

---

<sup>1</sup> Terry Perlin, ed., *Contemporary Anarchism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1979), no page.

civil rights movement, the 1960s counter-culture, the New Left, and the women's liberation movement in ways that historians have yet to fully understand or acknowledge.

As the last veterans of the 19<sup>th</sup> century movement passed away, and many of those active in the interwar years made their peace with New Deal liberalism, a new generation of anarchists looked to radical pacifism and the cultural avant-garde to renew and reinvent the libertarian socialist tradition in the early 1940s. During World War II anarchist draft resisters such as David Thoreau Wieck met and befriended progressive religious pacifists in conscientious objector camps and federal penitentiaries, where they collaboratively resisted racial segregation and other intolerable policies through non-compliance. Upon being released, pacifists who had embraced anarchism during the war—including David Dellinger and Bill Sutherland—pushed institutions such as the War Resisters League in a radical direction while collaborating with the “Christian anarchists” of the Catholic Worker movement. Anarchists on both coasts sought alternatives to the numbing effects of post-war culture by immersing themselves in avant-garde cultural productions, especially poetry, and by living collectively with like-minded individuals. Anarchism in the 1940s, then, revolved around a constellation of journals, pacifist organizations, literary haunts, and intentional communities. The publications and institutions anarchists created during this period provided a crucial seedbed for the emergence of the Beat Generation.

Throughout the decade, theorists drew on recent developments in social theory to broaden the anarchist critique of power beyond the movement's traditional focus on class oppression. From this milieu arose a conception of anarchism indebted to Henry David Thoreau and Leo Tolstoy that advocated individuals focus on living their own lives in a fashion that resembled their ideals as closely as possible. These "practical anarchists" sought to prefigure the world they hoped to live in rather than wait until after a revolution that now seemed impossibly far off.<sup>2</sup> It was this new style of anarchism—not the classic variety that obtained before the war—that would inform and inspire the movements of the 1960s. As anarchist ideas contributed to mid-century radical pacifism, the debates of the New York Intellectuals, and the nascent counter-culture, these influences, in turn, shifted anarchism toward a middle class constituency and promoted personal lifestyle change as a strategic priority.

### ***Why?***

During the 1930s, as we have seen, anarchism in the United States was comprised of two dominant tendencies—a syndicalist camp centered around the journals *Vanguard* and *Il Martello*, and an insurrectionist camp that produced *Man!*

---

<sup>2</sup> For the concept of "prefigurative politics" see Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*, (New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002).

Genealogy 2: Anarchism in the United States and Europe, 1940-2000

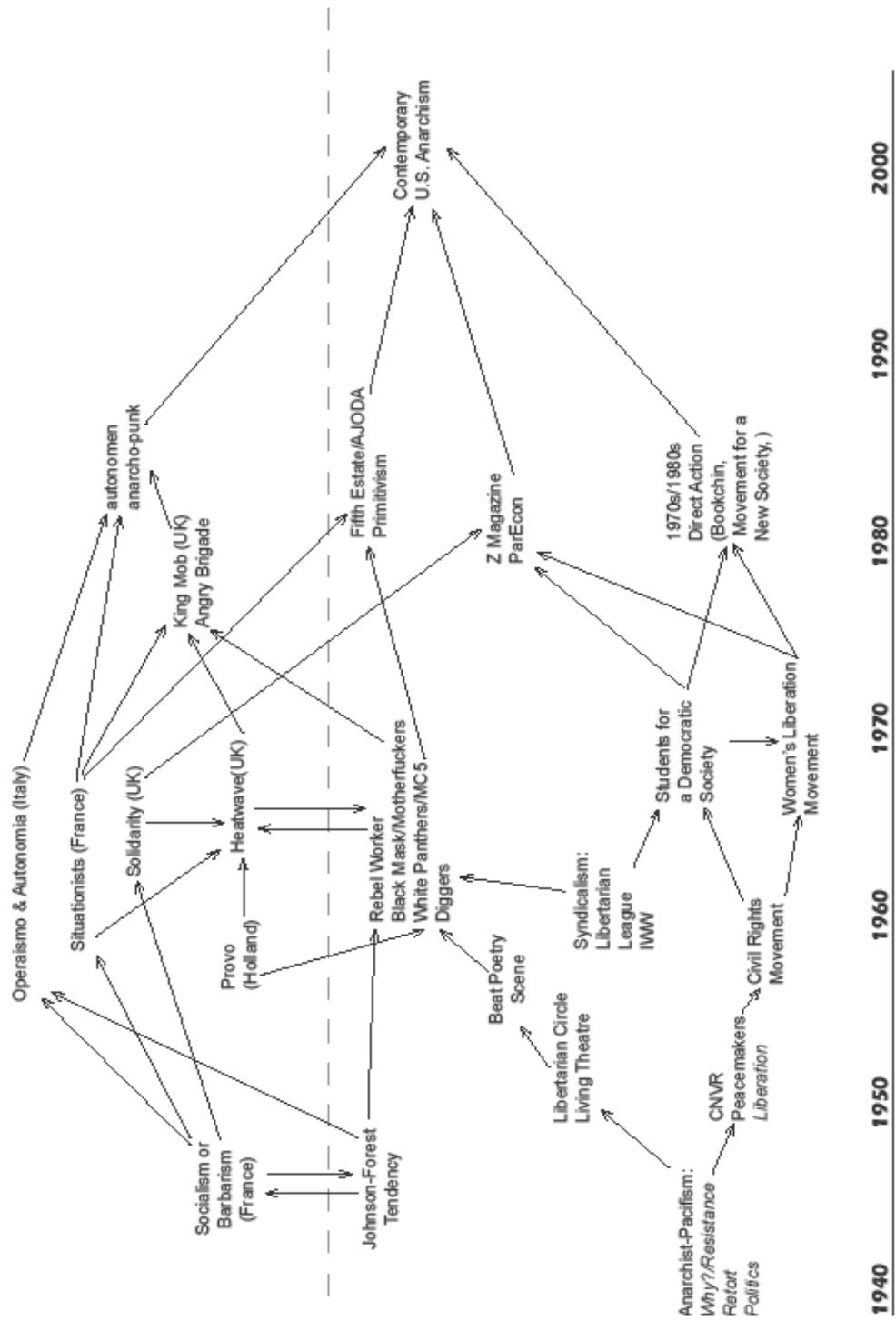


Figure 11

and *L'Adunata dei Refratarri*. Although both *Vanguard* and *Man!* ceased publication in 1939, new anarchist organizations and publications that sprang up in the early 1940s drew significantly on the legacy established in the preceding decade by both of these periodicals and the tendencies they represented.

Beginning in 1934, the Vanguard Group had helped anarchist teenagers in Brooklyn and the Bronx launch youth study groups. A number of these “Vanguard Juniors” played important roles in sustaining and transforming the anarchist movement in the 1940s. In 1942, Audrey Goodfriend, a 22 year-old Hunter College graduate who had been a driving force in the Bronx Vanguard Juniors, launched the newspaper *Why?* with her roommate, Dorothy Rogers, and a few other close friends. Goodfriend had met Rogers when she and Clara Freidman, also of the Vanguard Group, hitchhiked to Toronto to hear Emma Goldman lecture there in 1938. The New Yorkers stayed with Attilio “Art” Bortolotti, a veteran anti-fascist organizer and mainstay of the Italian insurrectionary anarchist community (see Chapter 2). At the time, Bortolotti rented a room to Rogers, who served as Goldman’s chauffeur throughout her visit. When Rogers decided to relocate to New York, she invited Goodfriend to share an apartment with her.

Sam and Esther Dolgoff, founding members of the Vanguard Group, contributed to the first issues of *Why?*, which differed little in content from *Vanguard*. An early reviewer noted, “The political position of *WHY?* is anarcho-syndicalism, with emphasis on Bakunin and the CNT of Spain. Its position on the war has not been

made very clear.”<sup>3</sup> A majority of the members of the Vanguard Group had sided in 1939 with Rudolf Rocker, a leading spokesperson of anarcho-syndicalism, when he urged a qualified support of the allies in order to defeat the menace of fascism.<sup>4</sup> Soon, however, *Why?* began printing critiques of the war and commentary questioning the possibility of bringing about an anarchist society through a violent seizure of the means of production. The Dolgoffs withdrew from the group, with Sam writing the younger radicals off as “Village anarchists” and “professional bohemians.”<sup>5</sup> In fact, the younger members of *Why?* were drawing closer to the *L’Adunata* anarchists who had butted heads continuously over the previous decade with the Vanguard Group and the Italian syndicalists grouped around Carlo Tresca.<sup>6</sup> Rogers’ friendship with Bortolotti had helped her establish good relations with the Italian anarchists who published *L’Adunata* upon her arrival in New York.<sup>7</sup>

Ties between the Why? Group and *L’Adunata* were strengthened when Diva Agostinelli, the daughter of anarchist coal miners in Jessup, Pennsylvania, moved to New York and joined the staff of *Why?* after graduating from Philadelphia’s Temple

---

<sup>3</sup> Holley Cantine, “Book Reviews,” *Retort*, June 1942, 54.

<sup>4</sup> See Abe Bluestein Oral History, Abe Bluestein Papers, Labadie Collection, University of Michigan; Sam Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Cambridge: Refract Publications, 1986), 71.

<sup>5</sup> Sam and Esther Dolgoff, interview, 1975, compact disc, LC.

<sup>6</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, “War Among the Italian Anarchists: The Galleanisti’s Campaign against Carlo Tresca” in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism*, eds. Phillip Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003); Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 32-35.

<sup>7</sup> Audrey Goodfriend, interview with author, Berkeley, California, November 10, 2008.

University. Even after WWI, Jessup remained home to a significant community of Italian anarchists of the Galleani school. Agostinelli later remembered, “The young men in town had a pool hall called the Speedway and they would call me in – my mother said I was six or seven then. They’d take my shoes off, put me up in my stocking feet on the pool table and say, ‘Tell us about the revolution’ or ‘Tell us about the strike’ and I would make a speech.” During the 1920s Agostinelli had lost an uncle when a bomb he was preparing for use against Italian-American fascists accidentally exploded.<sup>8</sup> After college she connected on both a personal and political level with the younger members of the Why? Group. On account of the personal connections to the Italian anarchist milieu Rogers and Agostinelli brought to the rroup, the printers of *L’Adunata* agreed to print *Why?* cheaply and the L’Adunata Group gave funds to the English-language newspaper whenever it held a benefit.<sup>9</sup>

Three major influences encouraged the editors of *Why?* to adopt an anti-war stance: the position taken by the British anarchist newspaper *War Commentary*, the writings of the Dutch anarchist Bart de Ligt, and the perspective forwarded by the *L’Adunata* Group. Throughout the early 1940s, the editors of *Why?* maintained contact with the London anarchists who published *War Commentary*. Although they had changed the name of their publications numerous times in the past decade, the editorial group of *War Commentary* traced a lineage back to the newspaper *Freedom*

---

<sup>8</sup> Diva Agostinelli, “A 79 Year Old Woman Who Bowls: An Interview with Diva Agostinelli, Anarchist,” *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* 5, no.1 (Spring 2001). Available at <http://flag.blackened.net/ias/9diva.htm> (accessed August 8, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> Goodfriend, interview.

founded by Peter Kropotkin when he settled in England in 1886.<sup>10</sup> *War Commentary* advocated a “defeatist” position similar to the one promoted by U.S. Trotskyists early in the war. The editors pronounced the war an inter-imperialist conflict and argued that workers in each of the belligerent countries should seize the crisis situation caused by the war to depose their own governments, turning war into revolution as the Russians had done in 1917 and French workers had done during the Paris Commune of 1871. At the end of 1942 *Why?* reprinted an article from *War Commentary* outlining this position under the heading, “Our Policy in Brief.”<sup>11</sup> The fact that the editors of *Why?* wrote few anti-war articles of their own during this period may indicate the tenuousness of this position, especially given the state of the left in the United States at the time. However, the group’s anti-imperialism began developing into a broader critique of violence itself as the war rolled on.

Audrey Goodfriend and other *Why?* contributors were deeply influenced by *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution*, published in 1937 by the Dutch anarchist and pacifist Bart de Ligt. Born in 1883, de Ligt was influenced by utopian socialists such as William Morris and John Ruskin as a young theology student. He brought feminist, anti-capitalist, and anti-militarist ideas to his work as a church pastor in a small Dutch Village beginning in 1910. De Ligt’s outspoken

---

<sup>10</sup> George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements* (Peterborough: Broadview Encore Editions, 2004 [1986]), 376, 383.

<sup>11</sup> “Our Policy in Brief,” *Why?* November- December 1942, 7. In April 1945 all but one of the editors of *War Commentary* were imprisoned for nine months on charges of inciting “disaffection” amongst soldiers. Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 385.

opposition to World War I and to the draft, however, earned him a short jail sentence and prompted military authorities to ban him from travelling to or speaking in certain of the country's provinces. This experience of state repression led de Ligt to carefully study the classic works of anarchist thought. As the historian Peter Van Den Dungen explains, de Ligt recognized that "anarchism was grounded in a mystical-spiritual conviction which strove for the freedom, equality and brotherhood of all."<sup>12</sup> Embracing this broader, humanistic spirituality, he disavowed his earlier Christianity and gave up his church pastorate to devote himself to writing and organizing full time. In 1921 he launched the International Anti-Militarist Bureau and he later became a leading figure in the War Resisters International. De Ligt outspokenly upheld his anarchist principles in this work. In the 1930s he corresponded and collaborated with another leading pacifist of the period, Mahatma Gandhi, but felt compelled to criticize him for his support of an independent Indian military and for the growing tendency of his followers to view him as an "infallible messiah."

De Ligt's anarchism also informed the titles he chose for his books. In 1931 he published a two volume history of international non-violent resistance to war which he titled, *Peace as Deed: Principles, History, and Methods of Direct Action Against War*. In doing so, he posited non-violent direct action as a form of the traditionally violent anarchist practice of "propaganda of the deed." His book *The Conquest of*

---

<sup>12</sup> Peter Van Den Dungen, "Introduction to the 1989 Edition," in Bart de Ligt, *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution*, (London: Pluto Press, 1989 [1937]), xiii.

*Violence*, published in English in 1937, likewise played on the title of Kropotkin's famous work, *The Conquest of Bread*. This book, which proved influential to the Why? Group and to many radical pacifists of the WWII-era, presented several innovative arguments. First, de Ligt lambasted "the absurdity of bourgeois pacifism." A pacifism that opposed war but accepted capitalism and the maintenance of colonies was pointless, since "war, capitalism, and imperialism make a common chord, like the three notes, tonic, third, and fifth." Moreover, he asserted, "the capitalists make war, but the proletarians make it possible." Since workers continued to fight in wars, even against their own interests, the revolutionary anti-militarist had to recognize that factors deeply embedded in social life prompted them to do so. He concluded, therefore, that "the underlying cause of modern war is the character itself of modern society...Our society is violent just as fog is wet."<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, those committed to abolishing war had to dedicate themselves to a long term struggle to fully transform contemporary society, its culture, and its values.

Making a second crucial intervention, de Ligt turned the traditional anarchist critique of capitalist and state violence against the assumption that a liberatory social revolution required and made legitimate the use of violent methods by radicals. Drawing from the experiences of the Russian Revolution and the Spanish Civil War, de Ligt introduced the maxim, "The more violence, The less revolution."<sup>14</sup> Using violence to successfully depose reactionary governments and their supporters, given

---

<sup>13</sup> De Ligt, *Conquest of Violence*, 58, 64.

<sup>14</sup> De Ligt, *Conquest of Violence*, 162.

the scope of weaponry possessed by modern states, would prove so destructive to the country's infrastructure and breed so much resentment amongst the vanquished that it would surely force the revolutionary forces to recreate the very structures of control they were seeking to abolish. De Ligt believed that even the noble Spanish CNT had been caught in this trap when it chose a military opposition to Franco's forces during the Civil War.

Strongly opposed to any form of military conscription, the Spanish anarchists accepted at the most 'spontaneous violence for the revolution,' and organized a free militia... But the necessities of modern warfare made it imperative for the Revolutionary Army to be systematically militarized, the command to be centralized, conscription to be introduced and so on. Besides this, total warfare could only be waged if supplemented by the totalitarian State. So that the longer the Civil War persisted, the more militarism and *étatisme* began to grow, even in the most libertarian circles.<sup>15</sup>

De Ligt concluded that it would have been preferable to let Franco's forces take military control without opposition, and for the people to enact a general strike and carryout a campaign of absolute non-cooperation. This, he admitted would have required long term preparation and training in the techniques of non-violent struggle. So sure was de Ligt of the power and political necessity of nonviolent methods of struggle, that he concluded *The Conquest of Violence* with an ambitious plan to defeat what appeared to be the pending invasion of fascist armies via a massive coordinated campaign of pacifist non-cooperation. De Ligt's ideas proved widely influential in the 1930s and 1940s. As Van Den Dungen notes, in the 1930s "de Ligt facilitated the

---

<sup>15</sup> De Ligt, *Conquest of Violence*, 196.

growing together, especially in Holland, of religious-anarchist, libertarian-socialist, and revolutionary anti-militarist tendencies.” His writings would help to unite a nearly identical set of tendencies in the United States over the next decade.<sup>16</sup>

After fighting in the Spanish Civil War, the individualist anarchist Brand developed a perspective similar to that of de Ligt. “Some of us took part in revolution under the illusion that something better might come out of it,” he said. “But through violent revolution we cannot inaugurate anarchism. Revolutions are inherently authoritarian.”<sup>17</sup> Audrey Goodfriend of *Why?* recalls, “At that time, thinking about Spain and how the anarchists entered the government, and all the things that beset the anarchists in Spain, and realizing how many people had been killed, had died—I just realized that change was not going to happen through violence. That was a very pivotal thing for me.”<sup>18</sup>

The young editors of *Why?* were also influenced by the anti-war stand of *L’Adunata*. At first glance, it is difficult to understand why Italian anarchists who had been the most outspoken advocates of revolutionary violence, and had seen Mussolini crush the Left in their country of birth, would organize against the war. It is harder still to understand how anarchist-pacifists made common cause with defenders of revolutionary terrorism. Some insight is provided by a comment anarchist miner Guy Liberti made to historian Paul Avrich years after the war. “Rudolf Rocker,” he said,

---

<sup>16</sup> Van Den Dungen, “Introduction,” xvii; Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 369.

<sup>17</sup> Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 174.

<sup>18</sup> Goodfriend, interview.

“was a good man but was wrong about World War II. Anarchism has always been antithetical to militarism. We must rely on people to rise up against dictators, not armies.”<sup>19</sup> This, in brief, was the position adopted by the editors of *L'Adunata dei Refretarri* before and during WWII.

In 1944 the Why? Group published an English translation of *L'Adunata's* Italian-language pamphlet “War or Revolution? An Anarchist Statement.” The anonymous pamphlet, likely penned by Raffaele Schiavina, argued that the First World War ended when domestic social rebellion, in the wake of the Russian Revolution, forced the Allies and Central Powers to cease hostilities in order to prevent the spread of revolution. Fascism grew in the interwar years as a means of brutally suppressing workers movements, and was openly supported by the bourgeois democracies in this effort until the fascist states' power was channeled into aggression against other “imperialist” states. While left movements had opposed the movement from the beginning, liberal opposition to fascism could not be trusted. “The official war bulletins deal only with the battles and victories of the regular military fronts,” claimed the pamphlet. “But the main factor of the struggle against fascism has always been and still remains the people's moral and physical revolt, and in the front ranks stand the militant workers who are the vanguard of the social revolution.” This being the case, the author saw no reason to depart from the position declared by Luigi

---

<sup>19</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 158.

Galleani before the First World War: “Against war, against peace, for social revolution.”<sup>20</sup>

The Italian insurrectionists, then, had no qualms about using violence to defeat fascism. They simply refused to budge from their conception of how that must happen: that the people effected should spontaneously revolt in order to defeat tyrants rather than fight under the aegis of another nation-state. The pacifists and the insurrectionists therefore shared some ground; both rejected the use of national militaries to defeat fascism and both had faith that the power of citizens organizing themselves to resist could provide a sufficient deterrent. They differed only on what methods would be most effective.

*Why?*'s position on the war was more than a question of editorial line for the young men of the group; it directly affected their decisions about how to relate to the draft. This was especially the case for regular contributor David Thoreau Wieck. Born in 1922 to parents active in the Progressive Miners of America, a radical offshoot of the United Mineworkers of America, Wieck moved to New York in 1934 when his father took a job in the Industrial Studies department of the Russell Sage Foundation.<sup>21</sup> In an undated reminiscence Wieck noted, “I immersed myself in the radical politics of the thirties, trying out the Communists and coming very soon to

---

<sup>20</sup> *War or Revolution? An Anarchist Statement* (New York: Why? Publications Committee, 1944), 46, 66.

<sup>21</sup> Wieck records his mother's life as well as aspects of his own in the biography he published late in life. David Thoreau Wieck, *Woman from Spillertown: A Memoir of Agnes Burns Wieck* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992).

realize that I was really an anarchist and didn't belong in a hyper-authoritarian political movement where the party line came from Moscow and dissent was unacceptable." In the summer of 1936, after leaving the Young Communist League, Wieck and his parents moved into the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' housing co-op in the Bronx. The Amalgamated co-ops, as well as the nearby Sholem Aleichem co-ops, were at that time home to a number of Jewish anarchist families, including the Blusteins and the Goodfriends. Wieck attended the Vanguard Juniors study group that Audrey Goodfriend organized with the help of Abe Bluestein. He recalls, "It wasn't by reading Thoreau that I was persuaded to anarchism; it was Kropotkin and Emma Goldman whose lives were an effort to save the world from itself."<sup>22</sup> Wieck entered Columbia University at age sixteen, receiving a bachelors degree in Philosophy in 1941. While in college he penned at least one article for *Challenge* and, after graduating, contributed articles under a variety of pen names to early issues of *Why?*<sup>23</sup>

During the Second World War, the federal government established a conscientious objector program aimed at providing alternate service assignments to members of the historic peace churches—the Quakers, Mennonities, Brethren, and others—whose religious beliefs precluded them from fighting in wars. Applicants found by a judge to possess religiously-based pacifist convictions were assigned to

---

<sup>22</sup> Goodfriend, interview; Untitled reminiscence about Edward Wieck, no date, Box 1, David Wieck Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University (hereafter DTW, TL).

<sup>23</sup> Wieck, *Woman from Spillertown*, 199; David Wieck to Paul Avrich, March 2, 1992, Box 1, DTW, TL.

Civilian Public Service camps, where they worked on building national parks or other public infrastructure projects. Draft age men who opposed the war, then, were forced to decide if they would seek conscientious objector (CO) status, which some saw as an accommodation to the war system, or refuse to register for either the draft or CO status and face a prison term of up to five years as a result.<sup>24</sup>

When the U.S. declared war in December 1941, Wieck felt compelled to refuse to register, but he applied for CO status to assuage his mother's anxieties. He wrote to the draft board, "I am conscientiously opposed to participation in any war in which it is necessary, for the successful prosecution of the war, to compel men to fight and to centralize society so that the evils whose eradication is the aim of the war, become an internal menace to the home country." The fear that the effort to combat totalitarian regimes was making the United States itself increasingly totalitarian was widely held on the libertarian left throughout the decade.<sup>25</sup> In his application, Wieck noted his brief participation in Communist circles, but said nothing of his recent anarchist

---

<sup>24</sup> On the origins of the CPS system, see Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969), 70-75; Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 79-94; James Tracy, *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 14-16.

<sup>25</sup> This argument was pursued by Trotskyists in their publications and by Dwight MacDonal in the pages of *Partisan Review* and *Politics*, for example. See Alan Wald, *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Fall of the Anti-stalinist left from 1930 to 1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 198, 200, 207. Anarchists such as Sam Dolgoff reiterated the "slide towards totalitarianism" argument with regards to federal involvement in labor struggles and interventions in the civil rights movement. See Chapter 5.

activities, instead claiming his beliefs derived from reading the works of his namesake, Henry David Thoreau, his union family's focus on solidarity between all peoples, and his studies of Western philosophy.<sup>26</sup> While waiting for his case to be processed, Wieck skipped town, making it to New Orleans before he was turned over to the FBI in February, 1943, by local police who had arrested him for violating a local "vagrancy, loitering" ordinance.<sup>27</sup> Charged with failing to notify his draft board of a change of address, he was returned to New York. The judge found that "the Registrant's views are of an economic and political, rather than a religious nature," and denied his application.<sup>28</sup> Wieck refused induction and was given a three year sentence in the Federal Penitentiary at Danbury, Connecticut.<sup>29</sup>

Wieck was not alone in his refusal enlist or apply for conscientious objector status. Another *Why?* contributor, Cliff Bennett, successfully dodged the draft for more than two years, but was eventually apprehended and jailed. Goodfriend's partner, David Koven, who had been a member of the Brooklyn Vanguard Juniors group in the 1930s, attempted to avoid military service by training as a medic in the merchant marines. He, too, was briefly imprisoned, however, for refusing to respect the military discipline of a naval officer responsible for his certification.<sup>30</sup> Wieck later

---

<sup>26</sup> David Thoreau Wieck, "Supplementary Statements, Form 47," C.O. Application, David Wieck Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection. (Hereafter, DW, SCPC.)

<sup>27</sup> David Wieck to Agnes Wieck, February 16, 1943, DW, SCPC.

<sup>28</sup> "Conclusion of Report of Hon. Monroe Goldwater, Jan. 15, 1943," DW, SCPC.

<sup>29</sup> Wieck, *Woman from Spillertown*, 202-203.

<sup>30</sup> Goodfriend interview; David Koven, "Live an Anarchist Life!" *Social Anarchism* 42 (2008-2009): 72-77.

noted that with Sam Dolgoff out of the group and many of the younger men in jail or on the lam, *Why?* was predominantly edited and distributed by four women during the course of WWII. These included Goodfriend, Rogers, Agostinelli, and, most likely, Sally Grieg, who participated in the group along with her husband, Michael. In addition to their editorial responsibilities, these women regularly contributed analytic and historical articles to the journal, marking a departure from the male-domination of anarchist journalism in the United States after *Mother Earth* was suppressed in 1917.

### ***Retort***

During the period when Wieck, Bennett, and Koven were parrying with the U.S. military, *Why?* was joined by *Retort*, another new anarchist periodical. Styling itself “a journal of art and social philosophy,” *Retort* was issued quarterly by editor Holley Cantine and his partner, Dorothy Paul, a painter, from a small cabin they had built in Bearsville, New York, just outside of Woodstock. Cantine took pride in hand setting, printing, and binding *Retort* rather than having it produced in a commercial print shop. He saw his efforts as promoting the merits of small-scale artisanal production and a rejection of the spread of automation and mass production, like his neighbors at the Byrdcliffe art colony had seen theirs 35 years earlier. Unlike Goodfriend and Wieck, Cantine came from wealth. His maternal grandfather served as the first president of Panama and later as Ambassador to the United States, while

his paternal grandfather owned a series of paper mills near Saugerties, New York.<sup>31</sup> Although he did not participate in anarchist circles like the members of the Vanguard Juniors, Cantine spent his 1920s childhood in Woodstock—home to the yearly Maverick Festivals and to anarchists such as Hippolyte Havel and Stella and Teddy Ballantine—where his mother, the artist Josephina Cantine, maintained a painting studio.<sup>32</sup> Cantine’s later collaborator and companion, Dachine Rainer, claimed (perhaps with some exaggeration) that “by the age of fourteen, he had converted his mother to atheism, pacifism, and radicalism.”<sup>33</sup> Cantine attended Swarthmore College and Columbia University, concentrating in anthropology, but abandoned the academy before completing a doctoral dissertation in order to live a self-sufficient “Thoreauian” life. His Woodstock upbringing had clearly left an impression. Like Hervey White, Cantine bought some land with his inheritance, built a house, set up a printing press, and devoted himself to a life of art and politics.

“Since all free societies have always been artistic societies,” Cantine sought to intersperse original political thought with formally and politically provocative poetry and fiction in each issue of *Retort*. Although *Retort* served as an early outlet for a

---

<sup>31</sup> Alf Evers, *Woodstock: History of an American Town* (Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1987), 616.

<sup>32</sup> On Cantine’s life, see Dachine Rainer, “Holley Cantine, February 14, 1916-January 2, 1977,” *Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy*, no. 2 (1994): 177-185; Allan Antliff, *Anarchy and Art: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2007), 115-117; David Wieck, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Match!*, no. 82, November 1987; Dachine Rainer to David Thoreau Wieck, May 17, 1988, Box 1, DTW, TL.

<sup>33</sup> Dachine Rainer, “Holley Cantine,” 178.

variety of respected literary figures—Kenneth Patchen, Saul Bellow, and Robert Duncan among them—the journal’s most notable non-fiction pieces came from the editor himself. Beginning with its first editorial, *Retort* marked a departure from the left-wing politics (including much of the anarchism) of the previous decades. Despite their longstanding feuds, anarchists often shared with orthodox Marxists certain fundamental assumptions: the struggle between economic classes formed the basis of the revolutionary project; a materialist viewpoint provided the conceptual tools radicals needed to make sense of the world; revolution was an inevitability in the progressive march of history; when it occurred, it would be at the hands of masses of workers—organized or inspired by self-conscious radicals—who would dispense with the old and initiate new institutions in a fell swoop. *Retort* boldly set itself against all these positions from the outset. “We enter the arena with few, if any illusions and no certainty that our cause will be victorious. Overconfidence is one of the few weaknesses that our opponents cannot accuse us of,” Cantine acidly admitted.<sup>34</sup> As one verity of the Left after another was proven false in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, he had seen most radicals either grow despondent or retreat into a delusional sectarianism. “However,” the editor asserted, “we cannot persuade ourselves that an absolutism which claims that success is impossible is any more reasonable than the old absolutism of inevitable success.”<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> Holley Cantine, “Editorial Statement,” *Retort*, Winter 1942, 3.

<sup>35</sup> Cantine, “Editorial Statement,” 4.

The task of committed intellectuals, then, was to propose tenets of a new radicalism at the same time they thoroughly debunked the old. Cantine could see that “human motivation is more complex than the theorists of the last century realized.”<sup>36</sup> He hoped that applying the insights offered by the “sciences” of psychology and anthropology—disciplines he had studied at Columbia—to the social crisis of the contemporary world would help Leftists develop a more accurate understanding of human nature and new strategic directions. Making good on his word, Cantine drew on Freud to understand why ordinary people, instead of acting for themselves, continued to place their faith in revolutionary leaders, despite so many betrayals.<sup>37</sup> In *Retort*’s second issue, he delved into anthropological accounts of early societies to conceptualize the origins of the multiple forms of oppression existing in the world. “Social stratification is deeply rooted in human society,” Cantine wrote, “and can take a number of different forms—all of them inimical to the establishment of a really free and stable social order. Therefore, before a decent society could be brought into existence, all factors – political, economic, religious—that make it possible for a minority to rise to a position of predominance must be eliminated.”<sup>38</sup> Cantine’s anthropological approach in this and other articles anticipated by three decades Murray Bookchin’s similar work in *The Ecology of Freedom*, as did his conclusion

---

<sup>36</sup> Cantine, “Editorial Statement,” 5.

<sup>37</sup> Holley Cantine, “Egoism and Revolution,” *Retort*, Winter 1942, 22-29.

<sup>38</sup> Holley Cantine, “The Mechanics of Class Development,” *Retort*, June 1942, 7.

that anarchists must seek to root out not only economic exploitation, but all forms of social domination.<sup>39</sup>

In outlining what might be called an “anarchism without guarantees,” Cantine’s thought also paralleled, in some respects, that of his contemporary Antonio Gramsci, whose Marxist theory undermined the strict economic determinism of more orthodox practitioners and recognized that the complexities of the modern social world made old revolutionary strategies obsolete. At points, similarities in their writings are striking, such as when Cantine states, “we believe that certain institutional forms, by their very existence preclude the possibility of desirable social change, but that these institutions—the state, for instance—have too many subtle psychological ramifications to be destroyable by a direct frontal assault. The problem of achieving a decent society is vastly more complex and roundabout than the 19<sup>th</sup> century imagined.”<sup>40</sup>

This very complexity convinced Cantine that radicals must select the means for attaining their goals “with great care.” The Russian Revolution had proven that “the mere overthrow of a decadent ruling class is but an incident in the real revolution...Indeed, it may be the prelude to a worse reaction than before.”<sup>41</sup> The instrumentalist means enacted by earlier militants needed to be carefully parsed, given the degree to which they were implicated in the further oppression of those they

---

<sup>39</sup> Amongst these forms, he included the sexual oppression of women by men, providing a glimpse of the theoretical affinities feminists would find with anarchism in the 1970s. See *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader*, ed. Dark Star (Edinburgh and Oakland: Dark Star and AK Press, 2002).

<sup>40</sup> Cantine, “Editorial Statement,” 6.

<sup>41</sup> Cantine, “Mechanics of Class Development,” 12.

promised to liberate. “In the name of a vague and distant future of Triumphant Socialism the worst exploitation and persecution have been condoned,” Cantine wrote. No future movement could, then, be considered revolutionary if it sacrificed the lives of individual humans for the promotion of an abstract system. To be sure, many former radicals had arrived at similar conclusions by the 1940s. But where such realizations lead many to paralysis, they encouraged Cantine to consider different routes to revolution.

Cantine’s reading of history lead him to eschew “placing very much reliance in benevolent leadership,” since leaders of previous revolutions had either divided against themselves, or grown detached with privilege and power from the people they claimed to represent, undermining the goals originally fought for. Furthermore, Cantine argued, “It is the radical movement’s present-day emphasis on politics—the idea of achieving control of the government, either by election or insurrection—that is perhaps the greatest single reason why the movement is so thoroughly stratified. An organization which is oriented toward political action, which expects to achieve its goal by taking over the state, must be highly centralized, and dominated by a hierarchy of trained specialists.”<sup>42</sup> Against political action aiming to influence or control the state, Cantine believed that another orientation was possible.

Since both violent revolution and parliamentary activity seem to lead away from the realization of fundamental liberty, a realistic radical movement should concern itself with building up a nucleus of the new society “within the shell of the old.” Communities and various other

---

<sup>42</sup> Holley Cantine, “Editorials,” *Retort*, Winter 1945, 6.

kinds of organization must be formed, wherein the ideals of the revolution are approximated as nearly as possible in daily life. The new society must be lived out by its advocates; both as a way of influencing the masses by example, and in order to iron out weaknesses of theory by actual experiment.<sup>43</sup>

*Retort*'s editor claimed no credit in originating such an idea of radical politics. "This tradition," he noted, "found probably its clearest expression in the writings of Thoreau and Tolstoi...and today provides the driving impulse for most conscientious objectors...It is present, at least by implication, in the writings of Eugene Debs and nearly all anarchist thinkers."<sup>44</sup>

Cantine was impressed by the anti-war stands which Thoreau and Tolstoy had taken in their times, but also by the means they chose to combat such wars. He reprinted Tolstoy's famous 1898 essay "Cathargo Delenda Est," in which the Russian sarcastically criticized those "enlightened friends of peace" who encourage their fellow citizens to "sprinkle salt on the bird one wishes to catch, i.e. to persuade the governments, who only exist by violence and deceit, to forsake both the one and the other." Tolstoy insisted that a much more powerful and direct alternative existed: "Every man, in refusing to take part in military service or to pay taxes to a government which uses them for military purposes, is, by this refusal, rendering a great service to God and man, for he is thereby making use of the most efficacious means of furthering the progressive movement of mankind toward that better social order which it is

---

<sup>43</sup> Cantine, "Mechanics," 13.

<sup>44</sup> Holley Cantine, "Editorials," *Retort*, Winter 1945, 8.

striving after and must eventually attain.”<sup>45</sup> In the pages of *Retort*, Cantine asserted his belief that anarchists should extend Tolstoy’s strategy of individual refusal beyond participation in war to other aspects of the social order—such as industrial production—that they found odious.

### **Dwight MacDonald and Paul Goodman**

*Retort* and *Why?* grew to see each other as kindred spirits that differed mainly in emphasis—*Why?* focused on shorter, newsy items, while *Retort* interspersed long theoretical considerations with poetry and fiction. The periodicals printed reviews and advertisements for each other’s publications in their pages and the editors took trips to visit one another. The editors of both publications likewise found a kinship in Dwight MacDonald’s *Politics* when it was launched in 1944. One of the most gifted writers of the period, MacDonald played a central role in the debates of the “New York Intellectuals”—writers who had come of age within the Communist and Trotskyist movements but grappled for new political foundations as the depredations of the Stalinist regime became more glaring. After a privileged childhood, MacDonald attended Yale University and worked as a staff writer for *Fortune* magazine from 1929 to 1936. His politics moved leftward as the Depression deepened, leading him to become an editor of the left literary journal *Partisan Review* in 1937. MacDonald left *Partisan Review* in 1943, when his “defeatist” anti-war position put him at odds with

---

<sup>45</sup> Leo Tolstoy, “Cathargo Delenda Est,” *Retort*, Spring 1943, 5-11.

the majority of the journal's editors, who by that time had adopted a position of critical support for the Allies.

MacDonald and his wife Nancy founded *Politics* with a gift of \$2000 from Margaret De Silver, the widow Carlo Tresca. Tresca was murdered on January 11, 1943, by an unknown gunman, likely to have been working for an organized crime family with whom Tresca had crossed.<sup>46</sup> MacDonald's new journal published some of the leading European leftist intellectuals of the period, including Hannah Arendt, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Simone Weil.<sup>47</sup> Like Cantine, these writers worked to articulate a sharp critique of orthodox Marxism while finding new intellectual footings for the left to stand on. By the mid-1940s, MacDonald's own politics gravitated towards an anarchist-pacifism similar to that being developed by *Retort* and *Why?* MacDonald was an occasional speaker at the weekly political forums the Why? Group began hosting at the Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA) Hall, which was located on Broadway just south of Union Square. The *Why?* forums also featured other notable figures, including the chairperson of the pacifist Fellowship of Reconciliation, A.J. Muste, the council communist, Paul Mattick, and the writer James Baldwin, who used

---

<sup>46</sup> Nunzio Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca: Life of a Rebel* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 265-296.

<sup>47</sup> Michael Wreszin, *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition: The Life and Politics of Dwight MacDonald* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); Gregory Sumner, *Dwight MacDonald and the Politics Circle: The Challenge of Cosmopolitan Democracy* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996); Wald, *New York Intellectuals*.

his appearance to debut selections from *Go Tell it on the Mountain*.<sup>48</sup> The New York SIA Hall was created in the mid-1903s as part of an international effort to support the CNT during the Spanish Civil War and those imprisoned and exiled by Franco in its aftermath. Perhaps inspired by relationships she developed at the SIA Hall, Nancy MacDonald established the Spanish Refugee Aid Committee, which raised funds, collected clothing, and maintained communication with thousands of Spanish anarchists and republicans who fled Spain, and often lived in destitution, after the end of the Civil War.

Another regular at the SIA Hall was the exuberant novelist, poet, and essayist Paul Goodman. A Bronx-raised and University of Chicago-educated polymath, Goodman would become famous in the 1960s as the author of *Growing Up Absurd* and as a mentor to the New Left. During the 1940s and 1950s, he worked as a Gestalt psychotherapist, co-authored a well-received book on urban planning with his brother, and was an outspoken advocate of educational reform.<sup>49</sup> In an interview with Paul

---

<sup>48</sup> Agostinelli, "A 79 Year Old"; Taylor Stoehr, "Introduction" in *Drawing the Line: The Politic Essays of Paul Goodman*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), xvii.

<sup>49</sup> No biographies of Paul Goodman have yet appeared. For biographical information see the introductions that Goodman's literary executor, Taylor Stoehr, provides in the collections of Goodman's essays that he edited. Stoehr, ed., *Drawing the Line*; Taylor Stoehr, ed., *Nature Heals=Natura Sanat Non Medicus: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman* (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977); Taylor Stoehr, ed., *Creator Spirit Come! The Literary Essays of Paul Goodman* (New York: Free Life Editions, 1977); Taylor Stoehr, ed., *Decentralizing Power: Paul Goodman's Social Criticism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1994). On Goodman's psychotherapeutic practice, see Taylor Stoehr, *Here Now Next: Paul Goodman and the Origins of Gestalt Therapy* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994). On his sexual politics, Taylor Stoehr, ed., *Crazy*

Avrich, David Koven remembered that Goodman “was the ferment within the Resistance Group [as the Why? Group was known after 1947] that made our meetings the most vital and exciting in New York. He introduced us to... the contemporary world of psychology and sociology.”<sup>50</sup> Goodman also brought a newfound attention to sexual politics to the group. Though he was married and eventually had a son, Goodman was bisexual and openly carried on affairs with younger men. Beyond his advocacy of gay rights, Goodman’s lectured at *Why?* meetings on the sexual roots of political repression, drawing on the theories of the radical psychologist Wilhem Reich. Years later, Diva Agostinelli remembered that the first time she met Goodman, he was on the floor demonstrating a “Reichian orgasm.”<sup>51</sup>

During the Spring of 1945 Goodman wrote a series of essays that would prove to be his most significant contributions to anarchist theory. Though later issued jointly as “The May Pamphlet,” the material was first published in sections spread across issues of *Retort*, *Why?*, and *Politics*. Goodman shared a good deal in common with Cantine’s perspective. “A free society,” he wrote, “cannot be the substituting of a “new order” for the old order; it is the extension of spheres of free action until they

---

*Hope and Finite Experience: Final Essays of Paul Goodman* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994). For perspectives on Goodman’s literary work, see Peter Parisi, ed., *Artist of the Actual: Essays on Paul Goodman* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986) and Kingsley Widmer, *Paul Goodman* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980). For considerations of the value of Goodman’s political thought by anarchists, see Colin Ward, “The Anarchist as Citizen” *New Letters* 42, no. 2/3 (1978): 237-245; David Wieck, “Paul Goodman: Drawing the Line” *Telos* 35 (1978): 199-214.

<sup>50</sup> Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 462.

<sup>51</sup> Agostinelli, “A 79 Year Old.”

make up most of the social life.” Goodman then posited a simple maxim: “Free action is to live in the present society as though it were a natural society.” The libertarian

does not look forward to a future state of things which he tries to bring about by suspect means; but he draws now, so far as he can, on the natural force in him that is no different in kind from what it will be in a free society, except that there it will have more scope and be immeasurably reinforced by mutual aid and fraternal conflict. Merely by continuing to exist and act in nature and freedom, the libertarian wins the victory, establishes the society; it is not necessary for him to be the victor over any one.<sup>52</sup>

Ties between *Why?*, *Retort*, and *Politics* were personal as well as intellectual. After Dorothy Paul left him for another man, Holley Cantine spent a winter in New York City, living in a basement apartment that the Why? Group used to store a small printing press they had purchased in the event that they were forced to issue the paper clandestinely.<sup>53</sup> Cantine met his next love, Dachine Rainer, during a visit to the *Politics* office, where she was working as an assistant to MacDonald.<sup>54</sup> Rainer, born Sylvia Newman in 1921, was the daughter of leftist Polish Jews. She grew up in the Bronx and was touched as a young child by the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti. Having read Tolstoy and Kropotkin as a teenager, she already counted herself an anarchist-pacifist by

---

<sup>52</sup> Paul Goodman, “Reflections on Drawing the Line” in *Drawing the Line: The Political Essays of Paul Goodman*, ed. Taylor Stoehr (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), 2-3. Goodman’s perspective shares much in common with what Todd May has termed the “poststructuralist anarchism” of Jacques Rancière. See Todd May, *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008).

<sup>53</sup> Goodfriend, interview.

<sup>54</sup> Dachine Rainer, “Holley Cantine,” 182.

the time she enrolled at Hunter College, on scholarship, in 1938.<sup>55</sup> After an awkward courtship, she returned with Cantine to Bearsville and became co-editor of *Retort*. In Bearsville, Rainer wrote poetry and fiction while earning extra money for the household by reviewing books for liberal magazines of opinion.

### **Radical Pacifists**

Due to his arrest, David Wieck missed the early *Why?* forums and the new ideas and friendships that grew out of them. However, upon arrival, he was happy to discover that Danbury Federal Penitentiary had been designated as one of the East Coast centers for incarcerating war resisters. In a letter home, he insisted that his mother “quit worrying” since “the physical side is abundantly cared for” and he had met “several COs in quarantine [the section of the prison for new inmates] who are decidedly good and interesting company.”<sup>56</sup> Wieck’s new companions were some of the nearly 6,000 conscientious objectors and war resisters imprisoned during the Second World War. Historian James Tracy explains that, “Of these, 4,300 were Jehovah’s Witnesses with little or no political agenda...The remaining seventeen

---

<sup>55</sup> “Dachine Rainer,” *The Daily Telegraph*, September 8, 2000, 31. See also, Toni Widenbacher, “Making Her Own Electricity,” *Woodstock Times*, August 31, 2000, 16; John Rety, “Death and the Imagination,” *Freedom*, September 9, 2000, 5. Her chosen name, Dachine Rainer, combined a Hindu word with the first name of the poet Rainer Maria Rilke.

<sup>56</sup> David Wieck to Agnes Wieck, August 25, 1943, DW, SCPC.

hundred, however, constituted the most militant distinct group of pacifists in the country.<sup>57</sup>

Prior to World War II, the pacifist movement was primarily composed of the historic peace churches—whose activities were generally limited to encouraging members to refuse military service—and two more actively political organizations, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) and the War Resisters League (WRL). Founded in 1915, the FOR functioned as a nondenominational center for Christian anti-war organizing. By 1943 the organization counted 450 local chapters and FOR membership included many ministers who preached a message of “universal brotherhood” to their congregations and counseled young men not to fight should war arise. For its first 25 years, FOR’s membership remained overwhelmingly white and middle or upper-middle class, and the organization shied away from protest activity and becoming involved with broader social justice issues such as poverty and racial inequality. However, this began to change quickly beginning in the early 1940s under the leadership of A.J. Muste and the inspiration of Mohandas Gandhi.

Muste, a Congregational minister, joined the FOR during WWI but dedicated his energies to labor and the Left for the next two decades. Muste considered himself a “small ‘s’ socialist” and interacted regularly with anarchists during the 1920s and 1930s. He was a leader of the 1919 Lawrence textile strike alongside Carlo Tresca, and was director of the Brookwood Labor College, where Rose Pesotta was a student

---

<sup>57</sup> Tracy, *Direct Action*, 16.

in the 1920s. He lectured at the Mohegan Colony in the 1920s and spoke at anarchist forums in New York City in later years. Although he renounced Christianity and pacifism in favor of Trotskyism in the interwar years, Muste had a religious awakening and returned to his roots in 1936. Having secured a reputation as a powerful speaker, brilliant organizer, and capable strategist, Muste was appointed chair of the FOR in 1940. While critiquing orthodox Marxism, he continued to steer the FOR towards fighting class and racial inequality in addition to war, declaring forthrightly that a world without violence—social as well as military—required revolution.

The demonstration of the transformative power of nonviolent activism provided by Gandhi's campaigns in India lent credibility to Muste's ideas about how to reorient the organization's work. Although African American newspapers, college professors, and religious leaders had trumpeted the innovations of the anti-colonial leader since the early 1920s, the FOR was one of the earliest and strongest advocates of Gandhian direct action within predominantly white, progressive Christian circles. The Quaker and FOR National Committee member Richard Greggs, for example, penned a widely read account of Gandhi's philosophy and method, *The Power of Nonviolence*, which proved highly influential for many of the WWII war resisters.<sup>58</sup>

The War Resisters League, organized in 1923, functioned as a secular alternative to the FOR. Because it was not Christian, the WRL attracted significant

---

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Kosek, *Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009)

numbers of Jewish pacifists, and its membership rolls overlapped significantly with those of the Socialist Party and a variety of postwar feminist organizations. Like the FOR, however, the WRL served primarily as an educational and support society that registered individuals who refused to fight in or support wars. WRL leaders also eschewed confrontational activism and kept their agenda limited to the prevention of international conflicts until the mid-1940s.<sup>59</sup>

In 1941, the Danbury penitentiary had housed the Union Eight—a group of young pacifists affiliated with the FOR who had created Gandhi-style ashrams in Harlem and Newark, New Jersey, while studying at New York’s prestigious Union Theological Seminary. After refusing to register for a draft exemption provided to clergy, members of the Union Eight—most notably George Houser and David Dellinger—had demonstrated their refusal to bend willingly to the prison’s arbitrary procedures and racial segregation, earning themselves long stays in solitary confinement, but also the grudging respect of fellow inmates.<sup>60</sup> Though the Union 8 had been released when Wieck began his sentence, they had set the tone for dozens of other pacifists who followed them into the prison. Such was the climate and companionship Wieck discovered as he began his sentence in 1943.

Shortly after Wieck arrived, approximately two dozen Danbury war resisters launched a successful strike against racial segregation in the prison cafeteria. Wieck

---

<sup>59</sup> Scott H. Bennett, *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003).

<sup>60</sup> David Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail: The Life Story of a Moral Dissenter* (New York: Pantheon, 1993), 81-97.

took part in the four month strike—refusing to work, to take his allotted time in the yard, or to eat meals in the segregated cafeteria. Through the strike he befriended a number of young men, including Jim Peck and Ralph DiGia, who would play important roles in radical pacifist organizations such as the War Resisters League upon their release. He also met Lowell Naeve, an anarchist painter who collaborated with Wieck on writing projects about their prison experiences after they were released. Hoping to prevent the protest from spreading, the warden at Danbury did the young non-violent militants a favor by housing them together in a secluded section of the prison where they were allowed to interact in a common space. A letter Wieck wrote to his mother indicates the sense of community that quickly developed amongst strike participants. “I have been having a swell time up here in my new quarters,” he explained. “We have very interesting discussions, debates and arguments on a variety of subjects, currently, primarily ‘the beard,’ the label one of the infidels here plastered on God. But [also] the labor movement...and even racial segregation.”<sup>61</sup> With the aid of outside supporters, including Adam Clayton Powell, the Danbury strike gained national media attention and resulted in the full desegregation of the mess-hall beginning in February 1944.<sup>62</sup>

The Danbury strike against Jim Crow regulations was part of a wave of similar actions in prisons and CO camps throughout the country. In the Lewisburg Federal Penitentiary in central Pennsylvania, thirteen war resisters launched a hunger strike to

---

<sup>61</sup> David Wieck to Agnes Wieck, October 18, 1943, DW, SCPC.

<sup>62</sup> Wieck, *Woman from Spillertown*, 203-205.

protest their prison's segregation policies in May of 1943. Among them was Bill Sutherland, an African American pacifist and socialist who had worked at the Newark Ashram before being arrested. The hunger strikers were later joined by David Dellinger, one of the Union Eight and a friend of Sutherland's from their time at the Newark ashram. When Ralph DiGia, a veteran of the Danbury strike, was transferred to Lewisburg as punishment for his intransigence, he participated as well. A similar protest broke out amongst COs in the summer of 1945 at the federal prison in Ashland, Kentucky, under the leadership of the experienced pacifist organizer Bayard Rustin. Influenced by Quakerism as a young man, Rustin, a black man, began organizing protests against segregated movie theatres and restaurants while still in high school. After a stint with the Young Communist League in the 1930s he was appointed to the staff of the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), and helped launch the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) in 1942. When Rustin was arrested for draft refusal late in the war, he carried CORE's non-violent direct action tactics into prison with him. COs also protested conditions in the CPS camps. One of the most prominent was Igal Roodenko, a socialist-Zionist from a Ukrainian Jewish background, who was assigned to the Powellsville, Maryland, camp in February 1943. There he conducted hunger strikes in sympathy with two CO's who were protesting the government's right to conscript them with a "fast unto death." Roodenko later transferred to a camp in Colorado where he helped organize work stoppages and protests to increase the paltry stipends COs received. He later abandoned the camp

altogether, choosing to accept jail time rather than continue to collaborate with the CO system.

In addition to successfully forcing the desegregation and liberalizing the policies of federal penitentiaries, the wave of nonviolent direct action united the radical pacifists and prompted them to discuss the potential for a broad movement of “revolutionary nonviolence” against war, racism, and economic inequality in the United States.<sup>63</sup> Imprisonment also led the dissenters to modify their beliefs. Wieck later wrote, “I did not go to prison as a pacifist but rather as an objector to war and conscription. (I take words seriously.) It was in prison that I learned the methods of nonviolence. If I didn’t dislike hyphenations I would characterize myself as an anarchist-pacifist.”<sup>64</sup> In turn, the influence of prisoners such as Wieck and Naeve helped move other COs and pacifists, such as DiGia and Sutherland, in the direction of anarchism. Anarchists outside the prison walls also had a salutary effect.

### **The Catholic Worker**

Although members of the Why? Group had considerable differences of opinion with religiously motivated radicals, they recognized them as some of the only allies available during the war and found ways of working together. Audrey Goodfriend

---

<sup>63</sup> On the CO and draft resister protests, see Tracy, *Direct Action*, 35-39; Scott Bennett, *Radical Pacifism*, 98-133; Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 75-93. On Bill Sutherland’s life, see Bill Sutherland and Matt Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000). On Bayard Rustin, see John D’Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>64</sup> David Thoreau Wieck, “Peace-related activities, post World War II,” DW, SCPC.

remembers that the Why? Group “would do street corner meetings, stuff like that. There was one time we were scared shitless that we would be hurt because we were near Hell’s Kitchen and a bunch of Catholics were coming out. But the Catholic Worker was anti-war and we were having meetings with all groups of people like that—War Resisters League, Catholic Worker—and so we were safe! These kids came out and saw a Catholic paper and they backed off!”<sup>65</sup>

Catholic Worker politics combined the French Catholic tradition of “personalism” with the teachings of Tolstoy and Kropotkin. The movement was founded in 1933 by Dorothy Day, a writer for the socialist newspaper *The Call*, and Peter Maurin, a émigré “peasant” intellectual who hailed from a small French farming village. Touched by the depths of suffering engendered by the depression, Day and Maurin sought to enact a three-pronged program to help the poor and the oppressed change the social system they lived in. The Catholic Worker, they declared, would publish a newspaper and hold weekly discussions to promote political awareness, organize “houses of hospitality” to directly serve the needs of the hungry and homeless, and establish communal farms to give people the opportunity to do productive and fulfilling work outside of the flailing industrial economy. Although the effort to publish a radical newspaper, hold political discussions, and organize cooperative communities differed little from the program of traditional anarchists during the 1930s, the new organization had a much broader appeal: by the end of the

---

<sup>65</sup> Goodfriend interview.

decade it printed 150,000 copies of its monthly newspaper and maintained twenty-five houses of hospitality in cities across the country. In addition to its proactive work, Catholic Workers regularly participated in pickets and protests against German anti-Semitism, racism, war preparations, and other ills in its early years.<sup>66</sup>

Catholic Workers' developed a unique political philosophy based on the thinking of founder Peter Maurin. As a young man, Maurin was deeply influenced by Kropotkin's advocacy of craft production in small self-governing communities, as well as by Le Sillon, a Catholic youth movement that sought to create a democratic, decentralist, and pacifist society similar to that advocated by Tolstoy. In the 1920s and early 1930s Maurin elaborated a personalist philosophy in conversation with French thinkers such as Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maratain. Personalist philosophy was first developed by Catholics with social justice commitments who opposed the poverty and war-making that appeared inherent to capitalism, as well as the atheism and anti-democratic practices of the Communists. Personalists asserted that "persons were not subservient to the political community; they were ends in

---

<sup>66</sup> On Dorothy Day, see Dorothy Day, *The Long Loneliness: An Autobiography* (New York: Harper and Row, 1952); Dorothy Day, *Loaves and Fishes* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997[1963]); William D. Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement* (New York: Liveright, 1973). On Peter Maurin, see Arthur Sheehan, *Peter Maurin, the Gay Believer* (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1959). On the Catholic Worker movement, see, Mel Piehl, *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982); Michele Teresa Aronica, *Beyond Charismatic Leadership: The New York Catholic Worker Movement* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987).

themselves, and the preservation and growth of whole persons was the central purpose of the political community.”<sup>67</sup>

In this way, personalism foregrounded the well-being and contributions of each member of society at the very moment the cultures of Western countries were beginning to feel increasingly massified and “faceless.” Yet it did so without promoting individualism in the traditional sense of the word. The concept of the “personal” recognized that individual people were necessarily shaped by the social environment and the particular communities in which they lived. Defending and celebrating each person’s potential, then, required the creation of just, equitable, and loving communities for her or him to thrive in. Personalists committed themselves to the defense of individual dignity whereas individualists sought to protect individual rights.

Save for its Catholic roots, personalism had clear affinities with the anarchism being developed in the 1940s.<sup>68</sup> The Catholic Worker came out strongly against

---

<sup>67</sup> James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 10. Farrell argues that personalist principles provided a foundation for many of the thinkers and movements of the 1960s. On personalism, also see Miller, *A Harsh and Dreadful Love*.

<sup>68</sup> David Dellinger, in fact, used the term as a synonym for anarchism. He wrote, “As a pacifist and personalist (anarchist, if you prefer), I was not predisposed to like the Cuban Revolution.” David Dellinger, “Cuba: Seven Thousand Miles from Home,” *Liberation*, June 1964, quoted in Andrew Hunt, *David Dellinger: The Life and Times of a Nonviolent Revolutionary* (New York: NYU Press, 2006), 119. On the relations between Catholic Worker politics and anarchism, see Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 22-50; Mary C. Segers, “Equality and Christian Anarchism: The Political and Social Ideas of the Catholic Worker Movement,” *The Review of Politics* 40, no. 2 (April 1978): 196-230.

World War II, claiming conditions for a “just war” could next exist given the contemporary social order. The Catholic Worker focus on directly aiding people disadvantaged by the existing system put a new spin on the concept of “direct action” which anarchists had previously conceptualized primarily as action to impede or destroy practices and institutions they found oppressive. Day, Maurin, and other Catholic Workers, in fact, considered themselves anarchists (though they frequently used alternative terms such as “libertarian” or “utopian communitarian”), and urged their followers to investigate thinkers such as Kropotkin as well as organizations such as the IWW. Day once snapped, “Whenever the New York Times refers to me, it’s as a ‘social worker.’ Pacifism and anarchism are just dismissed.”<sup>69</sup> Maurin linked personalism to the communist ethic and the Wobblies’ prefigurative politics in one of his trademark “Easy Essays”:

The Catholic Worker believes  
in the gentle personalism  
of traditional Catholicism.  
The Catholic Worker believes  
in the personal obligation  
of looking after  
the needs of our brother.  
The Catholic Worker believes  
in the daily practice  
of the Works of Mercy.  
The Catholic Worker believes  
in Houses of Hospitality  
for the immediate relief  
of those who are in need.  
The Catholic Worker believes  
in the establishment

---

<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 31.

of Farming Communes  
where each one works  
according to his ability  
and gets  
according to his need.  
The Catholic Worker believes  
in creating a new society  
within the shell of the old  
with the philosophy of the new,  
which is not a new philosophy  
but a very old philosophy,  
a philosophy so old  
that it looks like new.<sup>70</sup>

The small coalition comprised of the Why? Group, the Catholic Workers, and the War Resisters League also jointly picketed Danbury prison in February of 1946 alongside parents of COs who remained incarcerated after the armistice (including Wieck's). On that occasion, Why? Group members distributed a leaflet that read in part, "The war is over, but the government fears that if these men come out, they will influence others to resist the government's power to bring us into war, a power in which your children will be sacrificed. Wars are not stopped by preparing for them...Only such action as these men have taken, joined by workers who refuse to produce any war materials, can secure peace."<sup>71</sup> The picketers were not well received. "It was scary! We were practically run off the road by Danbury residents!"

---

<sup>70</sup> Maurin, reprinted in Thomas Cornell and James Forest, eds., *A Penny a Copy: Readings from the Catholic Worker* (New York: MacMillan, 1968), 9. Maurin's Easy Essays are collected in Peter Maurin, *Easy Essays* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1938).

<sup>71</sup> "Is Thinking A Crime? Men and Women of Danbury!" leaflet, Subject Vertical File, Folder: Anarchism—Resistance, LC.

Goodfriend remembers.<sup>72</sup> After the war, the Why? Group raised funds to mail packages of food and clothing to European anarchists left destitute by the war. When they discovered regulations severely limited what they could send, they picketed the Post Office.<sup>73</sup>

In the 1940s the gregarious anarchist Ammon Hennacy devoted considerable energy to bridging the Catholic Worker movement with the anarchist movement proper. Born in 1893, Hennacy was a member of the Socialist Party when World War I broke out. He refused to enlist because of his belief in working class internationalism. He was imprisoned for two years at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary where he met Alexander Berkman, serving his own term for counseling draft resistance. Shortly after Berkman converted the Midwesterner to anarchism Hennacy was thrown in solitary confinement with nothing but a Bible to occupy him. He was released a self-declared “Christian Anarchist,” believing Christ’s “Sermon on the Mount” to be the “most revolutionary statement ever written.”<sup>74</sup> Hennacy spent much of the following decades as an itinerant laborer in the West and Southwest. He wrote occasionally for the anarchist newspapers *The Road to Freedom*, *Freedom*, and *Man!* and in 1943 became the distributor of *Why?* and *Retort* in the Phoenix, Arizona, area.

---

<sup>72</sup> Dorothy Rogers to Agnes Inglis, May 14, 1946, Box 22, Agnes Inglis Collection, LC; Goodfriend, interview.

<sup>73</sup> Goodfriend, interview; “Millions are Starving! Cut the Red Tape...Open the Mails!” leaflet, Subject Vertical File, Folder: Anarchism—Resistance, LC.

<sup>74</sup> See Ammon Hennacy, *The Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist* (New York: Catholic Worker Books, 1954); Joan Thomas, *Years of Grief and Laughter: A “Biography” of Ammon Hennacy* (Salt Lake City: Hennacy Press, 1974).

Holley Cantine printed Hennacy's writings in *Retort* and even ran a poem written by his daughter, Sharon, who lived with Hennacy's estranged wife. During the Second World War, Hennacy picketed the nearest Federal Building daily and wrote a letter each year to the IRS declaring his refusal to pay taxes during a time of war. He urged other anarchists and pacifists to be as outspoken as he was and to bravely accept the consequences. Dorothy Day portrayed Hennacy's self-motivated acts of personal refusal as exemplary of the Catholic Worker approach to change.

Although Hennacy's enthusiasm for bold acts of resistance was infectious, he often exalted the rebellious initiatives of individuals to the exclusion of collective action. Like the Italian insurrectionists of earlier years, Hennacy distrusted organizations and disregarded the power of collective action by workers or any other group. In 1948 he wrote to Cantine and Rainer:

There is another matter on which I expect we agree, that is that we do not suffer from the illusion that what we say or write will move the masses. [Fred] Thompson of the Wobblie paper [*The Industrial Worker*] recently wrote me that great numbers of workers were wise to this system but were unorganized. I don't believe it, and even if they were organized that would likely spoil them into some party line that would limit their growth. You two living on the land, approximating the simple life (even with Holley's wine and tobacco) and myself doing productive work and denying the tax man and the other war mongering bastards have an influence much greater than thousands of voters and union members who gain 2 penny victories but are bound to the same capitalist wheel of misery.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Hennacy to Cantine and Rainer, June 15, 1948, Box 8, Dachine Rainer Papers, Beinecke Library, Yale University (hereafter DR, BL).

Later in life Hennacy would publish *The One-Man Revolution in America*, a book comprised of biographical sketches of figures who stood against the dominant thinking of their times, indicative of his individualistic conception of how change occurs.<sup>76</sup> His chosen title also hinted at Hennacy's enduring sexism; in the 1940s, he continually complained to male comrades that women undermined men's attempts to live by their principles and he rarely recognized the efforts of radical women (His love interest, Dorothy Day, was one exception). Hennacy's activities were also marred by a self-righteous flair; he clearly saw himself as the ideal one man revolutionary to which others rarely stacked up.<sup>77</sup> A focus on individual action and moral self-righteousness

---

<sup>76</sup> Ammon Hennacy, *The One-Man Revolution in America* (Salt Lake City: Hennacy Publications, 1970). For example, he noted in a letter to Holley Cantine, "Had a letter from Dave Dellinger today. I understand his wife is something special, in that like most wives she did not try to tame him." Hennacy to Cantine and Rainer, June 15, 1948, Box 8, DR, BL. A failure to question traditional gender roles and sexist patterns of thought was, in fact, widespread in the post-war radical pacifist milieu. Contra Hennacy, David Dellinger's political commitments did lead to considerable conflict in his marriage with Elizabeth Peterson. Her sacrifices and commitment to the cause, he later admitted, were continuously undervalued by the movement and by Dellinger himself. Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail*, 170-175. Also see Marian Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

<sup>77</sup> In 1948, for example, Hennacy ranted, "I have been telling Muste for years that he is a pipsqueak and ought to come across and be a leader. He said in Jan. that he would pay no tax and sent me his tax statement. Now it seems what he means is that *next* year he will pay no tax. Preachers are exempt from a withholding tax. The anarchists here laugh at me for refusing openly to pay a tax. Why not sneak around and no one would know it. Be the "Unknown Tax Objector"...." Hennacy to Cantine, May 14, 1948, Box 8, DR, BL.

would consistently undermine later manifestations of anarchist politics that, consciously or not, borrowed from the thinking of 1940s anarchist pacifists.<sup>78</sup>

### **David Dellinger and the Committee for Nonviolent Revolution**

As one of the few anti-war periodicals being circulated, *Retort* made a considerable impact in the WWII CPS camps and penitentiaries. After his release, West Coast CO Paul Lieber Adams wrote to Cantine,

When I was in CPS camp from January to Thanksgiving, 1944, I liked *Retort* very much. As you can guess, most of the men in those labor camps who could be considered politicized at all are men in the libertarian socialist position. Even in the backwoods camp to which I was assigned there were some philosophical anarchists and many younger fellows who have gone down the line from CP membership to sympathy with the IWW and the SP. *Retort* is a good influence for such people.<sup>79</sup>

Another CO who found intellectual sustenance in *Retort* was David Dellinger. Born in 1915 to a patrician Boston family, Dellinger began developing a radical egalitarian worldview after being introduced to the Gandhian movement for Indian independence by leaders of a social gospel Christian organization at Yale University. After experiencing the Spanish Civil War first hand and running messages between dissidents in Nazi Germany, Dellinger returned to the United States and was a leading force in establishing the Harlem and Newark Ashrams. While working carrying out educational and conflict mediation work as a member of the Newark Ashram, he met and befriended Dorothy Day, finding much affinity between her service-oriented,

---

<sup>78</sup> See Mark Andersen, *All the Power: Revolution without Illusion* (New York, Akashic Books, 2004).

<sup>79</sup> Paul Lieber Adams to Holley Cantine, October 24, 1945, Box 11, DR, BL.

religiously inflected brand of radicalism and his own. After serving a year in Danbury Prison as one of the Union Eight, Dellinger founded the People's Peace Now campaign and was sent to Lewisburg Penitentiary in Pennsylvania as a recidivist war resister.<sup>80</sup>

In October, 1944, Dellinger wrote to Holley Cantine, "Dwight MacDonald performs an excellent service in *Politics*. So do you in *Retort*."<sup>81</sup> Dellinger especially appreciated the ways that *Retort* departed from pre-war Leftist publications. "It seems hard for people to pass on from the old questions to the new ones which are germane to the period in which we are living. Much of my gratitude for *Retort* lies in the fact that it is taking a free approach to contemporary issues at a time when it is clear that we must develop a new ideology and methodology if we are to keep alive."<sup>82</sup>

Throughout his incarceration, Dellinger thought deeply about what such a new ideology and methodology would entail, regularly sharing his ruminations with Cantine and other correspondents. Dellinger resigned from the FOR in April 1944 because, he wrote Cantine, "it is pretty well solidified as a little religious cult of the privileged classes—with no prospect of meeting the needs of workers, farmers, artists, revolutionaries, and returning soldiers."<sup>83</sup> Dellinger saw the need for pacifism to be reestablished on a more radical basis. "Personally," he explained to Cantine, "I

---

<sup>80</sup> On Dellinger's life, see David Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail: The Life Story of a Moral Dissenter*, (New York: Pantheon, 1993) and Hunt, *David Dellinger*.

<sup>81</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, October 13, 1944, Box 8, DR, BL.

<sup>82</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, April 20, 1944, Box 8, DR, BL.

<sup>83</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, April 20, 1944, Box 8, DR, BL.

believe that if there is to develop a new movement which is to be historically relevant it must be unequivocally non-violent. Of course the non-violence that we know today is a bourgeois phenomenon with a terminology and attitude that are unsatisfactory. But just as Marxian socialism developed into a fairly hard-headed practical movement out of its early utopianism, so I think pacifism can outgrow its origins and early manifestations.”<sup>84</sup>

For a time Dellinger considered creating “a radical—and non-violent—caucus which would try to work in and through the Socialist Party,” but by 1945 he had started to sketch organizational precepts incompatible with a traditional Leftist party. Dellinger’s letters to Cantine from this period are especially interesting because they were not only in accord with the new ideas developing amongst anarchists, but also proposed ideas that became central to sectors of the civil rights movement, especially the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), in the early 1960s. In February 1945, Dellinger challenged what he perceived to be over-corrections in Cantine’s developing analysis. He believed there were alternatives to abandoning political organizations and campaigns to confront oppressive institutions wholesale.

I think that some kind of communal associations—from each...ability, to each...needs [sic]; and, so far as possible with a non-monetary scale of values—is a great help toward avoiding the pit-falls of intellectualism and professional radicalism without being exhausted by ‘the life of a worker.’ It can, for instance, make it possible for a person to concentrate on writing or other radical work, for a period of time, and then to return to manual, remunerative work for a while. Either by having their own economic enterprise or by alternating in outside work

---

<sup>84</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, March 28, 1945, Box 8, DR, BL.

(say 3 men to fill 2 jobs) they can combine radical and regular work more easily than if each person (family) were on its own. I think a revolutionary organization should operate somewhat similarly. Its full-time workers should be men who have left their other work for 6 months, a year, or so, and will return to it again. I think this would increase the value of this work as well as avoiding some of the problems of a centralized 'leadership' that tends to become sterile, self-perpetuating and conservative...Not only would their [leaders] effectiveness be increased, but others would be developed who are now kept undeveloped or are alienated.<sup>85</sup>

In the early 1960s, some leaders of the black freedom struggle, notably Ella Baker, would concur with Dellinger that the mark of a good leader was his or her willingness and ability to develop leadership capacities in others.<sup>86</sup>

Dellinger's letters to Cantine demonstrate that by the mid 1940s anarchism played a formative role in his thinking and that Dellinger saw the anarchist Cantine as a potential collaborator in the political work he planned to do upon release. "Naturally I have read quite a lot of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Kropotkin, de Ligt, and Trotsky," Dellinger explained in one letter, but he asked Cantine to suggest other relevant political theory for him to delve into.<sup>87</sup> After receiving his release date, Dellinger wrote Cantine that he was eager to meet in person so that they might discuss in more detail "the kind of left-wing libertarian socialist movement in which we are both interested." He floated the idea of a monthly pacifist socialist magazine and pledged that in addition to Cantine, he'd talk with "several key persons about a new

---

<sup>85</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, February 4, 1945, Box 8, DR, BL.

<sup>86</sup> See Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

<sup>87</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, April 20, 1944, Box 8, DR, BL.

organization and about the magazine. The sooner some of us can make definite plans, the better.”<sup>88</sup> Dellinger’s plans for a widely circulated magazine would not come to fruition until 1956, when he founded *Liberation*. However, the communal living arrangements and new radical pacifist formation he was excited to launch got off the ground much sooner. As his biographer, Andrew Hunt, asserts, “once a Christian socialist, Dellinger had evolved into a secular anarchist in Lewisburg.”<sup>89</sup>

Upon his release from Lewisburg in April 1945, Dellinger drew on the network of anarchists, writers, and pacifists that had developed during the war in order to get his life together.<sup>90</sup> When the housing situation Dellinger and his wife, Elizabeth Peterson, had arranged didn’t work out, Dellinger called upon his friend—and the namesake of his first child—Kenneth Patchen. Patchen and his wife arranged for the Dellingers to share a property with them in Mount Pleasant, New York, near Woodstock. In his autobiography, Dellinger recalls that “on the first or second weekend, Betty and I walked about ten miles to visit Holley Cantine, an anarchist who, doing his own printing, published a small magazine that I liked, *Retort*. It was in *Retort* that I had first read one of Kenneth Patchen’s poems, after my first release from prison and just before he showed up at a meeting at which Paul Goodman and I were

---

<sup>88</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, March 28, 1945, Box 8, DR, BL.

<sup>89</sup> Hunt, *David Dellinger*, 86.

<sup>90</sup> Hunt, *David Dellinger*, 82.

speaking.” Holley informed Dellinger that a local publisher, James Cooney, had a press for sale and helped arrange for him to purchase it.<sup>91</sup>

With press in hand, Dellinger and his CO comrades Bill Kuenning, Ralph DiGia and Roy Kepler wrote and printed the first issue of a new militant pacifist journal, *Direct Action*. The journal is notable for an essay on “What to Do Now” by anarchist poet and *Retort* contributor Robert Duncan, as well as for a forum on how to respond to post-war unemployment with comments from George Houser, the CO and participant in the Harlem Ashram who co-founded CORE with Bayard Rustin and James Foreman in 1942. The journal’s most powerful, and historically significant article, however, was a “Declaration of War” penned by Dellinger in the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Japan.

The “way of life” that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki...is international and dominates every nation of the world...With this “way of life” (“death” would be more appropriate) there can be no truce nor quarter....It must be *total war* against the infamous economic, political and social system which is dominant in this country.

The evil of our civilization cannot be combated by campaigns which oppose militarism and conscription but leave the American economic and social system intact. The fight against military conscription cannot be separated from the fight against the economic conscription involved in private ownership of the country’s factories, railroads, and natural resources...*The enemy is every institution which denies full social and economic equality to anyone. The enemy is personal indifference to the consequences of acts performed by the institutions of which we are a part...*

There is no solution short of all-out war. But there must be one major difference between our war and the war that has just ended...*The war*

---

<sup>91</sup> Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail*, 138.

*for total brotherhood must be a nonviolent war carried on by methods worthy of the ideas we seek to serve...* There must be strikes, sabotage and seizure of public property now being held by private owners. There must be civil disobedience of laws which are contrary to human welfare. But there must be also an uncompromising practice of treating everyone, including the worst of our opponents, with all the respect and decency that he merits as a fellow human being...Every act we perform today must reflect the kind of human relationships we are fighting to establish tomorrow.<sup>92</sup>

Although Dellinger's "Declaration of War" did not specifically elucidate the type of social order he believed should replace the current one, in other writings of the period he argued that the atomic bomb made it more clear than ever that political power needed to be "decentralized" away from the modern nation-state. The bombing led to similar conclusions from other WWII resisters whose interest in anarchism had been piqued in the preceding years. In the August 1945 issue of *Politics*, Dwight MacDonald argued that the United States' willingness to use atomic weapons meant, simply, "We must 'get the modern national state, before it 'gets' us."<sup>93</sup> The San Francisco-based anarchist poet Kenneth Rexroth pithily remarked, "The bomb is the state—transubstantiate."<sup>94</sup> At a pacifist conference in 1946, Lewis Hill, a west coast CO who had moved east to collaborate with Dellinger and his circle, asserted, "The modern state is the first enemy."<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> David Dellinger, "Declaration of War," *Direct Action*, Autumn, 1945, reprinted in Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail*, 139-142.

<sup>93</sup> Dwight MacDonald, no title, *Politics*, August 1945.

<sup>94</sup> Rexroth to Cantine and Rainer, no date, Box 11, DR, BL.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in Tracy, *Direct Action*, 50.

Post-war anti-statism shared roots with the traditional anarchist critique of the state, but shifted its focus to a certain degree. While 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchism called for the destruction of nation-states because of their instrumental role in maintaining the oppression of the working class, after WWII anarchists in the United States, England, and elsewhere argued that nation-states threatened the immediate annihilation of humanity as a whole through their production and use of nuclear weapons. This had profound, if not fully articulated, implications for international anarchism in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It contributed to an expanding vision of who would benefit from the anarchist reconstruction of society, and hence, who might be compelled to participate in anarchist activism. This broadened the movement's potential base from "workers" to "humanity." Simultaneously, by arguing that the state stood in opposition to life in general, anarchism was articulated in moral terms. The opposition to nuclear weapons and, later, nuclear energy production, became a major draw to anarchist organizations, internationally, in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>96</sup>

Pacifists recognized that the creation of a technology as complicated and destructive as the atomic bomb required a level of financial commitment and a scale of

---

<sup>96</sup> Many people were introduced to anarchism in the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and in the international peace punk movement of the 1970s and 1980s, for example. On the CND, see Dennis Dworkin, *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006). On peace punk, see George Berger, *The Story of Crass* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009).

organizational apparatus that could only be mobilized by a massive, centralized nation-state. However, they also asserted that the willingness of the state to use such a weapon, and its citizenry to support it in doing so, was, as MacDonald put it, “the natural product of the kind of society we have created.”<sup>97</sup> The values, nationalism, and devaluation of the non-white peoples of the world, among other aspects of U.S. American culture, it seemed to the war resisters, were essential elements in the mass violence enacted against the Japanese. Accordingly, they would focus their activities during the next decade (and beyond) towards both the decentralization of power—both political and economic—and towards the wholesale transformation of American culture towards one respectful of life and dignity, and disdainful of the use of violence.

The editors of *Direct Action* intended for it to become the mouthpiece of the Committee for Nonviolent Revolution (CNVR), a nationwide radical pacifist organization that they helped to found later in February 1946. Members of the CNVR expected that large sectors of U.S. Americans would share their sense of revulsion against the bombing of Hiroshima and the power of nuclear weaponry. They also anticipated a cultural backlash against war like the one that emerged following the First World War. Dellinger and his friends hoped to mold and channel such sentiments into a powerful social movement that could fundamentally reshape U.S. domestic life and foreign policy. The CNVR organized pickets in New York,

---

<sup>97</sup> MacDonald, *Politics*, August 1945.

produced position papers, and held a second conference, but never achieved the momentum Dellinger, DiGia, and others hoped it would. Anti-war and anti-nuclear sentiment never developed to anything approaching the levels the former COs anticipated. Besides lacking sufficient resources, Andrew Hunt argues, “the CNVR’s inflammatory rhetoric and anarchical politics alienated more moderate pacifists such as A.J. Muste and Abe Kauffman. The political landscape of cold-war America simply would not accommodate ultraradical sects like the CNVR.”<sup>98</sup>

Though *Direct Action* and the CNVR both sputtered out by 1948, Dellinger and his closest collaborators—men like DiGia and Sutherland, who grew to embrace anarchism along with Dellinger—worked tirelessly to replace them with more effective organs. To this end, the Dellingers realized David’s dream of creating an intentional community of radical pacifists that might get a jump-start on reinventing the American way of life. Together with three other COs and their families, the Dellingers collectively purchased a twenty acre farm in northwestern New Jersey, built additional houses, and named it the Glen Gardner World Citizens Community, after the nearest town. Soon the printing press was moved to Glen Gardner and established as “Libertarian Press: A Worker’s Cooperative.” Dellinger and his business partner, the former CO Igal Roodenko, who had also embraced anarchism, printed leaflets, periodicals, and books for movement organizations as well as enough commercial contracts to provide a steady, if modest, income for their families and the

---

<sup>98</sup> Hunt, *David Dellinger*, 89.

community as a whole. They edited or contributed to new publications such as *Alternative* and *Individual Action* and built new pacifist organizations such as The Peacemakers and the Committee for Nonviolent Action, as we will see in the next chapter.<sup>99</sup>

While many former COs worked to renovate pacifist organizations, David Wieck worked to give new wind to *Why?* Wieck was released from prison in May of 1946 and quickly gravitated back to the Why? Group. There he met and began a romance with Diva Agostinelli, who had joined the group after Wieck had been arrested. Later he wrote, “After jail I encountered all the new ideas—new to me anyway—that were being talked about at SIA hall and informally within the group.”<sup>100</sup> In 1947, the Why? Group decided to change the paper’s name (as well as the group’s) to *Resistance*. Back in New York, Wieck took on increasing responsibilities for the production of the paper, assuming editorship in all but name. Wieck expanded the size and length of the paper and drew on new printing technology to add photographs and original artwork.<sup>101</sup> Beginning with the first issue, *Resistance* devoted considerable space to chronicling and promoting the activities of radical pacifists, especially their expanding efforts to subvert Jim Crow segregation in the U.S. South.

### **Anarchist Poetry and the Libertarian Circle**

---

<sup>99</sup> Dellinger, *From Yale to Jail*, 137-157; Hunt, *David Dellinger*, 84-107.

<sup>100</sup> Wieck, *Woman from Spillertown*, 220; Wieck to Avrich, March 2, 1992, DTW, TL.

<sup>101</sup> The artwork in *Resistance* included front covers with a collage aesthetic that presaged the visual style made popular amongst anarchists in the 1980s by artists such as Freddie Baer and the punk band Crass.

In the postwar years, anarchists on both the East and West Coasts served as a hinge linking radical pacifists with the literary avant-garde. The addition of Dachine Rainer as co-editor of *Retort* beginning in the Spring of 1946 deepened the journal's connection with influential figures of the literary world. Rainer struck up friendships with the likes of Norman Mailer, e.e. cummings, and W.H. Auden, prompting them to visit Bearsville, and sometimes to contribute to the journal. In 1946 Rainer and Cantine temporarily suspended publication of *Retort* in order to devote themselves to the publication of *Prison Etiquette*, a collection of short pieces by the draft resisters about their experiences during the war.<sup>102</sup> The book featured an essay by David Wieck, drawings by Lowell Naeve, and an introduction by Christopher Isherwood. Rainer had originally solicited Auden to write the piece; he declined but approached Isherwood on her behalf.<sup>103</sup> Naeve also collaborated with Wieck on an account of his time at Danbury titled *A Field of Broken Stones*, which Dellinger and Roodenko published at the Libertarian Press.<sup>104</sup>

The first poem *Retort* ever printed was by Kenneth Rexroth. By the early 1940s, Rexroth had made a name for himself as an avant-garde poet and as a fixture of

---

<sup>102</sup> *Prison Etiquette* eventually became “a classic of criminological literature.” Erving Goffman drew on it heavily while writing his landmark work *Asylums*, and it was excerpted in a recent prison abolitionist anthology *War in the Homeland*. Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961); Joy James et al., eds., *Warfare in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

<sup>103</sup> Dachine Rainer, interview by Julie Herrada, cassette, LC.

<sup>104</sup> Dellinger and Roodenko also printed Ammon Hennacy's autobiography, *The Book of Ammon*, while he was lived at Glen Gardner.

San Francisco's bohemian community of radical artists. Born in 1905, Rexroth received only five years of formal education and lost both his parents by age twelve. He spent his teen years in Chicago's Hobohemia, educating himself about art and politics at the Dil Pickle and Bughouse Square, where his "favorite people were the anarchist and former IWW freelance soapboxers."<sup>105</sup> Later, he travelled the country, developing a lifelong love of the natural world, and meeting some of his radical heroes, including Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman. A fierce autodidact with a boundlessly inquisitive mind, Rexroth imbibed the writings of 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchists alongside poetry and novels in a half dozen languages, works of history, philosophy, natural science, and both Eastern and Western traditions of religious thought. In the 1930s Rexroth found work in New Deal writers programs and participated in the John Reed Clubs, a Popular Front group for writers and artists linked to the Communist Party. By the beginning of World War II, however, he had severed these ties, criticizing CP front organizations as much for what he saw as their artistic ineptitude as for their support of Stalinism. Rexroth's contribution to the first issue of *Retort*, a poem he composed for Emma Goldman upon her death in 1940, signaled three concerns he shared with the journal: its anarchism, determined anti-war stance, and interest in socially conscious literature.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>105</sup> Linda Hamalian, *A Life of Kenneth Rexroth* (New York: Norton, 1991), 16. On Rexroth's life also see, Ken Knabb, "The Relevance of Rexroth" in *Public Secrets: Collected Skirmishes of Ken Knabb, 1970-1997* (Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1997), 310-351.

<sup>106</sup> Rexroth to Cantine, September 2, 1941, Box 11, DR, BL.

... Now in Waldheim where the rain  
Has fallen careless and unthinking  
For all an evil century's youth,  
Where now the banks of dark roses lie,  
What memory lasts, Emma, of you,  
Or of the intrepid comrades of your grave,  
Of Piotr, of "mutual aid"  
Against the iron clad flame throwing  
Course of time?

Your stakes were on the turn  
Of a card whose face you knew you would not see.  
You knew that nothing could ever be  
More desperate than truth; and when every voice  
Was cowed, you spoke against the coalitions  
For the duration of the emergency—  
In the permanent emergency  
You spoke for the irrefutable  
Coalition of the blood of men.<sup>107</sup>

Rexroth may also have provided the impetus for Cantine to begin his correspondence with David Dellinger. After receiving the first issue of *Retort*, he suggested Cantine "try getting something out of the CO camps, thru Dorothy Day, the FOR...and similar sources."<sup>108</sup> Rexroth expressed considerable affinity toward the political vision Cantine was carving out in his essays and editorial decisions. "From the looks of *Retort* #3," he wrote to Cantine, "you are out for another synthesis, Kropotkin, Rosa [Luxemburg], Geo[rge] Fox—which is pretty much my point of view

---

<sup>107</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, "Again at Waldheim," *Retort*, Winter 1942, 8.

<sup>108</sup> Rexroth to Cantine, no date, Box 11, DR, BL. Rexroth astutely continued, "Why don't you try to find Mss. In the Japanese camps? The fact that the intellectuals who all got a good feel out of Sacco-Vanzetti ignored the existence of 250,000 Sacco-Vanzetti kind of tired me out with the intellectuals."

too.”<sup>109</sup> The poet ordered copies of *Retort*, *Why?* and *Politics* in bulk, and distributed them amongst writers and former COs in the Bay Area.

During the war, other Bay Area poets, such as Phillip Lamantia and Robert Duncan, made connections with the New York anarchist-pacifists as well. Lamantia, born into a family of Sicilian immigrants in 1927, became fascinated with poetry and with the European Surrealist movement while still in high school. Beginning in 1924, Surrealism succeeded Dada as the latest iteration of the radically oriented European artistic avant-garde. Although many Surrealist artists associated with Communist and Trotskyist movements in the 1930s, a founding theorist of the movement, André Breton, later argued that the Surrealist vision was most compatible with anarchism and lamented the movement’s detour into support for authoritarian forms of socialism. In 1943, at the age of fifteen, Lamantia submitted poems to the New York avant-garde art journal *View* and was excited to see them published. Breton, then living as an exile in New York while the war raged in Europe, was so impressed with Lamantia’s poetic voice that he began a correspondence and printed three additional poems and a letter outlining the young man’s commitments to Surrealism in his own journal, *VVV*, the following year. In 1944 Lamantia left school to meet the Parisian Surrealist, who had gathered in New York during the war. Although he associated with Breton and helped to edit *View* for a short period, Lamantia was disappointed to find the Surrealist

---

<sup>109</sup> Rexroth to Cantine, no date, Box 11, DR, BL. George Fox was one of the originators of the Quaker faith, one of the “historic peace churches” that helped establish the conscientious objector system after the First World War.

community in New York quickly dissipating as the war drew to a conclusion. However, he sought out the editors of *Why?* and *Retort*, who traveled in some of the same social circles, before returning to San Francisco in 1945.<sup>110</sup>

Robert Duncan also took up the craft of poetry as a high school student in 1930s California, after an English teacher, recognizing his brilliance, plied him with books by D.H. Lawrence, Virginia Wolff, and Eugene O'Neill.<sup>111</sup> At the University of California, Berkeley, Duncan was introduced to radical politics by a circle of friends, mostly female, including Virginia Admiral and Pauline Kael, who attended meetings of the Young People's Socialist League but also expressed anarchist leanings. With them he published a literary journal, *Epitaph*, with contents heavily influenced by the work of T.S. Elliot, Ezra Pound, and other literary modernists. Duncan left school to follow his male lover to the East Coast in 1939. Though the relationship didn't survive, Duncan solidified his understanding and appreciation of anarchist politics while sharing a New York City apartment with Jeff Rall, son of a longtime Wobbly who maintained a personal "library of anarchist literature."<sup>112</sup> There he made the

---

<sup>110</sup> Franklin Rosemont, "Surrealist, Anarchist, Afrocentrist: Phillip Lamantia Before and After the 'Beat Generation'" in *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*, ed. Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno (New York: Routledge, 2003), 124-143; Steven Frattali, *Hypodermic Light: The Poetry of Philip Lamantia and the Question of Surrealism* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005).

<sup>111</sup> Ekbert Faas, *Young Robert Duncan: Portrait of the Poet as a Homosexual in Society* (Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1983), 43.

<sup>112</sup> Robert J. Bertholf, "Decision at the Apogee: Robert Duncan's Anarchist Critique of Denise Levertov" in *Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov: The Poetry of Politics, the Politics of Poetry*, ed. Albert Gelpi and Robert J. Bertholf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006), 7; Faas, *Robert Duncan*, 63-64.

rounds of the galleries, read Salvador Dali's letters at the Museum of Modern Art, and met Yves Tanguy and other Surrealist exiles.

Duncan also lived, for a time, with James and Blanche Cooney at the Maverick artist colony in Woodstock.<sup>113</sup> James Cooney had moved into a cabin in the Maverick in 1936 in exchange for helping Hervey White with printing and carpentry work. There, Cooney launched *The Phoenix*, a literary journal inspired by the writings of D.H. Lawrence, which attracted early contributions from Henry Miller and Anais Nin. In 1939 and 1940 Duncan contributed his own poems to *The Phoenix* and through the Cooney's struck up friendships with Nin, Miller, and East Coast writers such as Kenneth Patchen. When Duncan's Berkeley friend Virginia Admiral moved to New York, she introduced him to Holley Cantine and Dorothy Paul. Duncan visited the couple at their cabin while staying in Woodstock, and later contributed to *Retort*.<sup>114</sup> During the same period, according to Robert Bertholf, "Duncan met Jackson MacLow at an anarchist meeting, September 1943, and that meeting began a political association between the two poets that lasted for many years."<sup>115</sup> The meeting was organized by the Why? Group, of which MacLow was a member of. Duncan attended regularly and "surprised his radical associates by taking them to the Gandhi Ashram in Harlem"—Dellinger and Houser's Harlem Ashram—"which he had discovered

---

<sup>113</sup> On the Maverick colony, see Chapter 2.

<sup>114</sup> Robert Duncan, "Notes on Some Painters and Poets," *Retort*, Winter 1945, 31-34.

<sup>115</sup> Bertholf, "Decision," 8.

earlier.”<sup>116</sup> After exchanging letters about Stalin’s regime and other political matters with Duncan, Dwight MacDonald published his essay, “The Homosexual in Society” in an early issue of *Politics*. The essay was seen as an especially bold move, because it not only outed Duncan as gay in a period where homosexuality was punishable by imprisonment, but also heavily criticized what he saw as the shortcomings and disappointments of that period’s subterranean gay community. He wrote that, while

there are Negroes who have joined openly in the struggle for human freedom, made articulate that their struggle against racial prejudice is part of the struggle for all...there is in the modern scene no homosexual who has been willing to take in his own persecution a battlefront toward human freedom. Almost co-incident with the first declarations for homosexual rights was the growth of a cult of homosexual superiority to the human race; the cultivation of a secret language, the camp, a tone and a vocabulary that is loaded with contempt for the human.

Finding himself dually alienated, Duncan concluded his essay with a plea for a universalist politics that would ground struggles for gay rights in a broader, anarchist-personalist, effort:

[O]nly one devotion can be held by a human being [seeking] a creative life and expression, and that is a devotion to human freedom, toward the liberation of human love, human conflicts, human aspirations...The forces of inhumanity are overwhelming, but only one’s continued opposition can make any other order possible, will give an added strength for all those who desire freedom and equality to break at last those fetters that seem now so unbreakable.<sup>117</sup>

After publishing “The Homosexual in Society,” Duncan found it difficult to develop his literary career on the East Coast and at the end of 1945 he returned to

---

<sup>116</sup> Faas, *Robert Duncan*, 190-191.

<sup>117</sup> Reprinted in Faas, *Robert Duncan*.

California. As the Surrealist émigrés departed for Paris at the close of the European war, Lamantia also headed back to the West Coast. In San Francisco, Duncan and Lamantia attended dinner parties organized by Rexroth and impressed him with tales of freewheeling Why? Group meetings they had participated in while in New York. The three decided to launch a similar, informal anarchist group of their own in the Bay Area. By 1946 Rexroth could brag in a letter to Rainer and Cantine, “We seem to have got together a very healthy little ‘Circle.’ The first English speaking one since [Alexander] Berkman was out here.” The group called itself the Libertarian Circle and rented the top floor of a house on Steiner Street in the Fillmore district of San Francisco, owned by a branch of the Arbeiter Ring, to hold discussions.<sup>118</sup> Meetings drew crowds of fifty or more participants, including friends of Duncan such as Sanders Russell and William Everson, a poet who had served a term at the Waldport CPS camp on the Oregon coast.

With its focus on artistic expression, Rexroth assumed that his group departed in certain respects from its East Coast counterparts. “Our bunch,” he wrote Rainer in 1946, “are not precisely up the same anarchistic alley—I think we are Neo-de Cleyreans—it’s a trifle orgiastic and apocalyptic out here. In theory of course, no impurities. But lots of [Wilhem] Reich and [D.H.] Lawrence and not so much of that fine rational air of Condorcet or whoever it is you read.”<sup>119</sup> Despite this disclaimer,

---

<sup>118</sup> Hamalian, *Kenneth Rexroth*, 149.

<sup>119</sup> Rexroth to Rainer, no date, Box 11, DR, BL. On the formation of the Libertarian Circle, also see Linda Hamalian, *Kenneth Rexroth*, 149-150.

the Libertarian Circle did study the anarchist tradition extensively. Each week a speaker would lecture on a significant person or event in anarchist history, and then open the floor to discussion. Topics included Mahkno's army and the Kronstadt rebellion, the IWW, "Andalusian Agricultural Communes," "communalist groups in the United States," and figures such as Kropotkin, Berkman, Goldman, and Voltairine de Cleyre. "Our objective," Rexroth recalled, "was to refound the radical movement after its destruction by the Bolsheviks and to rethink all the basic principles...to subject to searching criticism all the ideologists from Marx to Malatesta"<sup>120</sup>

Still, a crucial aspect of the Circle's "rethinking" was its critique of Western rationalism. If the elevation of technical and rationalistic thinking over all other modes of human perception and decision-making had led to the World Wars, the atomic bomb, and the industrial assembly line, Rexroth and his cohort, like the Surrealists before them, felt any new, truly transformative social vision would require wholly different epistemological groundings. To this end, one meeting of the Libertarian Circle was devoted to "mystical opposition to the state with reference to Blake, Lawrence, Miller, and other writers."<sup>121</sup> The critique of rationalism was also supported by participants' exploration of Zen Buddhist principles, as taught by D.T. Suzuki, a Japanese practitioner based in San Francisco and charged with translating

---

<sup>120</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, *An Autobiographical Novel*, expanded ed. (New York: New Directions, 1991), 518. Also quoted in Faas, *Robert Duncan*, 192.

<sup>121</sup> Faas, *Robert Duncan*, 192.

the Zen worldview into an American idiom.<sup>122</sup> Lamantia later linked the Zen practice of seeking “awakening” through meditation to the group’s preexisting dedication to poetry. “Like mysticism,” he told an interviewer, “poetry aims to reveal what is unknown to us, but also to make us conscious of what is already inside us.”<sup>123</sup> After a few months, the Libertarian Circle began hosting a bi-weekly Poetry Forum, where members presented some of their writing for criticism and workshopping. Although the Libertarian Circle was predominantly male, writers such as Muriel Rukeyser and Duncan’s college friend Pauline Kael also participated. Rexroth also threw Friday night dinner parties where a revolving cast of writers, former COs, and cultural radicals drank wine, chatted, and critiqued each others work late into the night. Meanwhile, Duncan initiated a Poetry Workshop on the campus of the University of California in Berkeley and public readings at art galleries and cafés multiplied.

In April 1947, Rexroth’s circle gained national notoriety when *Harper’s Magazine* published an expose of the “New Cult of Sex and Anarchy” that had grown rapidly on the streets of San Francisco and the beaches of Carmel since the war had ended.<sup>124</sup> While the novelist Henry Miller had drawn young artists to the Big Sur area

---

<sup>122</sup> James Brown, “The Zen of Anarchy: Japanese Exceptionalism and the Anarchist Roots of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance,” *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 19, no. 2 (2009), 207-242. I explore the relation between Zen Buddhism and anarchism further in Chapter 6.

<sup>123</sup> Garrett Caples, “Phillp Lamantia: Last Interview,” <http://www.angelfire.com/poetry/thepixelplus/nhlamantia.html> (accessed June 2, 2010).

<sup>124</sup> Mildred Edie Brady, “The New Cult of Sex and Anarchy,” *Harper’s Magazine*, April 1947, 312-322.

since 1943, Rexroth also served as a pole of attraction. “Around him, as around Miller,” wrote Brady, “there collected a group of young intellectuals and writers who met weekly in self-education sessions, reading the journals of the English anarchists, studying the old-line anarchist philosophers like Kropotkin, and leavening the politics liberally with psychoanalytic interpretations from Reich.”<sup>125</sup> In the mid 1940s San Francisco was still home to a small grouping of aging Italian anarchists who, in the 1930s, had supported the newspaper *Man!*. Calling themselves “the Libertarians,” they maintained their sense of community by hosting regular socials and fundraising events for *L’Adunata dei Refretarri*. Brady condescendingly noted Rexroth’s attempts to build bridges with this group across the language and generation gap. “At meetings of the Libertarians, today, you will be apt to find young intellectuals sprinkled among the mustachioed papas and bosomed mamas who, until recently, had no such high-toned cooperation.”<sup>126</sup>

---

<sup>125</sup> Brady, “New Cult,” 319. Wilhelm Reich was widely read by anarchists of the 1940s but was not nearly as influential as Brady claimed. Phillip Lamantia wrote to *Resistance*, “Actually among those who consider themselves anarchists, in San Francisco or Northern California, I know of none who accept Reich’s psychology as wholeheartedly as Mrs. Brady made out. And as far as his theory of the ‘orgone’ goes, it leaves most of us pretty cold.” “Letters,” *Resistance*, June 1947, 15. See also Goodfriend, interview; Rexroth to Cantine and Rainer, no date, Box 11, DR, BL. Reich prompted anarchists to consider the political importance of the era’s repressive sexual morality. Interestingly, however, Reich’s analysis led to a greater analysis of the connection between sexual repression and state power than to the oppressive social relations existing between men and women throughout society—a perspective that likely contributed to the less-than-emancipatory character of the early “sexual revolution” of the 1960s.

<sup>126</sup> Brady, “New Cult,” 320.

\*\*\*

These East Coast and West Coast anarchist scenes were further linked in the autumn of 1946 when Audrey Goodfriend and David Koven of the Resistance Group took a cross-country trip to meet their subscribers and assess the state of the anarchist movement outside of New York City. Upon reaching San Francisco, the couple met and befriended members of the Libertarian Circle as well as the older Spanish and Italian anarchists. The couple “loved San Francisco” and decided to stay for the year of 1947, convincing Resistance Group mainstays Mel and Sally Grieg to join them.<sup>127</sup> “We started a discussion group with the children of the Italian anarchists. We met regularly,” Goodfriend explained. Eventually the transplanted New Yorkers decided they “should start a co-operative community of some sort” so that, like the editors of *Retort* and the residents of Glen Gardner, they might “withdraw from the system.”<sup>128</sup> They rented a large house in San Francisco, which they shared until Mel and Sally Grieg left to raise their child in a more traditional setting. David Wieck and Diva Agostinelli followed their friends’ itinerary with the intent of experiencing the San Francisco scene for themselves in the summer of 1947, renting a small house in San Francisco when they arrived. While Diva quickly found a job as a bookkeeper, David

---

<sup>127</sup> Rexroth was on a cross-country speaking tour when the New York anarchists arrived in San Francisco. Koven and Marie Rexroth, Kenneth’s wife, had a brief romantic affair. Although both couples were in open relationships and the Rexroth’s marriage was on the rocks, the liaison created considerable tension when Kenneth returned. Hamalian, *Kenneth Rexroth*, 181-182.

<sup>128</sup> Goodfriend, interview.

found that San Francisco employers seldom hired men to do the clerical work he was used to performing in New York.<sup>129</sup>

In mid-December Diva was able to report in a letter to David's parents, "This weekend we are having a meeting, hope to get the group here reorganized. They seemed to have broken up for a while but now want to start something. Dave is scheduled to open the meeting with a short talk. Hope we can get enough people interested to start something."<sup>130</sup> The East Coast anarchists were eventually able to help reestablish weekly discussion groups, which sometimes continued to attract upwards of fifty people. Art remained central to the Libertarian Circle. As Diva explained, "The group here is sponsoring a series of poetry readings and seminars. On alternate Saturdays, the various young poets read from their works, describe what forces reacted on them to create the poem, etc."<sup>131</sup>

The Libertarian Circle had released the first issue of its literary magazine, *The Ark*, the previous Spring. It featured poetry by established writers such as Cummings, Duncan, and Goodman, as well as by rising stars Phillip Lamantia and William Everson. Ammon Hennacy and George Woodcock contributed essays about their visions of anarchism and *The Ark's* editorial statement clearly announced its personalist credo. "In direct opposition to the debasement of human values made flauntingly evident by the war," the editors wrote, "there is rising among writers in

---

<sup>129</sup> David Wieck to "Dear Folks", December 23, 1947, DTW, TL; Goodfriend, interview.

<sup>130</sup> Diva Agostinelli to Edward and Agnes Wieck, December 16, 1947, DTW, TL.

<sup>131</sup> Diva Agostinelli to Edward and Agnes Wieck, March 12, 1948, DTW, TL.

America, as elsewhere, a social consciousness which recognizes the integrity of the personality as the most substantial and considerable of values.”<sup>132</sup>

For many of the young anarchists of the Bay Area, art wasn't a mere supplement to, or aspect of, political struggle, but was seen as its highest form. Rexroth expressed this view bluntly (and in his typical hyperbolic style) when he wrote to editors of *Retort*, “As for Patchen, Everson, Goodman, Miller, Duncan, myself and a few others—Lamantia for instance for the past year—we are the freedom you are fighting for. Frankly, I think one poem by Kenneth Patchen worth all the possible theoretical journal articles that ever have been and ever will be published—and I don't think Patchen the greatest poet.”<sup>133</sup> In statements such as these, one could misperceive Rexroth as upholding a narrow understanding of freedom that didn't extend beyond the ability of relatively privileged individuals to flaunt cultural expectations. In fact, however, his thinking ran considerably deeper.

Rexroth sometimes described his philosophy as a “religious anarchism” or an “ethical mysticism.” In addition to his encounter with Buddhism, Rexroth's thinking was significantly influenced by the writings of the Jewish mystic Martin Buber, who had, in turn, been mentored by the German anarchist Gustav Landauer. Rexroth characterized Buber's thinking as “a philosophy of joy, lived in a world full of others.” He concurred with Buber that despite its highly conservative practices, certain aspects of Hasidic Jewish life were to be emulated: “Song and dance, the mutual love of the

---

<sup>132</sup> “Editorial,” *The Ark*, Spring 1947, 3.

<sup>133</sup> Rexroth to Cantine and Rainer, no date, Box 11, DR, BL.

community—these are the values...a foundation of modesty and love and joy.” As Ken Knabb explains, “Rexroth [was] always enthusiastic about these ethical or ‘world-affirming’ mysticisms, always quick to praise and encourage any tendencies toward joining contemplation and community, toward integrating religious life with ordinary life in the world.”<sup>134</sup> Rexroth’s thought, expressed in his poetry, essays, and lectures to the Libertarian Circle, constituted another contribution to mid-century personalist anarchism. Like Cantine and Hennacy, Rexroth articulated a politics that centered on individuals living humanely and creatively in a world overflowing with cruelty and destruction. Distrustful of any systematic political ideology and still reeling from the violence of fascism, World War II, and the atomic bomb, Rexroth felt that establishing honest personal relations and a supportive community of the like-minded was the most one could hope for. Poetry, to Rexroth’s mind, was the surest means to practice such communication and community.

This emphasis did not sit well with David Wieck, for it seemed to promote a rejection of political engagement. Coming from his experience of successful resistance to Jim Crow regulations at Danbury and his associations with the CNVR direct actionists, Wieck was more optimistic about the impact political activism could make.<sup>135</sup> He and the other New Yorkers encouraged the Bay Area anarchists to become more proactive. By March of 1948 he could report to his parents, “Last Friday at the discussion group we finally got to something concrete: The [Korean]

---

<sup>134</sup> Knabb, “Relevance of Rexroth,” 335.

<sup>135</sup> Untitled notes, Box 4, Folder 3, DTW, TL.

War. As a result, before the regular discussion next week we will have a kind of “action” meeting to discuss what can be done to promote anti-war activity on the University of California campus. There is talk of leaflets, street-meetings, etc.”<sup>136</sup>

The emphasis on creative work and lifestyle was also confusing to the old-time Italian anarchists who sometimes attended Libertarian Circle events. The Italians welcomed the young New Yorkers, owing to Agostinelli’s family connections and the their relations with the editors of *L’Adunata* in New York. Writing to his parents in December of 1947, Wieck explained that the “comrades” he and Diva had met “fall into two groups—the old Italians , and the young “bohemians.”

Most all of both groups are nice people. But the Italians expect Diva and I to be ‘propagandists’ and neither of us has any inclination for it. They expect us to straighten out the young intellectuals about what anarchism is, and hell we’re as confused as anybody. On the other hand the young intellectuals are up somewhere in a semi-religious sub-stratosphere...

Many of the Italians felt the neophytes were straying too far from anarchism’s roots in class struggle and some, who held conservative views on sexuality, resented their association of anarchism with sexual freedom. Wieck recounted a situation in which these tensions over conflicting views of anarchism boiled over.

When I met Rexroth for the first time, at an Italian dance, we chatted awhile till I made a chance remark that led him to think I was on the side of the Italians and their anti-Bohemianism. He started shouting and raging and insulting about these sectarians who think nobody is any good except proletarians, and how they crucified Emma Goldman because she was too literary, and how they crucified LaSalle...because

---

<sup>136</sup> David Wieck to Edward and Agnes Wieck, March 29, 1948, DTW, TL.

Marx had accused LaSalle of being a spy just because he looked like an intellectual and dressed like an artist.<sup>137</sup>

Although Wieck and Rexroth's relationship improved significantly in the following months, the Libertarian Circle's anti-war activity never materialized and Wieck was never able to find a job. Frustrated on both counts, he and Agostinelli returned to New York City in the Spring of 1948 and resumed publishing *Resistance* there. Wieck focused on his writing in attempt to overcome some of the confusion he harbored about what anarchism might mean in the post-war era. His thinking during this period was heavily influenced by Paul Goodman, who continued to write regularly for the journal.<sup>138</sup> In line with the prevailing interests of the period, *Resistance* published profiles of intentional communities, essays on psychology and anarchism, and reports on the activities of radical pacifists and anti-racist campaigners. Despite the anarchists long-standing antipathies to the Communist Party of the United States, the editors spoke out early and vehemently against the rising tide of McCarthyism and the suppression of Communist speech rights.

---

<sup>137</sup> David Wieck to "Dear Folks", December 23, 1947, DTW Papers, TL.

<sup>138</sup> See David Wieck, "Paul Goodman: Drawing the Line."



**Figure 12:** David Thoreau Wieck, 1940s.  
Image courtesy of David Wieck Photographs Collection, Tamiment Library, New York University.

At the end of the year, Wieck penned an essay that was adopted by the *Resistance* editorial committee as a statement of its position. “Anarchism” synthesized many of the new ideas that had been percolating in Cantine’s *Retort* editorials, Goodman’s “May Pamphlet,” Dellinger’s “Declaration of War” and Dwight MacDonald’s seminal essay, “The Root is Man.” With the goals and values of the anarchist tradition, the Resistance Group was “in complete agreement.” As anarchists, the group believed “freedom is the core of a society of healthy, happy human beings;

that State and Government—that is, law; institutionalized violence; war; individual, group and class domination—are the antithesis of freedom and must be destroyed.”<sup>139</sup> Yet it expressed grave doubts about the traditional methods anarchists had employed to reach their goals. The group rejected an economic view of humanity’s oppression, a teleological view of history, and the old faith that the majority of people were becoming increasingly immiserated and, therefore, radical. “The mass of the people is increasingly indifferent to radical ideas—indifferent even to thinking,” Wieck tartly asserted. Therefore it was incumbent upon anarchists to recognize:

The revolution is not imminent, and it is senseless to expend our lives in patient waiting or faithful dreams: senseless because the revolution of the future requires active preparation: not the preparation of conspiracy and storing of arms, but the preparation of undermining the institutions and habits of thought and action that inhibit release of the natural powers of men and women... The revolution as a “final conflict” exploding out of the condition of man is an illusion; revolutionary growth is necessarily the hard-won learning and practice of freedom.<sup>140</sup>

“Anarchism” went beyond similar statements of the 1940s to suggest a number of practical steps the movement could take. First, it recognized the importance of winning “concrete victories” and “improving existing conditions”—that is, reform struggles. To this end, the statement suggested that direct action campaigns should be prioritized in the workplace and against militarism and racism. Secondly, the anarchist movement should serve as a sphere of freedom. Wieck suggested “Perhaps our strongest achievement and our strongest propaganda is a movement

---

<sup>139</sup> David Wieck, “Anarchism,” *Resistance*, November-December 1948, 4.

<sup>140</sup> Wieck, “Anarchism,” 5.

where...people can find a refuge of sanity and health, where they can learn in practice what anarchism and an anarchist society are. To put it another way: It is much more important to be an anarchist, and live anarchistically, than to merely have anarchist ideas.”<sup>141</sup> Finally, the statement suggested that anarchists should refocus on education. More than newspapers and forums, however, they needed to place significantly more emphasis on relationships within the family. “We believe the present state of ‘human nature’ is largely responsible for the present state of human society, and that this ‘human nature’ is formed in the early part of life when the family and morality and discipline (and not economic or political institutions) are the dominant facts in the life of the individual.”<sup>142</sup>

### **The Living Theatre, City Lights, and the King Ubu**

After Wieck and Agostinelli returned to New York they resumed holding weekly discussions and lectures at the SIA Hall on Broadway. As the 1950s dawned, the Resistance Group attracted a few new participants to their public forums and other

---

<sup>141</sup> Wieck, “Anarchism,” 14. This idea of a “refuge of sanity” and a place within the oppressive society where individuals can experience anarchistic social relations bears similarities to the idea of the “temporary autonomous zone” developed in the 1980s. See Hakim Bey, *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1991).

<sup>142</sup> Wieck’s perspective was gaining considerable currency in Europe by the half-century mark, and “Anarchism” generated considerable excitement and discussion. *Resistance* had fruitful exchanges with the French journal *Noir et Rouge* and the Italians who published *Volontá*. George Woodcock reprinted the statement in *Freedom*, and Colin Ward took a similar position in his influential book *Anarchy in Action*. Colin Ward, *Anarchy in Action* (London: Freedom Press, 1976). On the Resistance Group’s influence on Ward, see David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath*, 322; Colin Ward, “The Anarchist as Citizen” *New Letters* 42.2-3 (1976): 237-245.

activities. Perhaps most significantly, Judith Malina and Julian Beck, a young couple who had launched an experimental theatre troupe, The Living Theatre, became regular participants. Malina had been placed on the subscription list to *Why?* by an anarchist friend as early as 1942. In the middle of the decade she began undergoing gestalt therapy with Paul Goodman and developed a strong friendship with him. In June of 1949 she attended a performance of Goodman's play "Faustina," produced by a troupe that included the poet and *Resistance* contributor Jackson MacLow as both an actor and director.<sup>143</sup> Beginning in April, 1950, Malina began to take more interest in the group, vividly recording some of her first visits to their forums in her diary.

The people who publish *Resistance* meet in a loft rented by a group of Spanish anarchists. A few elderly men sit smoking and reading in the small hall. Under a big plaster bust of a martyred comrade, an old radio shouts in Spanish. There are posters, and a kettle on the stove and rope-bound cartons of books marked *Bombas y Marxismo* and other such titles. The first to arrive is David Wieck, who writes the lead articles in *Resistance*. He is badly/madly dressed and wears the firm, clear-eyed expression of the career anarchist.

The next week Malina attended a *Resistance* Group meeting addressed by the council communist, Paul Mattick. She summoned her courage to argue for the importance of individual acts of resistance in response to Mattick's argument that change was impossible while the workers' movement remained in a state of disrepair. Malina recorded herself as saying, "We stand outside of wars. Our personal example is a useful political action in spite of Mattick's contention that it is a limited expression.

---

<sup>143</sup> Judith Malina, *The Diaries of Judith Malina, 1947-1957* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 42-3, 82.

Gandhi's action, and Christ's too, began as limited expressions." She was pleased that Mac Low, also in attendance, supported her position.<sup>144</sup> Malina began bringing her romantic and dramatic partner, Julian Beck, to meetings and by November they had agreed to co-host a discussion on pacifist forms of revolutionary struggle. After the event Malina confided to her diary that,

Our first political speech meets with a lack of faith among these anarchists... They are deeply resentful of this world (as they should be), often so much so that their concern with destroying the existing order overshadows the work of building a better one. Their attitude is that since revolution is at present impossible and the general strike too difficult to organize, all we can do is break down faith in the existing state. Valuable work, but by itself too negative. And love does not always enter in.<sup>145</sup>

Although Malina was speaking primarily of the older, syndicalist-oriented anarchists that frequented the SIA hall, many of the younger East Coast anarchists and radical pacifists experienced the late 1940s and early 1950s as a frustrating and dispiriting period as well. Rainer and Cantine ceased publishing *Retort* in 1951 to focus on other writing projects and on raising their children. Wieck continued editing *Resistance* until December of 1954, but found himself writing more and more of the content while sales stagnated. In such an environment, anarchist ideas survived first and foremost in the realm of the arts. Although figures like Malina, Beck, Mac Low, Goodman, and Patchen continued writing and performing in and around New York, San Francisco remained the true center of anarchist arts.

---

<sup>144</sup> Malina, *Diaries*, 106.

<sup>145</sup> Malina, *Diaries*, 131-132.

The meetings and poetry readings convened by the Libertarian Circle, the Friday evening salons at Rexroth's house, and the publication of radical literary journals such as *The Ark*, beginning in 1946, all contributed to a lively literary scene in the Bay Area. Founding figures such as Rexroth, Duncan, Lamantia, and Everson were soon joined by other poets such as Phillip Whalen, Gary Snyder, and Michael McClure who shared their interests in ecology, Buddhism, and anarchism. The establishment of a few additional institutions helped amplify this still fairly intimate community of writers and artists into what became known as the San Francisco Renaissance. KPFA-Pacific Radio, the country's first listener supported radio station, began broadcasting from Berkeley in 1949. Pacifica was the brainchild of Lewis Hill, a former CO who had penned the original call for the founding conference of the Committee for Nonviolent Revolution. After growing frustrated with East Coast radical pacifism, Hill relocated to San Francisco, began attending Libertarian Circle meetings, and recruited other anarchists and pacifists including Roy Kepler, David Koven, and Audrey Goodfriend, to help him establish a foundation and begin broadcasting. Once operational, KPFA aired a wide variety of programs including a weekly book review show hosted by Rexroth, followed by a program that sought to popularize Zen Buddhism, hosted by Alan Watts. Theodore Roszak, a California pacifist who later penned a classic text on the 1960s counter-culture, remarked that KPFA had "turned this area into a real cultural and political community."<sup>146</sup>

---

<sup>146</sup> Roszak quoted in Wittner, *Rebels Against War*, 160. On the founding of Pacifica,

The community was also given a boost with the establishment of City Lights Bookstore in 1953. City Lights began as a magazine published by Peter Martin, son of Carlo Tresca.<sup>147</sup> Martin moved from New York to San Francisco in the 1940s to teach sociology. He launched *City Lights* in July of 1952 with contributions from Lamantia, Duncan, Pauline Kaen, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. The next year he and Ferlinghetti launched the bookstore—the first to stock only paperbacks—in a small, triangular shaped storefront on the border between the North Beach neighborhood and Chinatown. It quickly became a meeting point for the flourishing anarchist-pacifist literary scene.

Early patrons of City Lights were also likely to visit the King Ubu Gallery. At the end of 1952 Duncan and two abstract expressionist painters, Harry Jacobus and Duncan's lover, Jess Collins, established a new venue in a converted carriage house in the Marina district, the King Ubu Gallery. Duncan and his collaborators took their inspiration from Alfred Jarry, a late-19<sup>th</sup> century French anarchist whose play *Ubu Roi* protested the means by which “governments inhibit the free expression of individual

---

see Tracy, *Direct Action*, 52, 59-60; John Whiting, “The Lengthening Shadow: Lew Hill and the Origins of Listener-Sponsored Broadcasting in America” [www.whitings-writings.com/lengthening\\_shadow.htm](http://www.whitings-writings.com/lengthening_shadow.htm) (accessed, Feb. 21, 2010).

<sup>147</sup> Peter Martin's mother was Sabina Flynn, the younger sister the famous organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, to whom Tresca was at one time married. Peter was born as the result of an affair Tresca and Sabina Flynn carried on while Sabina shared an apartment with Elizabeth and Tresca in 1922. Martin's surname was that of James J. Martin, Sabina's estranged husband at the time of the affair. Tresca visited with Martin regularly during his childhood until Sabina remarried and the family relocated to Arizona. Pernicone, *Carlo Tresca*, 244-245.

feeling and impulse.”<sup>148</sup> The Bay Area artists may have been introduced to the play by Malina and Beck, who had translated and directed a performance of *Ubu Roi* in New York earlier in the year.<sup>149</sup> The curators of the King Ubu planned from the outset that they would only maintain the gallery for a year in order to mitigate against the possibility of profiting off of avant-garde art. During this time, however, they displayed over a dozen exhibits and hosted regular poetry readings by the likes of Rexroth, Lamantia, and Weldon Kees, a transplant from New York who had been close to the Why? Group in the 1940s.<sup>150</sup> Duncan, Jacobus, and Jess made good on their word and shut down the King Ubu at the end of 1953. It had proven so useful to the Bay Area radical art milieu, however, that another group assumed renamed the space the Six Gallery and continued to organize similar readings and shows.

As we will see in Chapter 6, the Six Gallery, and the San Francisco anarchist poetry scene more generally, would, a year later, prove foundational to the emergence of the Beat counter-culture. Perhaps counter-intuitively, the aversion to organizing and the inward-looking perspectives of the west coast anarchist writers served to insulate them from the dismal political climate of the late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. Not expecting inspiration to come from the “masses” they flourished by inspiring and enlightening one another.

---

<sup>148</sup> Patrick Frank, “San Francisco 1952: Painters, Poets, Anarchism” in *Drunken Boat*, no. 2, (1994), 148.

<sup>149</sup> Malina, *Diaries*, 231-241.

<sup>150</sup> Frank, “San Francisco 1952,” 150. On Kees and *Why?*, see Hamalian, *Kenneth Rexroth*, 184.

When it became clear that despite their varied innovations anarchism would remain a severely marginalized political current, activists from other sectors of the movement moved on from the anarchist press to a variety of new projects and callings. Audrey Goodfriend and David Koven launched a libertarian educational center—the Walden School—in Berkeley. David Wieck earned a PhD in philosophy from Columbia University and moved with Diva Agostinelli to Troy, New York, to teach at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in 1959. He contributed articles to David Dellinger’s *Liberation* until the mid-1960s, when the two men had a falling out over the Cuban Revolution. In a display of just how personal inter-generational anarchist connections were at mid-century, Dachine Rainer left Holley Cantine to begin a relationship with Teddy Ballantine, widower of Emma Goldman’s niece Stella Commyn Ballantine. Rainer and Ballantine moved to London where they contributed to the efforts of the Freedom Press anarchist group. After *Retort* ceased publication, Cantine wrote radical science fiction and fantasy stories and translated Voline’s multivolume account of the degeneration of the Russian revolution.

If these writers focused primarily on the “education” and “anarchist culture” planks of the *Resistance* program, Dellinger, DiGia, Sutherland, and other pacifists maintained the “direct action” component. Over the next decades they relentlessly organized campaigns against U.S. militarism, nuclear weapons, and white supremacy. As we will see in Chapter 5, they served as respected mentors to young organizers

involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Students for a Democratic Society, and other emerging organizations of the New Left.

### **Conclusion**

Although it did not flourish immediately, a new form of anarchism emerged between 1940 and 1954. The period is especially notable for the profound number of new thinkers, ideas, and perspectives taken up by U.S. anarchists. During the interwar years, anarchists had largely recycled theoretical frameworks developed by the movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The production of new anarchist theory was preempted by the more immediate needs of prisoner solidarity and combating fascism and authoritarian Communism. The outpouring of new ideas and interests in the 1940s gives one the sense that anarchist thinkers felt the need to make up for lost time. They drew from the anthropology of Franz Boas and Margaret Mead, the psychology of Sigmund Freud and Wilhelm Reich, and literature of James Joyce, D.H. Lawrence, and many other modernist authors. A variety of proximate sources—Gandhi, de Ligt, and Maurin—influenced the turn toward nonviolence, though each of these figures, as well as Tolstoy, shared a common intellectual and moral debt to an unlikely pair of influences: Peter Kropotkin and Jesus of Nazarene. Like Gandhi, post-war anarchists in the United States drew from a range of non-Christian religious traditions as well. Indeed, the range of spiritual influences upon the post-war generation—including Social Gospel Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism, Quakerism, Jewish Mysticism, and Zen Buddhism—is perhaps the period's most surprising development, considering

the extent to which an outspoken hostility to all religion defined traditional forms of anarchism.

Drawing on these and other sources, the new anarchists distinguished their conception of anarchism from pre-WWII anarchism in a variety of ways. First, they reluctantly surrendered the belief that revolution was likely to occur soon. Moreover, they deduced from the experiences of the Russian Revolution and Spanish Civil War that simply sparking a violent mass upheaval would not lead directly to the sort of world they dreamed of. Such thinking led to at least three philosophical reconsiderations. First, anarchists began to acknowledge that existing power relations and forms of domination were more extensive and more difficult to overcome than previous anarchist theorizations of “the state” imagined. Secondly, they recognized (or remembered) the means by which one makes a revolution fundamentally effect what a post-revolutionary society will look like. While Bakunin and Kropotkin had insisted on means-ends congruence in the forms of organization anarchists adopted, they had stopped short of extending the analysis to the consideration of the effects of coercive violence. Post-war anarchists took this logical step. Finally, they began to question the assumption held by earlier anarchists that humans are, by nature, essentially good and will act altruistically and cooperatively if the repressive fetters of the state and the wage relation were removed. Instead, they began to consider the ways in which the social and psychological environment a child grows up in, works to form his or her individual nature.

Differences between the new and older conceptions of anarchism were well illustrated in an exchange published in 1951. That year the Free Society Group of Chicago—a remnant of the interwar anarcho-syndicalist movement—produced a long pamphlet entitled *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View* which consisted of short essays by notable anarchists from around the world, attempting to take stock of the situation the movement found itself in as the Cold War intensified. The revered anarcho-syndicalist G.P. Maximoff, for instance, lamented,

Since we cannot destroy both warring factions [in the Cold War] simultaneously, and in the absence of a third force—an organized, independent working class—we have only this alternative: to sit by passively (an attitude which neither camp will permit), or side with those whose victory will give us our best chance to unite the proletariat and overthrow the victors. That side, strange as it may seem, is the capitalist bourgeoisie, not the Communist dictatorship represented by a new class of bureaucrats. Such is the paradox of history.<sup>151</sup>

With these words, Maximoff advocated a strategic alliance with the West for the duration of the Cold War, still clinging to a vision of a cataclysmic overthrow of the state by a working-class strategically led by revolutionaries. Rudolf Rocker advocated a similar position in his contribution. In contrast, David Wieck presented a poetic statement of the new vision he and his cohort had been advocating. He rejected becoming a “realist” if that required anarchists to “argue the relative merits of a bomb now or two years from now; support (that is, help create) a war, be its soldiers, fabricate its weapons.” Instead, he declared,

---

<sup>151</sup> G.P. Maximoff, “State of the World,” in *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View*, ed. Free Society Group (Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951), 5-6.

We have learned that as groups living the ethics and meaning of Anarchism we create an Anarchist community in and as our movement, and demonstrate by this new society our ideas, and their practicality...By daily acts of life we are more deeply angered, gifted with hatred at a kind of life (as it is); more deeply knowing, in our hearts, that we must live differently; more earnestly searching in each direction our strength allows us, ways and instruments and friends and comrades in a struggle which must have this form: the creation of new life, or continuing death.<sup>152</sup>

Though the anarchism practiced in the United States during the 1940s incorporated new ideas and departed from pre-war traditions in significant ways, it did not mark a complete break. As we have seen, numerous figures that rose to prominence in the post-war period had already been active in anarchist circles in the 1930s. While they became estranged from some anarchists of the older generations, they continued to communicate with and be mentored by others, such as Raffaele Schiavina and members of the British Freedom Press Group. Rather than reinvent anarchist strategy and tactics from scratch, the post-war generation made at least two major adaptations to older precepts. They upheld the traditional anarchist emphasis on taking “direct action” when faced with a social wrong, rather than appealing to authorities to improve the conditions. However, the younger anarchists nearly unanimously decided that direct action was much more effective, in both the short and long run, when it was conducted nonviolently. Whereas classical anarchists envisioned the revolution taking place through a violent mass uprising, post-war

---

<sup>152</sup> David Wieck, “Anarchism, Anarchy, Anarchists,” in *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View*, ed. Free Society Group (Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951), 51.

anarchists—such as Dellinger in his “Declaration of War”—envisioned campaigns of mass refusal undertaken without violence. While traditional anarchists believed that bombings and assassinations carried out by individuals or small groups could prompt these anticipated insurrections or general strikes, the new anarchists similarly hoped that openly declared war tax refusal, three-person pickets, and hunger strikes would touch the conscience of much larger segments of the population, prompting them to act in a concerted fashion.

The new generation of anarchists also carried into their work the anarchist commitment to practice prefigurative politics. The IWW’s call to begin building the “new world in the shell of the old” was widely touted in the 1940s by figures such as Cantine, Goodman, and Maurin. In the Wobblies’ vision, the structure of their democratic, industrial unions prefigured the organizational form that would stitch together all of post-capitalist society. Post-war anarchists developed the metaphor in new directions, however. They urged anarchists begin creating the new world in all aspects of their daily lives—including the types of community they lived in, the sorts of family relationships they maintained, and the ways they treat fellow humans in need. Anarchists had attempted similar acts of prefiguration to varying degrees in earlier periods—as the 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchist singing and drama societies, and the inter-war anarchist colonies attest to. In the post-war period, however, anarchists’ prefigurative lifestyles and communities were less and less embedded in broader working-class traditions and neighborhoods. Perhaps even more important, for the

first time, some (though not all) anarchists of the period argued that changing their own patterns of living and creating meaningful and challenging works of art, could and even *should* constitute the sum total of the anarchist strategy for making a social revolution.

A related feature of the post-war anarchist movement is its changing class composition. Key figures of this period—Wieck, Goodfriend, Agostinelli, and Goodman among them—benefitted from the expansion of federal support for higher education in the 1930s and 1940s to become the first members of their working-class families to attend college. That experience helped expose them to the worlds of literature, psychology, anthropology and other disciplines. Federal repression of war resisters ironically served to introduce these working-class radicals to pacifists from more affluent backgrounds who had arrived at an anarchist position more from their opposition to violence than their opposition to class exploitation. These personal paths combined with the new anarchism's de-emphasizing of labor organizing to shift the demographic and cultural norms of anarchism away from the working class.

The mid-century period has bestowed a mixed and complicated legacy on liberation movements which have succeeded it. Anarchists took a leap forward by adopting insights of 20<sup>th</sup> century critical theory, by actively supporting freedom struggles of people of color, and by expanding their estimation of the many aspects of a new world that could be prefigured inside the shell of the old. The milieu's commitment to gender equality, for example, was uneven but an improvement over

that of the previous generation of U.S. anarchists. Men continued to dominate the front lines of direct action and to produce the most respected theoretical writings, but women took on prominent roles editing and contributing to publications. Participants worked to incorporate an understanding of sexuality into their critiques of power while making conscious efforts to challenge traditional gender roles in their personal lives.

Yet the anarchism of the 1940s also became divorced from working-class struggles. The ideology was upwardly mobile along with the few young people who worked to maintain it during these difficult years. Because of conservative tendencies in the leadership of the labor movement and the perceived acquiescence of working people in the face of expanded post-war consumer opportunities, anarchists largely gave up hope in the working class as a collective agent of change. They weren't able to muster the long-range vision needed to anticipate later shifts in capitalist development that would again leave workers in precarious conditions that compelled them to more forcefully fight back. Anarchists of the period were also ambivalent about organizing. This stemmed partially from concerns—born of recent historical events—about recreating hierarchies and delegating power to leaders which could then be turned against the movement itself. But it was also due to the promotion, by some participants, of artistic expression and the maintenance of resistant lifestyles as the highest form of activity for social rebels to engage in.

Despite these shortcomings, the writers and activists of the 1940s and early 1950s adapted the anarchist tradition to the disheartening historical circumstances they

found themselves in. By doing so they were able to keep the libertarian socialist current alive during a period of total war, McCarthyism, and declining labor movement militancy. Having done so, the anarchist-pacifist-poet milieu of the 1940s and early 1950s diverged into two distinct streams during the 1950s and early 1960s, each offering its own vital contribution to U.S. cultural and political life. In the first of these streams, anarchist-pacifists participated in the mass civil rights struggles of the 1955-1965 period. They contributed tactics, organizational techniques, and institutions, including an important movement journal, at the same time their thinking about the nature and potential for revolutionary struggle was transformed by the powerful experiences of the black freedom movement. The second stream devoted itself the invention and promotion of new values, life priorities, and senses of identity, in the form of the Beat counter-culture of writers, actors, musicians, and artists. These two streams powerfully reconverged in the charged atmosphere of the mid-1960s, profoundly influencing the tenor of the counter-culture, anti-war, student, and women's movements that were grew to mass proportions by the end of the decade.

## **Chapter 5: Libertarian Socialism, the Black Freedom Movement, and National Liberation**

In his generative work *Black Is a Country*, Nikhil Pal Singh claims, “A more or less consistent tradition of radical dissent can be traced, in which black activists and movements produced political discourse that strained the nation-form, stretching the boundaries of U.S. liberal and democratic thought.”<sup>1</sup> Singh notes, for instance, that W.E.B. Du Bois’ approach to racial justice in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century challenged fundamental assumptions of liberal democracy. “His was an early effort to move democratic theory and practice beyond its own implicit ‘commitment to a unified public that tends to exclude or silence some groups’ and toward...a reconstruction of democratic politics,” one that potentially provided what Du Bois called a “method of reorganizing the state.”<sup>2</sup> Such formulations raise a series of questions that have never been sufficiently investigated. In what ways have black radical thought and freedom struggles overlapped with anarchism and its long standing commitments to developing “direct democracy” and egalitarian alternatives to nation-states? When and how have anarchists contributed to the freedom struggles of peoples of color, and what have black intellectuals and activists found of value in the anarchist tradition?

---

<sup>1</sup> Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 53.

<sup>2</sup> Du Bois quoted in Singh, *Black is a Country*, 63.

In this chapter I begin to address these questions by examining the manner in which two groups of anarchists related to the black freedom movement in the United State and national liberation struggles abroad between the years 1955 and 1965. I consider, first, the efforts of anarchist-pacifists who participated in organizations such as the War Resisters League, Peacemakers, and *Liberation* magazine, and, secondly, the ideas forwarded by the anarcho-syndicalist Libertarian League. The encounter between these groups and black freedom struggles had mutually transforming impacts on each of the parties involved. The experience helped anarchists previously focused on class struggle to overcome economistic thinking at the same time it encouraged civil rights organizations to adopt non-statist direct action tactics and horizontal organizational forms. Both of these transformations had abiding affects on the post-1960s left.

### **Nonviolent Revolutionaries Against War and Racism**

Resistance to the racial segregation of federal penitentiaries by the young men who refused to fight in the Second World War prompted considerable collaboration and cross-fertilization between anarchists and radical pacifists inspired by religious beliefs and the non-violent methods of social conflict developed by Gandhi. The work strikes and hunger strikes undertaken by these young men had two notable effects. First, they functioned as experiments for developing techniques of non-violent direct action, which proved that such methods could compel concrete policy changes, even when enacted by only a small number of participants—at least in the restricted

institutional setting of a prison. Secondly, the prison strikes created a sense of community amongst the participants that empowered them to launch ambitious campaigns of social transformation upon their release. The success of non-violent resistance in prisons and Civilian Public Service camps helped to cement the anarchist-pacifist perspective which became the dominant form of anarchism in the United States between 1940 and 1960.

As we saw in Chapter Four, some of the most active anarchist-pacifists formed the Committee for Nonviolent Revolution with other former conscientious objectors in February of 1946. Differences between nominal “anarchists” and “socialists” involved with CNVR were subsumed under the mantle of an emerging politics of *revolutionary nonviolence*. In 1946 both the anarchist movement and the Socialist Party were husks of their former selves, with neither exerting appreciable organizational or intellectual weight on the national scale. At the CNVR’s two national meetings, members agreed that “decentralized democratic socialism,” a version of worker self-management, was their economic ideal. They did not specify their vision of other aspects of a post-revolutionary social order, but agreed that direct action, rather than electoral campaigns, should be the primary means to force a fundamental transformation of the modern war-making nation-state. CNVR activists devoted themselves to fighting what they saw as the causes of war—capitalism, racism, and colonialism, first and foremost—in addition to resisting war itself. In their search for a base of support, leading nonviolent revolutionaries—former COs

including David Dellinger, Ralph DiGia, Roy Finch, Bill Sutherland, and others—made the significant decision to attempt to radicalize members of the traditional peace movement rather than radicalize members of labor unions, as pre-war anarchist and socialist movements had done. While CNVR directed leaflets and personal appeals at industrial laborers, who they hoped to recruit to their cause, the radical pacifists saw peace organizations, rather than unions, as the most strategic *institutional* means to begin realizing their goals. It was through their contributions to a network of pacifist and anti-racist organizations that anarchists made their most significant contributions to the historic mid-20<sup>th</sup> century movement for African American civil rights. Although these organizations were not, in any way, pure anarchist organizations, practices they initiated have continued to inform anarchist activism up to the present day.

Upon their release from prison in the mid-1940s, non-violent revolutionaries were happy to discover an institutional vehicle to continue their anti-racist work already existed in the form of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Travelling throughout the country in 1940 and 1941, Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR) Youth Secretary Bayard Rustin had found little support for pacifist resistance to the war but considerable enthusiasm for using nonviolence as a means of resolving racial conflicts. In 1942 FOR approved proposals submitted by its young staff members, Rustin, James Lawson, and George Houser, to launch a project that would apply Gandhi's nonviolent philosophy and direct action techniques to the American system

of racial segregation and inequality. CORE grew quickly, with Houser, Rustin, and Lawson remaining on the FOR payroll even as they came to focus the majority of their attention on anti-racist activities. CORE members assiduously studied Krisnalal Shridharani's book on Gandhian means, *War Without Violence*, as a manual for non-violent action and soon became more action-oriented. In Chicago, New York, Washington, D.C. and other Northern cities in CORE chapters, members patiently worked to desegregate restaurants, amusement parks, and other public facilities.<sup>3</sup> To do so they developed campaigns that often culminated in disciplined acts of non-violent civil disobedience, such as sit-ins conducted by inter-racial teams of volunteers.

Marian Mollin has shown that CORE was both multi-racial and nearly gender-balanced from the start. "Women often spearheaded local chapters and played key roles on CORE's national committees...they organized demonstrations, led the picket lines, and even risked arrest in the nonviolent battle against Jim Crow," she remarks.<sup>4</sup> This stood in contrast to the staffs and executive committees of the FOR and WRL, which were predominantly comprised of white men. It also stood in contrast to the CNVR, comprised mainly of former COs, who frequently proved unaware of the ways

---

<sup>3</sup> August Meir and Elliot Rudwick, *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); James Tracy, *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Marian Mollin, *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 22-25.

<sup>4</sup> Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 24.

in which the all male environment of their prison and CPS experiences had created a close-knit community that valued acts of heroic masculinity (if of a pacifist nature) that unintentionally undervalued and excluded women and their political contributions. “The ‘brotherhood’ they had created,” Mollin observes, “was a literal one, a political fraternity.”<sup>5</sup>

As an organization founded on Gandhian principles, with two WWII draft resisters as staff members, CORE proved attractive to radical pacifists looking to continue their wartime action against Jim Crow upon being released from prison. While participating in CORE activities, however, many also felt the need to promote non-violent direct action amongst traditional peace constituencies. 1947 was a year of bold initiatives by the nonviolent revolutionaries. It saw an anarchist-pacifist takeover of one of the country’s most significant pacifist organizations, the founding of new intentional communities, and the invention of provocative new tactics that would become emblematic of the movements of the 1960s.

### **The War Resisters League and Peacemakers**

In 1947 the former COs and war resisters who had formed the CNVR sought positions of influence within the War Resisters League in order to push it’s nearly 10,000 members in a more radical direction. At that time the WRL’s executive committee was comprised primarily of liberals and social democrats, such as executive secretary Abe Kauffman and founder Jessie Wallace Hughan, who oriented

---

<sup>5</sup> Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 30.

the organization to educating the public about pacifist alternatives to war and counseling potential draft resisters. Members of the faltering CNVR recognized that gaining access to the WRL's membership lists, newsletter, and funds would prove crucial to helping them promote their more expansive vision of Gandhian resistance to inequality and the culture of violence. Voting as a bloc, CNVR members and other former-COs managed to seat Dave Dellinger, Roy Finch, Igal Roodenko, Dwight MacDonald, George Houser and Jim Peck on the executive committee.<sup>6</sup> Of the six, only Dwight MacDonald had not served a term as a CO. Dellinger, Finch, Roodenko, and MacDonald were, at the time, avowed anarchists, and Houser and Peck were personally and politically close to the anarchists.<sup>7</sup> David Wieck, editor of the anarchist journal *Resistance*, also became an active member of the War Resisters League after being released from prison in May, 1946.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Tracy, *Direct Action*, 57.

<sup>7</sup> Houser had worked with Dellinger in the Harlem Ashram before the war, and contributed to *Direct Action* afterward. He identified as a socialist, however. Peck had become close friends with David Wieck at Danbury, where the two participated in the anti-Jim Crow strike together. When he was released Wieck's parents, Edward and Agnes, befriended him and provided emotional support and while he got back on his feet. Later in life Peck wrote to Wieck, "I'm grateful to you for having sent me to Ed and Agnes when I got out. As I said in that letter, they and Mat Kauten were my only friends at that time. I got to love them like the parents I never had." Peck to Wieck, Sept. 28, 1979. See also, Peck to Wieck, Oct. 26, 1966, David Thoreau Wieck Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University (hereafter, DTW, TL).

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Wieck's address to a 1952 WRL conference, "Problems of Anti-War Activity," published in the London anarchist periodical *Freedom*, August 2, 1952, Box 5, Folder 4, DTW, TL.

In April of 1948 the country's radical pacifists regrouped in Chicago to create a new institutional vehicle to express their politics. The meeting of nearly 300 radical pacifists replaced the CNVR with Peacemakers, a new organization that included former CNVR members, such as Dellinger, Rustin, and Houser, but also attracted other prominent pacifists such as A.J. Muste and Dwight MacDonald. Although it toned down its rhetoric, Peacemakers still advocated a broad non-violent social revolution and continued to tout the strategic value of civil disobedience and direct action. As in the CNVR, some of its most active members were anarchists while others identified as socialists or independent radicals. Peacemakers had an overlapping membership and executive board with the WRL and functioned as a something of a radical pacifist cadre organization. Its members served as a "militant minority" that attempted to push the broader, established peace movement, including the membership of the WRL and the FOR, in a more radical direction.<sup>9</sup>

Peacemakers is perhaps most significant in the history of U.S. anarchism for its organizational form and for aspects of its strategy. The group was organized as a network of small groups or cells that elected a steering committee but were given the freedom to operate autonomously from one another in pursuit of the organization's defined goals. Peacemakers encouraged groups of sympathizers to join and participate

---

<sup>9</sup> In this sense, the Peacemakers-WRL relationship in some ways paralleled that of the FAI with the CNT during the Spanish Civil War. On "militant minority" organizations functioning within and alongside mass organizations in anarchist history, see Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009), 239-267.

as small groups, rather than as individuals.<sup>10</sup> In this way they hoped to develop an alternative structure to that of traditional membership organizations, such as the War Resisters League, that consisted of a staff and a large number of “members” who frequently did little more than pay dues and receive mailings. At the same time, Peacemakers consciously and explicitly rejected the democratic centralist model of the Communist Party, in which decisions were made by officials and expected to be carried out by members at lower positions in the organizational hierarchy. Members of Peacemakers cells were considered equals and the organization adopted the Quaker method of making decisions by discussing the matter at hand until the group achieved consensus. As historian Scott Bennett writes, the group believed this form of organization “could challenge and eventually replace centralized, hierarchical institutions.”<sup>11</sup> Peacemakers appears to be the first organization in which anarchists adopted the consensus method to make decisions rather than voting. Moreover, its cell structure in some ways mirrored the concept of networked “affinity groups” that arose during the Spanish Civil War and that anarchists would again draw upon in the 1970s.<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Hunt, *David Dellinger: The Life and Times of a Nonviolent Revolutionary* (New York: New York University, 2006), 93.

<sup>11</sup> Scott Bennett, *Radical Pacifism in America: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 148-149.

<sup>12</sup> There is however a much longer tradition of questioning the ethics of majority rule voting. At international anarchist gatherings, delegates often voted on issues but declared only those who voted in the affirmative would be held to their position if they were found to comprise the majority. To impose a decision on the minority was

Peacemakers was also significant for the emphasis it placed on members forming cooperative intentional communities that would allow them to engage in egalitarian personal relations and anti-consumerist lifestyles, while providing emotional and financial support necessary to continue their protest activity. Marion and Ernest Bromley, who, with another Peacemaker couple, anchored one such community near Cincinnati, Ohio, saw the focus on intentional community building as a response to “the need for suitable housing, closer association, and mutual aid which would enable Peacemakers to ‘wage peace’ more effectively.”<sup>13</sup> The Bromley’s use of the term “mutual aid,” long associated with Peter Kropotkin, was more than a coincidence. The anarchist movement, more than any other political tendency, was responsible for carrying the idea of the utopian community as a strategy of social change into 20<sup>th</sup> century America. Dellinger was a major proponent of communal living within Peacemakers and the Glen Gardner Intentional Community served as an early model. However, other members, such as Muste, urged members to stay focused on organizing campaigns and actions that attracted media coverage in order to promote the members politics beyond their own circles.<sup>14</sup>

Dellinger was certainly not opposed to such projects. In 1953, he, Bill Sutherland, Ralph DiGia, and Art Emory, travelled to Paris where they embarked on a

---

considered antithetical to anarchist values. See Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, trans. Paul Sharkey (Oakland: AK Press, 2002), 83-84.

<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 67.

<sup>14</sup> Tracy, *Direct Action*, 62-63, 65-66.

bicycle trip to Moscow. The bicycle trip was intended to promote dialogue and understanding between the people of the capitalist and communist blocs, as a means of undermining Cold War fear mongering. The riders could not secure visas to enter the Soviet Union, but they took pride in handing out leaflets in Soviet occupied East Germany, which they snuck into by commuter train.<sup>15</sup>

The debate within Peacemakers over the relative emphasis to be placed on community building and these forms of inventive protest activity echoed closely the discussions anarchists had in the 1920s and 1930s regarding the merits of forming “colonies,” and extended the wartime debate between Dellinger, Holley Cantine, and others, about prioritizing withdrawal to prefigurative communities over confrontational activity. Whereas Dellinger had criticized Cantine for overemphasizing the former during his incarceration at Lewisburg, he had become one of the strongest advocates of intentional communities by the late 1940s, when it was becoming increasingly clear that a mass revolutionary movement was nowhere in the making. Peacemaker communities served as an important conduit of the strategy of building intentional communities, linking the anarchist colonies of the 1920s and 1930s to the counter-culture of the late 1960s, when “back to the land” communes flourished.

---

<sup>15</sup> Tracy, *Direct Action*, 68-75.

## **Draft Card Burning and the Journey of Reconciliation**

The beginning of 1947 was a busy and exciting time for the nonviolent revolutionaries grouped around the CNVR, WRL, FOR, and CORE. Still energized from their victories in prison and still enraged by the atomic bombing of Japan, they innovated at least two tactics that made only a modest impact at the time but would become iconic to the movements of the 1960s. On February 12, Dellinger, Muste, Dwight MacDonald, and Bayard Rustin lead a ceremonial draft card burning in New York City in which sixty-three draft age men participated. Approximately 400 other young men, living in other parts of the country, returned their cards to draft boards as part of the demonstration. Two months later, members of the non-violent revolutionary community embarked on the Journey of Reconciliation, an interstate direct action campaign on wheels, which served as the model for the 1961 Freedom Rides. In June of 1946, the Supreme Court prohibited segregation on busses and trains that crossed state lines. As coordinators of CORE, Rustin and Houser began to construct a plan to test enforcement of the ruling on private bus lines. They gathered a planning committee that included the anarchist-pacifist Bill Sutherland as well as the dynamic NAACP organizer Ella Baker. When the Journey commenced in April of 1947, with pairs of white and black men riding at the front and the back of Greyhound and Trailways busses, Jim Peck and Igal Roodenko were on board. In total twelve of the sixteen participants were radical pacifists. Journey members were arrested on six separate occasions, but experienced less violence than they had anticipated. The most

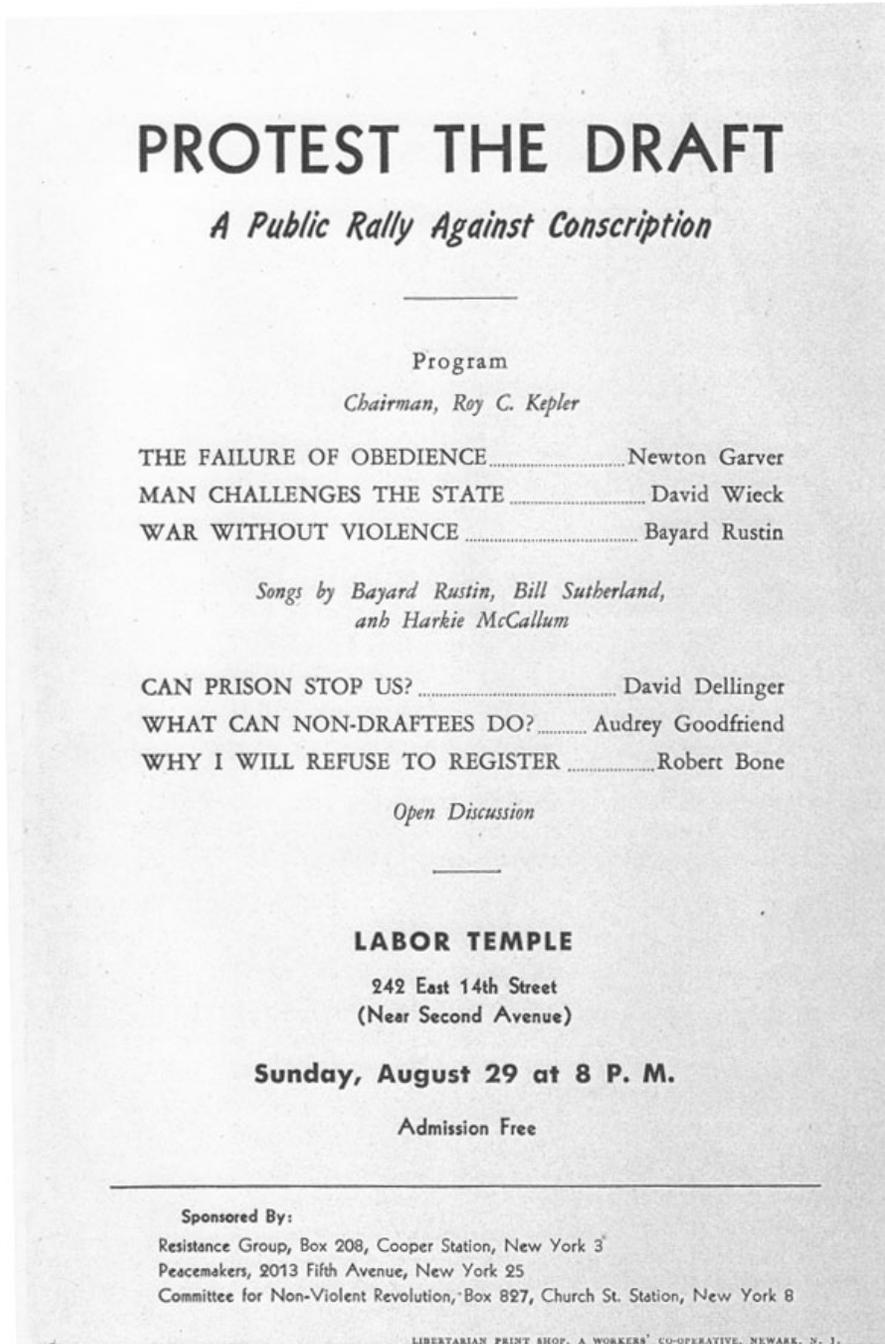
heated incident occurred when Jim Peck was beaten by a bus driver and taxi drivers in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, after four Journey members were arrested. Despite the attack, Peck became a CORE stalwart, serving as editor of its newsletter, *The CORElator*, for years. Bayard Rustin and Igal Roodenko, meanwhile, were sentenced to work on the chain gang.<sup>16</sup>

The interconnections between anarchists, radical pacifists, and the nascent civil rights movement in the late 1940s can be glimpsed in a leaflet announcing a “public rally against conscription” issued in 1948. Chaired by *Direct Action* editor and Pacifica Radio founder, Roy Kepler, the program included speeches by David Wieck

---

<sup>16</sup> John D’Emilio, *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 133-140; Mollin, *Radical Pacifism*, 31-35.

and Audrey Goodfriend of *Resistance*, as well as by Dellinger and Rustin. Bill



**Figure 13:** Protest the Draft leaflet.

Image courtesy of David Thoreau Wieck Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Sutherland provided entertainment alongside Rustin. The event was co-sponsored by *Resistance*, the recently organized Peacemakers, and the soon to be defunct Committee for Nonviolent Revolution. Dellinger and Roodenko's Liberation Press, unsurprisingly, printed the leaflet.<sup>17</sup>

Although Rustin never counted himself an anarchist, he collaborated with and maintained friendships with a number of active anarchist-pacifists, including Dellinger, Sutherland, and Roy Finch, into the 1960s. On one occasion, these comrades provided crucial support at a time when his position in the movement was under attack. In January of 1953, Rustin was arrested in Pasadena, California, when he was caught having sex with two other men in the back seat of a car. The incident was publicized and threatened to further tarnish the already unsavory reputation of the pacifist movement in the eyes of an overwhelmingly homophobic American public. At the time, Rustin was employed as a field secretary for the FOR while continuing to serve on the executive committee of the WRL. Fearing the fallout from the revelation that its most prominent staff person was gay, FOR secretary A.J. Muste threatened to fire Rustin if he did not immediately tender his resignation. Rustin did so and, without prompting, also wrote a letter of resignation from the WRL.<sup>18</sup> In 1953, however, the anarchist former-CO Roy Finch served as chairman of the WRL, and nonviolent

---

<sup>17</sup> Leaflet, David Wieck Papers, Swarthmore College Peace Collection (hereafter, DW, SCPC). The leaflet is undated, but since the advertised event is endorsed by both the CNVR and Peacemakers, it was likely distributed in early 1948.

<sup>18</sup> D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 184-205.

revolutionaries, including anarchists such as Dellinger, DiGia, and Roodenko, still constituted a majority of its executive committee.

Since the mid-1940s the broader anarchist-pacifist milieu had functioned as a safe haven for gay or bisexual men such as Robert Duncan and Paul Goodman, and the anarchist press had advocated for greater openness and sexual freedom. Not surprisingly, then, the WRL refused to accept Rustin's resignation. Instead, shortly after Rustin was pushed out of the FOR, Finch surveyed a number of prominent WRL members as he considered hiring Rustin as the WRL's full time program director. Although some of the more traditional, long-time members advised against Rustin's appointment, the new guard overwhelmingly supported it. Dellinger's younger brother had recently been murdered after making a pass at another man. Evidence gathered by biographer Andrew Hunt also suggests that Dellinger had engaged in relationships with men himself, and was himself charged with a "sexual misdemeanor" similar to Rustin's in 1951. Dellinger, therefore, strongly endorsed hiring Rustin, calling him "the most creative nonviolent activist" in the country. Finch agreed and appointed Rustin in the fall of 1953.<sup>19</sup> In this way, anarchists promoted to a position of leadership a man who would become one of the most important figures in the civil rights movement at precisely the time other veteran organizers were attempting to drum him out of the movement due to his sexuality.

---

<sup>19</sup> D'Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 206-219; Hunt, *David Dellinger*, 104-105.

## **Liberation Magazine**

In 1956 Dellinger, Muste, and Rustin collaborated to found *Liberation*, a full-size monthly magazine intended to serve as a pole for non-Communist radical politics and a forum for developing movement strategy.<sup>20</sup> In its debut editorial, the editors acknowledged that traditional Left arguments failed to inspire hope and that the world needed fresh vision. The editors encouraged contributors and readers to develop such a vision by drawing on four “root traditions.” These included the “Judeo-Christian prophetic tradition which gave men a vision of human dignity and a reign of righteousness, equality, and brotherhood on earth” and an “American tradition” that “asserts government rests upon consent, and institutions are made for man, not man for institutions.” In addition to Jefferson and Paine, the editors included Eugene Debs, Randolph Bourne, and the abolitionist movement in this tradition. Third, they looked to “the libertarian, democratic, anti-war, socialist, anarchist and labor movements” that fought for a “class-less and war-less world.” Finally, they celebrated the tradition of non-violence, especially noting the contribution of Gandhi, who “joined nonviolence and revolutionary collective action.”<sup>21</sup> Despite the breath of these ideological sources, the editors agreed that:

We do not conceive the problem of revolution or the building of a better society as one of accumulating power, whether by legislative or other methods, to “capture the state,” and then, presumably, to transform society and human beings as well. The national, sovereign,

---

<sup>20</sup> Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 112-124.

<sup>21</sup> “Tract for the Times,” *Liberation*, March 1956, 3-6.

militarized and bureaucratic State and bureaucratic collectives economy are themselves evils to be avoided or abolished.<sup>22</sup>

In many respects, *Liberation* picked up where *Resistance* left off when it ceased publication in 1954. Like that magazine, *Liberation* mixed news reports about a wide variety of international social justice struggles with long essays analyzing movement strategy and evaluating recent trends in social theory and popular culture. *Liberation* regularly published contributions from *Resistance* regulars such as Kenneth Rexroth, Paul Goodman, George Woodcock, and David Wieck himself. As indicated by its “root traditions,” however, *Liberation* drew from a considerably wider stable of writers, including socialists such as Michael Harrington, radical academics like Sidney Lens, and international leaders including Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere. Anarchists retained a distinct presence in the pages of *Liberation*. In 1963, for example, scholar and activist Staughton Lynd wrote a lengthy piece assessing the legacy of Henry David Thoreau, and questioning whether he should be considered an anarchist and a pacifist. The essay drew essay length replies from Wieck, Dachine Rainer, and Holley Cantine, arguing in the affirmative.<sup>23</sup> More than a platform for any Old Left ideology, however, *Liberation* served, during its first decade of publication, as an essential forum for analyzing and promoting the black freedom movement in the United States and national liberation struggles erupting in Africa, Cuba, and Asia.

---

<sup>22</sup> Editors, “Tract for the Times,” *Liberation*, March 1956, 3-6.

<sup>23</sup> Staughton Lynd, “Henry Thoreau: The Admirable Radical,” *Liberation*, February 1963; “Thoreau and the New Radicals,” *Liberation*, April 1963.

Under the auspices of CORE, the WRL, Peacemakers, and *Liberation* magazine, the anarchist-influenced radical pacifist movement made further contributions to the struggle for racial justice, which shifted into high gear in 1956. It did so alongside, and sometimes in dialogue with another, more traditional, group of anarchists who in 1954 constituted themselves as the Libertarian League.

### **The Libertarian Book Club and the Libertarian League**

After withdrawing from the Why? Group in 1942, Sam and Esther Dolgoff focused their energies on raising their children, Abe and Dets (named after the Abraham Lincoln Brigade and Bueneventura Durruti), and working in New York City. Sam plied his trade as a house-painter and, as an IWW members and spokesperson, remained an oppositional force pushing for more radicalism within the House Painters Union. However, in 1945, at the urging of G.P. Maximoff, the Dolgoffs gathered a group of comrades from the *Road to Freedom* and *Vanguard* days to once again attempt to distribute anarchist literature in English.<sup>24</sup> Together with Joseph Spivak and his wife Hanna, Clara and Sidney Soloman, Valerio Isca, and a few others, they launched the Libertarian Book Club in New York City. The club rented a room from a Workmen's Circle Branch in which it held monthly "forum discussion meetings and socials." Meetings of the Libertarian Book Club served, in large part, as social events which held together the small community of aging East Coast anarchists. The club

---

<sup>24</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Cambridge: Refract, 1986), 74-75; Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 417, 431.

did, however, organize a mail-order distribution service to make classic books, pamphlets, and newspapers from abroad available to readers across the country.

The book club's first publishing project reflected the longstanding interests of the older anarchists, but it also brought them into contact with the younger generation of the 1940s. The Libertarian Book Club financed the publication of *Nineteen-Seventeen*, a volume of Voline's history of the Russian Revolution, which Holley Cantine had translated from French. Interest in anarchist literature was so low and anti-Russian sentiment so high, however, that the club had a difficult time convincing stores to stock the title, and ended up losing money on the venture. Afterwards, a lack of funds made it impossible for the club to issue new books. The members settled on reprinting three out-of-print titles on anarchist topics. Their choices, including Paul Eltzbacher's *Anarchism*, Max Stirner's *The Ego and Its Own*, and James Martin's *Men Against the State*, a history of 19<sup>th</sup> century individualist anarchists in the United States, attest to the influence of individualist anarchists in the club.

Ten years after it was founded, the Libertarian Book Club was supplemented by a new organization. The Libertarian League was formed in New York City in 1954 by the Dolgoffs and Russell Blackwell. As a young man in the 1930s, Blackwell participated in the Trotskyist movement and travelled to Spain during the Civil War to fight with the POUM (the Marxist Party of Worker's Unity, with which George Orwell was also aligned.). He was taken prisoner by Communists in their effort to destroy competing left forces but was eventually released after a public campaign

organized by the CNT and his comrades in the United States. Although he had been “converted to anarchism in Spain,” Blackwell took leave from the radical movement to focus on his family and his career as a cartographer during the 1940s and early 1950s. By 1954, however, he felt eager to return to public activity.<sup>25</sup>

Blackwell and Dolgoff drew up a Provisional Declaration of Principles that announced the Libertarian League as an organization dedicated to anarcho-syndicalist principles and in support of the International Worker’s Association, the syndicalist international reorganized in Berlin in 1922.<sup>26</sup> Dolgoff later summarized the group’s politics as “essentially anarcho-syndicalist, with a nostalgia for anarchist-communism.”<sup>27</sup> In a brief public statement of its politics, “What We Stand For,” the group placed its activities in the context of the cold war. “Two great power blocs struggle for world domination... Their conflict threatens mankind with atomic destruction.” The League suggested an alternative, however:

The exploitative societies of today must be replaced by a new libertarian world which will proclaim—Equal freedom for all in a free socialist society. “Freedom without socialism leads to privilege and injustice; “Socialism” without freedom is totalitarian. The monopoly of power which is the state must be replaced by a world-wide federation of free communities, labor councils, and/or co-operatives operating according to the principles of free agreement.”<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 74-75; Jack Frager quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 434; Robert Calese quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 471.

<sup>26</sup> This document was published in the short-lived anarchist newspaper *Individual Action*.

<sup>27</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 75; Dolgoff quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 426.

<sup>28</sup> “What We Stand For,” *Views and Comments*, No. 8, Oct. 1955. This statement appeared in each issue of the Libertarian League’s journal, *Views and Comments*.

“What We Stand For” sheds interesting light on the mindset of anarchists in the 1950s. First, it indicates that by the mid-1950s anarchists in the United States felt less pressed to maintain sectarian divisions between anarcho-syndicalism and anarchist-communism which had divided the movement in earlier periods. Their willingness to paper over slight differences in organizational vision was likely aided by the cessation of violent attacks by insurrectionary anarchists who identified themselves as anarchist-communists in counter-distinction from anarcho-syndicalists. Secondly, like the stillborn Libertarian Socialist League of 1938—which the Dolgoffs may have had in mind when naming their new outfit—the Libertarian League hesitated to use the word “anarchist” prominently in its literature. Finally, by insisting on conceiving of freedom and socialism as linked goals that limit and shape one another, the League offered a critique not only of the two cold war poles, but also of anarchists focused more on their own freedom than on collective struggle.

In its first years, the League attracted only a handful of members. They included two couples: Phyllis and Robert Calese, who worked as public librarians, a professional printer named Richard Ellington, and his wife Patricia. Another member, Bill Rose, came from a prominent family and was introduced to anarchism by underground CNT members while studying literature in Spain. A younger member, Walter Caughey, had invited Sam Dolgoff to lecture at Antioch College while he was a student, and was so impressed by the lecture that he relocated to New York upon graduating. With such a small membership, the Libertarian League confined its

activities primarily to organizing weekly political discussions and publishing a bimonthly journal blandly titled *Views & Comments*. The Spanish anarchists who had loaned their SIA hall to the Resistance Group for its monthly forums offered to share the space with the Libertarian League after the Resistance Group disbanded.

By the mid-1950s Greenwich Village had begun to attract another generation of young bohemians, many of them participants in the American folk music revival. Like others in the folk scene, Dave van Ronk, a guitarist and singer who had grown up in Queens, was attracted to leftist politics but was unimpressed with the Communist Party members he met in and around Washington Square Park. While out drinking one night, a friend encouraged him to check out the “libertarian center” at 813 Broadway. Van Ronk remembers that, “The center turned out to be a big loft on the corner of 12<sup>th</sup> Street, which they would set up on forum nights with long trestle tables and folding chairs for about thirty people.” The young musician was impressed that League meetings drew a few “genuine firebrands who had fought in the Spanish Civil War, people who had been forced to flee Europe because of their revolutionary activities, veterans of the IWW strikes.”<sup>29</sup> The first Libertarian League meetings Robert Calese attended left a striking impression on him as well. “Sam,” he recalled, “looked like he combed his hair with an eggbeater. His eyeglasses were covered with paint. His teeth were rotten and he mispronounced every other word. But he made the

---

<sup>29</sup> Dave Van Ronk with Elijah Wald, *The Mayor of MacDougal Street: A Memoir*, (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2005), 34.

other speakers look like junior high school students.”<sup>30</sup> Van Ronk was impressed with the determination he saw in these older radicals. He recalled that, “Unlike the Marxists, who expected ‘History’ to descend like a *dues ex machine* and pull their chestnuts out of the fire, the anarchists knew how long the odds were, and they went about their business with a kind of go-to-hell, cheerful, existential despair.”<sup>31</sup> After attending the forums for a few weeks, Van Ronk decided to become a member. Sam Dolgoff became “something of a mentor” to the folk singer, teaching him about the history of anarchism and even giving him a fedora that had once belonged to Carlo Tresca.<sup>32</sup>

Like the book club, the Libertarian League organized social events, such as an annual May Day celebration, which nurtured anarchist community in New York. Van Ronk, for instance, recounts that one May Day, “Holly Cantine, ‘the Hermit of Woodstock,’ showed up with a trombone and asked if he could lead the assembled masses in ‘The International.’ He proceeded to produce a series of farts and howls

---

<sup>30</sup> Robert Calese quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 472.

<sup>31</sup> Van Ronk, *Mayor*, 34.

<sup>32</sup> They had a severe falling out, however, when van Ronk lent his hand to a campaign by the Association of Catholic Trade Unionists to organize Puerto Rican workers away from a mob-controlled union. Dolgoff publicly berated van Ronk for associating with a religious institution. Dolgoff, like Havel and Van Valkenburgh before, him had taken to drinking heavily. Van Ronk remembers, “he would get shit-faced drunk and come into meetings and curse me up hill and down dale. It got incredibly abusive.” They made amends in 1961 after van Ronk had left the Libertarian League. Van Ronk, *Mayor*, 34-37.

that almost emptied the hall.”<sup>33</sup> *Views and Comments* provided an avenue for the Libertarian League to maintain contact with scattered sympathizers throughout the United States and with more developed syndicalist organizations in Europe. However, its circulation remained miniscule, topping out at just over 300 subscribers, “many of them in American colleges and universities.”<sup>34</sup> Russell Blackwell and Sam Dolgoff took brief lecture tours through the Northeast and Midwest to try to develop League chapters in other cities. In May 1959 the organization held its first and only conference in Youngstown, Ohio. Anarchists from Cleveland, Detroit, and Milwaukee attended, but the assembled group acknowledged that not enough energy existed to establish regularly functioning groups outside of New York, much less a nationally coordinated organization.<sup>35</sup>

The only major campaign the Libertarian League carried out as an organization was its work in 1956 on behalf of CNT members threatened with execution by the Franco regime in Spain. Members of the League convinced Norman Thomas, Chairman of the Socialist Party, to collaborate with them on a Committee to Defend Franco’s Labor Victims. The Committee secured publicity in the mainstream media,

---

<sup>33</sup> Vank Ronk, *Mayor*, 158. Apparently this wasn’t an isolated incident and Cantine left a lasting impression. Dolgoff remembers, “Holley, convinced that he was a musical virtuoso on the trombone, would unfailingly come to our Libertarian League every May Day celebration to stridently blast out in deafening tones what he supposed to be a rendition of “The International” or “Solidarity Forever.” Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 93. Richard Ellington repeated this story in an interview with Paul Avrich in 1974. Avrich, *Anarchist Portraits*, 473.

<sup>34</sup> Dolgoff quoted in Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 426.

<sup>35</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 89.

organized rallies, and collected petition signatures to pressure the U.S. State Department to intervene on behalf of the anarchist unionists. When the U.S. ambassador questioned Spanish officials, they responded that the accused unionists were terrorists planning to assassinate Franco. After this exchange, according to Dolgoff, Thomas decided that the issue was too much of a “hot potato” and unceremoniously withdrew from the Committee, leading to its hasty collapse. Nonetheless, the League believed the Committee’s work helped save the lives of at least five Spanish anarchists.<sup>36</sup>

While the League maintained a distinct organizational existence, members clearly expressed an affinity for and willingness to collaborate with the anarchist-pacifist and radical pacifist groups also based in New York. In June of 1955, Dorothy Day and Ammon Hennacy of the Catholic Worker, Muste and Rustin of the FOR and WRL, and the Living Theatre’s Judith Malina, among others, were arrested for deliberately refusing to take cover during a public air raid drill, to protest the absurdities of Cold War social conditioning. The following issue of *Views and Comments* carried a front page article lauding “our pacifist friends” for their protest against the “authoritarianism, control, and militarism” that marked the city’s Civil Defense campaigns.<sup>37</sup> A year later the League issued a joint statement calling for an investigation of the disappearance of a young professor from the Dominican Republic

---

<sup>36</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 85-86; Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 426.

<sup>37</sup> “Civil Liberties and Civil Defense,” *Views and Comments*, No. 5, July 1955, 1-2, 12.

who had recently criticized the Trujillo regime. In addition to the Libertarian League, the statement was signed by the IWW, Catholic Worker, the War Resisters League, SIA, and two socialist organizations.<sup>38</sup> The League also welcomed the launch of *Liberation* in early 1956. “On final objectives and basic attitudes we find ourselves in substantial agreement with these comrades,” wrote an anonymous reviewer (likely Dolgoff). The League’s principle disagreement was its rejection of *Liberation*’s insistence on the superiority of nonviolent activity in all situations. Still, the reviewer acknowledged, “We will agree with our anarcho-pacifist comrades that all possibilities of non-violent resistance must be explored first.”<sup>39</sup>

The Libertarian League was a marginal organization that made little immediate impact on the political culture of its day. Although some of its members participated in civil rights demonstrations in New York in the early 1960s, the League can not be said to have made a unique or abiding contribution to black freedom struggles, either through organizing work undertaken by its members or through intellectual contributions to movement strategy articulated in *Views and Comments*. The League is, nonetheless, valuable to consider from an historical standpoint for the extent to which its journal provides another window on to evolving perspectives anarchists held regarding domestic struggles against racism and international movements for national liberation. Between 1955 and 1965, both *Liberation* and *Views and Comments* devoted hundreds of pages to publicizing and analyzing these movements. Though

---

<sup>38</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 92.

<sup>39</sup> “Some New Voices Speak,” *Views and Comments*, No. 13, May 1956.

both periodicals promoted anti-statist and direct action strategies, they differed significantly in tone, depth of analysis, and the stature of the writers they were able to attract. The encounter with liberation movements lead by people of color significantly altered the political perspectives held by the anarchist editors of both periodicals, each in their own ways.

### **Montgomery, Little Rock, Monroe, and Jackson**

Despite decades of earlier struggles which made possible the confrontations of the 1950s, the Montgomery Bus Boycott marked, for many African Americans and white radicals living in the United States, the beginning of a new and heroic phase of the black freedom movement in the United States.<sup>40</sup> As is now widely known, on December 1, 1955, the civil rights activist Rosa Parks refused to follow segregationist seating policies on a city bus in Montgomery, Alabama, with the intention of launching a campaign of resistance to the broader Jim Crow social order. When Parks was arrested for her defiance of the ordinance, local African American organizers and ministers, including Joanne Gibson Robinson, E.D. Nixon, and Martin Luther King, Jr., launched a protest campaign centered on a boycott of the bus system by the African American community. The campaign lasted nearly a year and resulted in

---

<sup>40</sup> Standouts amongst the large literature on pre-1950s black freedom struggles include Glenda Gilmore, *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950* (New York: Norton, 2008); Robin Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990); Robin Kelley, *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994); Penny von Eschen, *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997).

hundreds of arrests and many acts of violence against participants. By the time it was over, however, the campaign had succeeded not only in desegregating public transportation in Montgomery, but in demonstrating the central importance of the black church for civil rights work to follow, and in making Martin Luther King, Jr., who emerged as the campaign's most compelling spokesperson and strategist, a figure of national and international renown.

Both *Views and Comments* and *Liberation* enthusiastically supported the Montgomery desegregation movement. Even before Parks' arrest, the Libertarian League had declared itself opposed to white supremacy and in solidarity with the various individuals and organizations fighting Jim Crow. In October 1955, for instance, the journal's lead editorial denounced the exoneration of the white men accused of murdering the black adolescent Emmet Till and honored the black men who testified against them amidst threats to their own safety. "We salute their heroism even while we tremble for their lives," proclaimed the League.<sup>41</sup> Members recognized that civil rights struggles in the United States were linked to national liberation struggles abroad. In an early article they noted, "All over the world the submerged peoples are rebelling against the imperialist exploitation which is based in large part

---

<sup>41</sup> Articles in *Views and Comments* were frequently not attributed to any author. However, Sam Dolgoff claims that he penned the majority of unsigned articles. Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 426.

on the false doctrines of racial superiority. The struggle of the Southern Negroes is part of that movement.”<sup>42</sup>

The first months of the Montgomery Bus Boycott proved particularly inspiring to League members. The boycott not only advanced the struggle for equal rights, but also seemed to confirm their own convictions about how social change could and should occur. The campaign in Montgomery, a League member wrote, “shows the power of direct mass action and possibilities which go far beyond the channels of legalistic action. It shows that the people themselves are fully capable of initiating, organizing and coordinating complex social functions by free agreement, not only without but even against the opposition of the state.”<sup>43</sup> Owing to their reading of anarchist theory, experiences in the labor movement, and conflicts with Communists, League members believed that change could only be actualized through physical acts of refusal and obstruction by large numbers of people. They also believed that grassroots participants typically had broader goals and a greater willingness to fight for them than self-selected or officially designated “leaders.”

While the Libertarian League gave its verbal support to fight in Alabama, the radical pacifist movement contributed to the bus boycott in a variety of ways. Most importantly, perhaps, the WRL dispatched Bayard Rustin to Montgomery to help the Montgomery Improvement Association plan strategy. Rustin placed the knowledge he had accumulated from twenty-years of non-violent struggle, much of which he had

---

<sup>42</sup> “The South’s Negroes are in Motion,” *Views and Comments*, No. 11, Feb. 1956, 11.

<sup>43</sup> “The South’s Negroes are in Motion,” *Views and Comments*, No. 11, Feb. 1956, 12.

developed collaboratively with anarchist-pacifists such as Dellinger, at the disposal of the ministers organizing the boycott. King's own training had already prepared him to be receptive to such suggestions. King had first learned of Gandhi and his innovative anti-colonial campaigns from talks given by A.J. Muste and by Howard University president Mordecai Johnson at Crozier Seminary in 1949 and 1950. As a seminarian King was also heavily influenced by personalist interpretations of Christian belief, as taught to him by two of his favorite professors, George Davis and L. Harold DeWolf.<sup>44</sup> Beginning with the Montgomery campaign, Rustin and other pacifists, such as the FOR's Glen Smiley, helped King translate Gandhian principles into a strategic plan of civil disobedience geared to the conditions of the American south. After returning to New York, historian James Farrell notes, "Rustin consulted King by telephone and maintained King's connections with pacifists like A.J. Muste and David Dellinger."<sup>45</sup> In this indirect way, the anarchist ideas of Kropotkin, Tolstoy, and de Ligt filtered down, via Gandhi and Christian personalism, to the leadership circles of the early civil rights movement. There, the anarchist tenets of equality of all people, refusal to support social evil, and direct action by the oppressed mixed with the much more

---

<sup>44</sup> James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 81-95.

<sup>45</sup> Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 90.

prominent social justice traditions of the African American church, Western liberalism, and below-the-radar contributions of Communist activists.<sup>46</sup>

Rustin also served as a direct link between the Montgomery movement and *Liberation* magazine. The second issue of the magazine, released in April, 1956, opened with an account of the ongoing conflict in Montgomery signed by King, which announced the non-violent basis of the campaign. The article concluded with a personalist declaration that fully accorded with mid-century anarchism: “We must not try to defend our position by methods that contradict the aim of brotherhood... We do not wish to triumph over the white community. That would only result in transferring those now on the bottom to the top. But, if we can live up to non-violence in thought and deed, there will emerge an interracial society based on freedom for all.”<sup>47</sup>

Although Rustin provided a separate account of time he spent in Montgomery in February 1956, it was later revealed that he had also penned the article attributed to King.<sup>48</sup> The timing for the launch of *Liberation*, then, proved highly fortuitous. The new magazine provided a national platform on which leaders and supporters of the southern movement could express their aims and debate tactics. Over the next decade, *Liberation* regularly published original essays by King, including, in 1963, his famous “Letter from the Birmingham Jail.”

---

<sup>46</sup> On Communist influences on the SCLC, see Jack O’Dell and Nikhil Pal Singh, *Climbin’ Jacob’s Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement writings of Jack O’Dell* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Martin Luther King, “Our Struggle,” *Liberation*, April 1956, 3-6.

<sup>48</sup> Bayard Rustin, “Montgomery Diary,” *Liberation*, April 1956, 7-10. D’Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 239.

In contrast to *Liberation*, the Libertarian League never had the clout (or perhaps never attempted) to solicit contributions from central figures of the civil rights movement. Despite their opposition to white supremacy, in the mid-1950s members of the Libertarian League had little first hand knowledge of conditions in the U.S. South or experience working with African-American or civil rights groups in New York City. Like their anarchist predecessors, there is no indication that League members ever ventured across the Mason-Dixon line when they undertook speaking tours. And though the League was based in one of the country's most multi-racial cities, it remained the preserve of European immigrants and white Americans.<sup>49</sup> A regular participant in League activities in the late 1950s recalled of Sam and Esther Dolgoff, "They were not comfortable with black people and other people. Not in the sense that they were negative toward them, but they were culturally working class whites. And it was a divide."<sup>50</sup> Despite this relative unfamiliarity with conditions of life and traditions of struggle within African American communities, League members felt entitled, and perhaps obligated, to critically assess the forms the struggle took in the South and closer to home.

In September 1957, Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered the state National Guard to prevent the integration of Little Rock Central High School. In

---

<sup>49</sup> On anti-racist struggles in New York City between the 1940s and 1970s, see Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York* (Cambridge: Harvard, 2003); Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

<sup>50</sup> Author interview with Ben Morea, March 29, 2009.

response, President Dwight Eisenhower ordered federal troops to Arkansas to force the National Guard to stand down and to ensure the safety of nine African-American youth as they attended classes in the previously all-white school. In December of that year, the League weighed in on the Arkansas crisis. In an unsigned article (likely penned by Sam Dolgoff) the League fervently denounced the shameful acts of the citizens who attempted to block school integration. However, the League also criticized Eisenhower's decision to deploy the Army, claiming it set "an extremely dangerous precedent" for federal intervention in labor disputes and should be considered a "step toward complete state control—toward fascism".<sup>51</sup> After all, the League pointed out, Eisenhower defended his decision as a means of upholding the authority of the Federal authority, not as a means of pursuing integration. However, since the League also saw Faubus' tactics as "fascist" it condemned both groups of political actors.

The certainty with which League members denounced both the "Arkansas racists" and Eisenhower's intervention stemmed from core political beliefs that shaped their interpretation of the crisis. They wrote,

The racists are effectively hiding the real enemies of the people, their economic exploiters and the political lackeys of these exploiters in both the State and Federal governments. 'Divide and Conquer' has always been the slogan of our overlords, and the situation in Little Rock was manufactured and is being skillfully used by them for their own ends.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> No author, "Little Rock," *Views and Comments*, No. 25, December 1957, 6-7.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

Statements such as this indicate that in 1957 the League continued to hold an “economistic” perspective characteristic of traditional anarcho-syndicalists as well as orthodox Marxists, which held class relations to be the key to understanding inequality and social conflict as a whole. According to this way of thinking, capitalist exploitation was the true form of injustice, and white working people of Arkansas had been tricked by the ruling class into expressing racism against workers of color. The Libertarian League supported integration, but believed there was only one truly anti-authoritarian way to achieve it.

The only cure for the problem of race discrimination is making [the people] see that all who are economically exploited should unite firmly in their struggle against their common enemies. This can best be effected through militant unionism. The color bar falls on the picket line.<sup>53</sup>

Unionism, in this view, was a tactic much preferable to federal intervention, which the League pointed out, tended to unite moderate whites against the movement. But there was a hitch. The League felt it necessary to clarify, “When we say unionism, we mean real, militant, democratic unionism, which is the very antithesis of the shameful racketeering and low ‘politiking’ of those who dictate to the AFL-CIO.” Since members of the League viewed the AFL-CIO as hopelessly conservative, their position effectively meant that black freedom would have to await the reconstitution of the labor movement on entirely new, radical footings—something even they admitted was highly unlikely in the near future.

---

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

Instead of issuing a definitive position piece, the editors of *Liberation* decided to explore the dilemmas raised by the Little Rock crisis by publishing a forum comprised of contributions from, among others, the novelist Lillian Smith, a spokesperson for the NAACP, a reporter beaten by the mob during the standoff, Paul Goodman, and David Wieck. Wieck's contribution to the discussion shared points of commonality with the Libertarian League's position, but also diverged in important ways, indicative of ideological and stylistic (or temperamental) differences between the anarcho-syndicalists and anarchist-pacifists. Wieck admitted that as the conflict unfolded he favored Eisenhower's deployment of troops, despite the pacifist and "libertarian, anti-state philosophy" which he held. "One branch of government was suppressing a mob incited by another branch of government; the soldiers were giving the adolescents the chance, within the school, to discover their way to each other," he rationalized.

Upon further consideration, however, Wieck recognized that the use of troops set a bad precedent which, if repeated in other civil rights conflicts, could prove detrimental to the movement as a whole. Choosing to set aside arguments based in anarchist doctrine, which he feared might sound too "sectarian," Wieck focused on two more immediate issues. First, he cautioned against reliance on federal force. "If the Federal government is, in an objective sense, a kind of ally to the struggle against racism, it is the most uncertain kind of ally: not from conviction but from the pressure of an immediate situation (especially as bears on the 'prestige abroad')." Since

Eisenhower's support for integration was driven by a variety of political calculations, the movement couldn't predict when he would seek compromise or withdraw from the conflict entirely. Better, then, to depend on the actions of those motivated by their deeply felt anti-racist convictions. Wieck also argued that coercing southern whites to act differently allowed them to avoid confronting and resolving the moral dilemma of their own racism. Like Gandhi and King, he believed that in addition to its impact on the oppressed, the psychology of domination "maimed" the personality and degraded the humanity of the oppressor. Methods that forced a conscious reckoning, then, would be more fully transformative. Wieck, therefore, affirmed the tactical example set in Montgomery and argued, "Little Rock must be regarded as a lost opportunity."

However, in contrast to the attitude of the Libertarian League, Wieck declared he did not feel he had the "right" to prescribe alternative tactics, "if only because I am a 'white' northerner, whose relationship to the case is emotional rather than personal, and who cannot expect to know what is the exactly appropriate act in the given circumstances." However, he felt that the true "shame" of the situation was not the constitution of the mob, but the lack of action on the part of (presumably white) anti-segregationist forces to "demonstrate their disagreement with the mob." The question, then, was how anti-racist forces might induce such people to take that "responsibility."<sup>54</sup> Wieck's position was more modest and less doctrinaire than the League's. He recognized the limits of his knowledge about the particular social

---

<sup>54</sup> David Wieck, "The Invention of Responsibility," *Liberation*, November 1957.

conditions present in Arkansas and resisted the temptation of the politically savvy outsider to attempt to impose correct practice and enlightened leadership from afar. Instead of declaring the use of troops to promote integration was wrong as an ideological absolute, he explained why a local, popular strategy would have been preferable.

The conflict in Arkansas continued despite the forced integration of Little Rock Central High School. Governor Faubus was reelected by a wide margin, and segregationist forces organized a statewide effort to remove white students from public schools and install them in segregated private schools. In September of 1958, Wieck and fellow pacifist Al Uhrie were appointed by Peacemakers to travel to Arkansas so that Northern activists might learn more about situation in person. In two additional articles for *Liberation* based on the trip, Wieck provided a more incisive analysis of racial dynamics the Libertarian League's class-struggle perspective allowed for. He found that resistance to desegregation was led at the political level by the class of rural planters in Eastern Arkansas. But in the city, its most impassioned opponents were working class whites. Upper-class whites, he suspected, felt secure in their superiority and might be willing to accept gradual desegregation. Wieck argued that, "For lower-class whites, however, the existence of Negroes is a very ambiguous fact; their entrance into 'white schools' raises the possibility that individual Negroes (or the whole body of Negro students) will excel [beyond] one's own child, and thereby demonstrate that one is inferior to the group whose inferiority is so

emphatically asserted.” For this reason, Wieck found that liberal leaders (including ministers, and a newspaper editor) lacked a white desegregationist base to organize. Despite two weeks of investigation, Wieck found “among adult whites very little basis” for a “positive” or active anti-segregationist sentiment. Young people, he felt, provided the best hope for a white anti-racist movement to emerge.<sup>55</sup>

Over the next seven years, League members’ assessments of black freedom movement began to shift as they learned more about conditions in the South, contributed to civil rights campaigns, and drew inspiration from the increasing militancy of movement participants.<sup>56</sup> Members of a “Libertarian Youth Club” organized by the League participated in the Second Youth March for Integration held in Washington, D.C. in October 1958. Members also worked with the Brooklyn chapter of CORE and participated in a successful sit-in against segregated apartment complexes. As the movement expanded in the north, Russell Blackwell devoted the majority of his political energy to it.<sup>57</sup> In a prescient article in its April 1959 issue of *Views and Comments*, a League member noted, “The Negroes and their organizations have displayed magnificent discipline and excessive restraint in the recent months of struggle. One cannot help but wonder at what point the policy of non-violent

---

<sup>55</sup> David Thoreau Wieck, “Report from Little Rock,” *Liberation*, October 1958, 4-9.

<sup>56</sup> For example, a League correspondent described the hostile political terrain of North Carolina in D.R., “Letter from the Bible Belt,” *Views and Comments*, No. 29, July 1958.

<sup>57</sup> See, for example, “Negro Struggle Sharpens,” *Views and Comments*, No. 34, April 1959, 1; Sean Mitchell, “Direct Action,” *Views and Comments*, No. 42, December 1961.

resistance practiced so far in Alabama will have to be reinforced by realistic actions of self-defense.”<sup>58</sup> Before a month was up, one of the early conflicts in the black freedom struggle between non-violence and armed self-defense exploded into public consciousness.

In May, a Monroe, North Carolina, jury acquitted a white man who had very clearly assaulted a black women. The acquittal was only the most recent in a long string of legal and physical assaults on local African Americans. In response, Robert F. Williams, the independent-minded head of the local NAACP branch and former U.S. Marine, publicly declared that without the protection of the courts, blacks would have to “meet violence with violence.”<sup>59</sup> NAACP headquarters quickly rebuked Williams and suspended him from his position. Moderate civil rights leaders and a variety of pacifist supporters of the movement rebuked Williams for the fear and outrage his comments stirred among southern segregationists and federal officials. The Libertarian League, however came down squarely in favor of Williams. The February 1960 issue of *Views and Comments* reprinted an article from Williams’ newsletter, *The Crusader*, on the elimination of black housing in urban renewal campaigns. The editors noted, “We recommend this publication to all those interested in following the struggles of the militants among the Negro people, those among them who, unwilling to limit their struggle to prayers, petitions, and pacifist action, propose

---

<sup>58</sup> “Negro Struggle Sharpens,” *Views and Comments*, No. 34, April 1959, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999); Robert F. Williams, *Negroes With Guns* (New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1962).

instead a policy of militant direct action, with an insistence on the elementary right of self-defense by all means available.”<sup>60</sup>

The editors of *Liberation* deemed the issues raised by the Williams controversy worthy of reasoned discussion. The magazine ran a long article by Williams, “Can Negroes Afford to be Pacifists?” which made a powerful case for armed self-defense. “Nonviolence is a very potent weapon when the opponent is civilized, but nonviolence is no match or repellent for a sadist,” Williams cautioned. While passive resistance was a useful tool in “gaining concessions from oppressors,” he argued that if Mack Parker, a black man recently murdered by white racists, “had had an automatic shotgun at his disposal, he could have served as a great deterrent against lynching.” Williams concluded by forthrightly criticized “cringing Negro ministers” and NAACP lawyers who he viewed as over reliant on the government to make changes and protect black citizens. While legal work had its place, he called for “acceptance of diverse tactics.”<sup>61</sup>

*Liberation* provided the NAACP space to present its position on the Williams controversy and asked King to reiterate the moral and tactical benefits of non-violence. David Dellinger, however, took a different tack in an editorial titled “Are Pacifists Willing to be Negroes?” The vigilante violence that Williams and the other

---

<sup>60</sup> “Dixie,” *Views and Comments*, No. 37, February 1960, 13-14.

<sup>61</sup> Robert F. Williams, “Can Negroes Afford to Be Pacifists,” *Liberation*, September 1959. In debates amongst global justice activists in demonstrations modeled on the 1999 “Battle of Seattle,” anarchist advocates of the tactic of street trashing in “black blocs” regularly insisted that other demonstrators respect a “diversity of tactics”—in a language highly reminiscent of Williams’ phrase “acceptance of diverse tactics.”

black citizens of Monroe faced tested his commitment to nonviolence. Dellinger noted that the movement had hit a wall of opposition and was nearly at a standstill. With violence against African Americans unabated, Dellinger claimed it would be “arrogant” for white pacifists to criticize men like Williams for practicing armed self defense:

Gandhi once said that although nonviolence is the best method of resistance to evil, it is better for persons who have not yet attained the capacity for non-violence to resist violently than not to resist at all. Since we have failed to reach the level of effective resistance, we can hardly condemn those who have not embraced nonviolence.

To Dellinger’s mind, white pacifists, himself included, had no room to criticize others’ response to injustice when they were not doing all that they could to end it. He encouraged them to envision themselves in the position of southern African Americans, and act as they would in that situation. “Sooner or later, segregation must erupt into violence,” he argued, “and those white persons who conform to the practice of segregation are as surely responsible as those of either color who bring out the guns.” Yet, Dellinger also took a sly anarchist jab at Williams’ eagerness to counterpose his willingness to use violence to what he saw as the “cringing” strategy of relying on the state to secure civil rights. Dellinger reminded readers:

The power of the police, as the power of the F.B.I., the courts, and the Federal government, is rooted in violence. The fact that the violence does not always come into bloody play does not alter the fact that the

power of the government is not the integrating power of love but the disintegrating power of guns and prisons.<sup>62</sup>

The alternative to both types of violence, Dellinger reiterated, was that of the brave, imaginative, and active practice of non-violence that had been effectively arrayed against both mob and state violence in Montgomery.

In the fall of 1962, James Meredith's attempt to enroll at the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, prompted a crisis similar to the Little Rock stand-off of 1957. When Meredith, a black civil rights organizer, attempted to enroll in the segregated state university as a means of testing compliance with desegregation statutes, the Governor, Ross Barnett, personally blocked his attempt to enter campus and announced that his office would resist integration. After ten days of quiet maneuvering, in an attempt to avoid a direct confrontation, President Kennedy deployed thousands of troops to ensure Meredith's safety and right to register. In an editorial co-written by Bayard Rustin and David Dellinger, *Liberation* blasted Kennedy's response, using logic that synthesized elements of the Libertarian League's, Wieck's, and Dellinger's earlier considerations of civil rights struggles. Kennedy, Rustin and Dellinger proclaimed, was not on the side of the movement. In his public remarks he made no mention of Meredith's bravery or the aspirations of black Mississippians, but rather apologized to white southerners for what seemed an avoidable decision. The president had not intervened to support integration but rather

---

<sup>62</sup> David Dellinger, "Are Pacifists Willing to be Negroes?" *Liberation*, September 1959, 3. See also, Dorothy Day, "Crusader in Exile: A Visit with Robert Williams," *Liberation*, December 1962.

“in defense of Federal authority” over the states. The military solution provided southern reactionaries with grist for their portrayal of the South as besieged by northern “invaders,” increasing rather than decreasing the power of the segregationists. Once again, Rustin and Dellinger acknowledged, a compromised resolution to the crises arose because the movement had been unprepared to provide its own popular and non-violent resolution. They concluded, “The temptation for shortsighted men and women of good will is to rely on the Federal government to take up the slack created by their own failure to act responsibly and in social solidarity. But in the long run the Federal government must act in accord with its own nature, which is that of a highly centralized political, military, industrial, and financial bureaucracy.”<sup>63</sup>

In 1965, Rustin famously called for the civil rights movement to move “from protest to politics,” meaning, in part, a concerted effort by organizers to integrate themselves into the Democratic Party and to build influence by strategically allying with existing liberal institutions.<sup>64</sup> This shift in his thinking is especially surprising given the extent to which he had so recently articulated an understanding of state structures as inherently militaristic and authoritarian. In response to Rustin’s shift, David Wieck remarked privately to Dellinger,

---

<sup>63</sup> “Mississippi Muddle,” *Liberation*, November 1962. The article was signed by the editors as a whole when the issue was released. Rustin and Dellinger are identified as the authors in Paul Goodman, ed., *Seeds of Liberation* (New York: George Braziller, 1964), 306-316.

<sup>64</sup> See D’Emilio, *Lost Prophet*, 393-416.

The thing that bothers me most about the Rustin business is that I believe that certain attitudes, a certain tone, that are customary in most all politics, including most all radical politics, have no place in an anarchist or a pacifist movement. Anybody who seriously calls themselves an personalist, or an anarchist, or a pacifist, should have a different style of politics, and a different style of relating to people even in political and conflict situations, than other people do.<sup>65</sup>

Wieck's remarks underscore the extent to which mid-century anarchist-pacifists viewed "personalism" and "anarchism" as congruous, if not synonymous terms, as well as the degree to which they had considered Rustin (before his move to the right) within that fold. Before Meredith's confrontation with Governor Barnett, and well before Rustin's political realignment, however, students of traditionally black colleges in dozens of Southern towns and cities, gave the movement the strongest proof to date of the transformative power of non-violent civil disobedience when they launched a wave of sit-ins against Jim Crow segregation. Like Wieck, many of them came to believe that in pursuit of egalitarian goals, such as racial justice, required "a different style of politics" and way of relating to people if they were to be truly transformative.

### **The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and "Anarchist" Organization**

The student sit-in movement began as a local action when four black college students asked for service and refused to move from the segregated lunch counter of a Greensboro, North Carolina, Woolworth's department store. Within days students across North Carolina—and soon, throughout many other southern states—began to

---

<sup>65</sup> Wieck to Dellinger Oct. 19, 1965, DTW, TL.

emulate it with hastily planned lunch counter sit-ins of their own. By June an estimated 50,000 students had joined the fray in more than 100 cities across South Carolina, Tennessee, Maryland, Virginia, Mississippi, and other states.<sup>66</sup>

As a mass-based, self-organized, non-violent campaign of direct action, the sit-in movement was exactly the type of activity many anarchists and radical pacifists, as well as a subset of civil rights organizers, had been longing for since the victory in Montgomery. In May 1960, the Libertarian League excitedly noted that the student sit-in movement “shows how a genuine people’s movement arose spontaneously, produced its own organization, devised its own tactics and inspired everyone to participate creatively and valiantly in a common cause.” Instead of counseling reliance on a great leader, “it arouses people from apathy and restores their belief in their own power.”<sup>67</sup> As the sit-ins spread, the WRL released Bayard Rustin from his other duties to work full time as an aid to the movement in the South. In Rustin’s absence, the other editors of *Liberation* noted proudly but modestly, “We remark here parenthetically that it was pacifist organizations immediately after World War II, and somewhat later CORE also, that carried on projects in nonviolent direct action in the racial field, circulated Gandhian and other literature on the subject, and quietly trained a considerable number of people, all of which is now bearing fruit.”<sup>68</sup>

---

<sup>66</sup> Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1981), 11; Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 97.

<sup>67</sup> E.W., “The ‘Civil Rights’ Struggle,” *Views and Comments*, No. 38, May 1960.

<sup>68</sup> “Our Editors in the Field,” *Liberation*, April 1960, 3.

Indeed, one important factor contributing to the spread of the sit-in movement beyond North Carolina was the work radical pacifists had done to build up a core of black student activists in Nashville, Tennessee, and other southern cities. Nashville was home to James Lawson, who served as the first southern field secretary of FOR. After a stint in federal prison as one of the few men to refuse the draft during the Korean War, Lawson had travelled to India to study Gandhian nonviolence.<sup>69</sup> As a seminary student in Nashville, he served as an inspiring political mentor to students such as Diane Nash and John Lewis, who would play key roles in the movement in the years to come. Part of that training consisted of using the consensus process to make decisions, which the Nashville-area students used as they organized sit-ins in their area.

In April, the experienced anti-racist organizer Ella Baker arranged a meeting of students who had participated in the sit-ins with the hopes of launching an organization which could coordinate and sustain their activism. Baker's sense of urgency arose from beliefs she held about the process of social change that shared much in common with those expressed by the Libertarian League. Baker believed that the reliance on the highly educated lawyers of the NAACP and on charismatic preachers like Martin Luther King, Jr. reduced poor and working-class black people's confidence in themselves and their own power. Since the civil rights movement was intended to combat the sense of dependency and powerlessness southern African

---

<sup>69</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 22.

Americans felt in relation to the white power structure and society at large, she found it perverse that the movement itself should suggest their dependence on “saviors” of one sort or another. It was her bedrock belief that “Strong people don’t need strong leaders.”<sup>70</sup>

Baker’s ideas about organizing grew out of thirty years of movement work, some of it shaped by anarchism. After graduating from college in 1927, Baker moved to Harlem and plunged into the world of black radical politics. There she befriended, debated, and worked with socialists, Communists, Garveyites, Pan-Africanists, and feminists, choosing not to confine herself to a single ideology. However, during the 1930s her “closest political ally,” according to biographer Barbara Ransby, was George Schuyler, a sharp-witted black newspaper columnist who helped edit the socialist *Messenger* in the 1920s and later defined himself as an anarchist.<sup>71</sup> In 1930, Baker and Schuyler launched the Young Negroes Cooperative League (YNCL), a national association of consumer co-ops and buying clubs that sought to create a non-profit, alternative economy for the black community as both a survival strategy during the Great Depression, and a means for avoiding future capitalist catastrophes of the sort. The YNCL had a far-ranging, anarchist vision and mode of operating. In opposition to the idea of “Industrial Democracy” advocated by Sidney Hillman and other socialist labor leaders of the day, Schuyler and Baker promoted the concept of

---

<sup>70</sup> Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 188-190.

<sup>71</sup> Ransby, *Ella Baker*, 78.

“co-operative democracy” in which the means of production were owned by those who operate them. Schuyler explained:

Whereas the Socialists hope to usher in such a Utopia society by the ballot and the Communists hope to turn the trick with the bullet, the cooperator (who is really an Anarchist since the triumph of his society will do away with the state in its present form—and I am an Anarchist) is slowly and methodically doing so through legal, intelligent economic cooperation or mutual aid.<sup>72</sup>

In the harsh environment of the Depression, the YNCL only survived for three years. In 1931, however, Baker spent a semester at Brookwood Labor College (directed by Muste), where she first encountered the radical teaching styles and models of popular education that became a defining feature of her later organizing style. As an organizer for the NAACP in the 1940s, she regularly conflicted with many of the organization’s leaders over their sexism and their disinterest in promoting independent activism by local branch members. She helped Rustin and Houser organize the Journey of Reconciliation in 1947 and again collaborated with Rustin to launch In Friendship, a fundraising operation, and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) following the Montgomery bus boycott.

At the April 1960 meeting of sit-in participants, Baker urged the assembled students to remain independent of the established civil rights organizations and to see their desegregation efforts as part of broader, international struggles against injustice. James Farmer and the students from Nashville argued passionately for basing future activities in the philosophy of nonviolence, and shared the “ethos” of building

---

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Ransby, *Ella Baker*, 87.

consensus (rather than relying on adversarial parliamentary procedure) with the assembled group.<sup>73</sup> At the end of the weekend the two hundred or so students in attendance founded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), an organization that Baker would continue to delicately, but profoundly, shape for the next half-decade.

The advent of SNCC marked a watershed for the black freedom movement as well as for future anarchist movements in the United States. SNCC was not created by anarchists nor do any of its staff members or volunteers appear to have identified as such.<sup>74</sup> The organization's post-1962 focus on voter registration and its creation of an electoral political party in 1964 deviated substantially from traditional conceptions of anarchist politics. Nonetheless, the way SNCC conducted its business—including how members of the group made decisions, and the way it organized for radical social change, deeply resonated with long-held anarchist beliefs. For that reason, historian James Farrell claims, “SNCC’s own organization followed a communitarian anarchist model.” Farrell isn’t alone in this assessment; in recent years, organizers sympathetic to anarchism, such as Chris Crass, have argued that contemporary global justice activists have much to learn from SNCC’s analysis, internal structure, and style of

---

<sup>73</sup> Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 47.

<sup>74</sup> Howard Zinn and Staughton Lynd both worked with SNCC and in later years described their position as significantly influenced by anarchism. However, Zinn served only in an advisory capacity, and Lynd as Freedom School director for one summer, after the organization’s character and direction had already been established.

organizing.<sup>75</sup> And in 1965 members of SNCC who sought to restructure the organization denounced a large faction who remained wed to the organization's original structure as "anarchists."<sup>76</sup>

In its first five years, SNCC distinguished itself from existing civil rights organizations such as the NAACP and the SCLC by its dedication to the use of nonviolent direct action and through its efforts to invent egalitarian forms of organization, participatory decision-making processes, and what Ella Baker termed "group-centered leadership." The local student groups which had participated in sit-ins desired to retain local autonomy. At first, therefore, SNCC operated as a coordinating council of elected representatives that was empowered to suggest, but not direct activities for local groups to take. Historian Clayborne Carson explains that the student activists "strongly opposed any hierarchy of authority such as existed in other civil rights organizations."<sup>77</sup> While the radical pacifist influence of the Nashville students may have played some role in this decision, SNCC members generally supported decentralization not due to any ideological allegiances, but because so far it had served them well—the spontaneous and local character of their sit-ins had successfully broken through the stagnation the centralized, "big-man" driven national civil rights organizations had fallen into by 1960.<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 98. Chris Crass, *Collective Liberation on My Mind* (Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2001).

<sup>76</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 155, 156.

<sup>77</sup> Carson, *In Struggle*, 30.

<sup>78</sup> Polletta, *Freedom*, 57.

Instead of carrying out a program designed by a few leaders (and perhaps an appointed circle of advisors), SNCC members collectively engaged in long discussions wherein those not used to speaking up were supported and gently urged to participate alongside the more loquacious. On all major questions, the organization attempted to reach consensus—that is, make plans that all participants could agree upon. While developing organizational strategy and policy by consensus was a time-consuming and often a frustrating process, sociologist Francesca Polletta has argued that by drawing in more people, it served to build the leadership capacities of those involved.<sup>79</sup> This process was fundamental to Baker’s understanding of social change. She believed that, “Instead of the leader as a person who was supposed to be a magic man, you could develop individuals who were bound together by a concept that benefitted the larger number of individuals and provided an opportunity for them to grow into being responsible for carrying out a program.”<sup>80</sup> Baker’s perspectives on leadership and movement building were strikingly similar to those elaborated by David Dellinger during and after his imprisonment during WWII. At that time he had argued that staff positions in revolutionary organizations should be rotating rather than permanent. This would help solve “some of the problems of a centralized ‘leadership’ that tends to become sterile, self-perpetuating and conservative...Not only would their effectiveness be increased, but others would be developed who are now kept

---

<sup>79</sup> Polletta, *Freedom*, 55-87.

<sup>80</sup> Quoted in Ransby, *Ella Baker*, 188.

undeveloped or are alienated.”<sup>81</sup> Baker’s views also accorded with the thinking of Sam Dolgoff and other members of the Libertarian League, as we will see shortly.

During its first year, SNCC members solidified their organization, built up a network of contacts, and carried out additional sit-ins to desegregate restaurants and other public facilities. Inspired by their activity, CORE launched a series of “Freedom Rides” in April of 1961 modeled on the 1947 Journey of Reconciliation. Interracial teams again attempted to travel by bus throughout the southern states in violation of segregationist protocol. Jim Peck again participated and was beaten by racist mobs along with other Freedom Riders on this trip as well. When CORE decided to abandon the project after an especially brutal attack by segregationists in Anniston, Alabama, SNCC members volunteered to continue the rides, in order to demonstrate that the movement would not be cowed by violence. They, too, were violently attacked as they travelled through Mississippi and Alabama, and eventually finished the ride under the protection of federal troops.

Following the Freedom Rides, SNCC members were divided over whether to devote themselves to a voter registration campaign, as they were encouraged to do by local southern activists and the Kennedy administration or to continue to rely on the moral force of nonviolent direct action. Baker helpfully noted that given conditions in the Deep South, the two activities were not mutually exclusive: resistance to registering poor blacks, especially in rural areas, would be so strong that organizers

---

<sup>81</sup> Dellinger to Cantine, February 4, 1945, Box 8, DR, BL.

would be forced to put their bodies on the line to secure enfranchisement. Beginning in 1962, dozens of students, mostly African American, left school to become full time organizers in voting rights projects in small towns and rural areas of the southern states.<sup>82</sup> Working with local leaders and slowly gaining the confidence of black residents, they incrementally increased voter rolls, despite regular physical attacks and constant legal harassment. The shift of focus from direct action for desegregation to the campaign for voting rights required participants in SNCC to develop from brave activists into skilled organizers. Whereas the sit-ins and Freedom Rides had been conducted by a self-selected group, the mass voting rights campaign required SNCC to encourage, inspire, and facilitate hundreds of thousands of southern African Americans to make sacrifices and take risks in pursuit of their freedom.<sup>83</sup> In their patient organizing work, members sought ways to extend the process of group

---

<sup>82</sup> By 1962, members such as James Forman recognized that the enormity of the task they had set for themselves required SNCC to maintain a full-time staff, including field secretaries, fundraisers, administrators, and other positions. Yet even as the organization began evolving from a council of student volunteers, to one centered on a full-time, paid staff, it continued to accord with anarchist principles. SNCC salaries were so low that, according to Forman, that it was “impossible for anyone to develop a vested interest in the survival of the organization.” Anarchists, such as those involved in the ILGWU faction fight of the 1920s, had long advocated that union staff members should never be paid more than the people they represented, so that they could not be corrupted by the desire to retain higher salaries. Forman quoted in Carson, *In Struggle*, 71. See also Ransby, *Ella Baker*, 278-279.

<sup>83</sup> This useful distinction is discussed in Ransby, *Ella Baker*; Charles Payne, *I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Aldon Morris, *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change* (New York: Free Press, 1984). I addressed this distinction as it specifically relates to anarchists in “Dear Punk Rock Activism” in *Letters from Young Activists: Today’s Rebels Speak Out*, ed. Beger, Boudin, and Farrow (New York: Nation Books, 2005).

leadership and perpetual leadership development beyond the organization itself to all the people they worked with in voter registration efforts. SNCC developed in its day-to-day organizing work an ideal of *participatory democracy* that demanded ordinary people be able to make the decisions that effect their lives.

Bob Moses, a high school teacher from New York who was recruited for the southern movement by Rustin and mentored by Baker, exemplified and promoted this approach within SNCC.<sup>84</sup> Moses remarked of SNCC's organizing process, "How are you going to, as early as possible, move in the direction of [local] people taking ownership? One of the first areas is the meeting—that's your tool for building. There you get into what has come to be called participatory democracy...in which the people who are meeting really get more and more of a feeling that this is [their] meeting."<sup>85</sup>

Polletta notes that this promotion of collectivist decision-making was intended to "create leaders—and to create the mechanisms that would hold leaders responsible to their constituents."<sup>86</sup> Accountability and direct responsibility to the entire group, when representation was deemed necessary at all, were goals pre-war anarchists, such as those who belonged to the ILGWU, had struggled to achieve in their union activism. This is significant because it indicates that SNCC operated on principles very similar to those of traditional anarchists, not simply those that radical pacifists derived from

---

<sup>84</sup> Eric Burner, *And Gently He Shall Lead Them: Robert Parris Moses and Civil Rights in Mississippi* (New York: New York University Press, 1994).

<sup>85</sup> Moses quoted in Polletta, *Freedom*, 56. The term "participatory democracy" was not used by SNCC members at the time, but was popularized by members of Students for a Democracy Society who were heavily influenced by SNCC. See Chapter 6.

<sup>86</sup> Polletta, *Freedom*, 56.

Gandhi. Such concurrences in organizing styles and organizational values inured not only the anarchist-pacifists, but also the anarcho-syndicalists to SNCC in its early years. More than likely, it is because of these similarities that the previously class-struggle-focused syndicalists of the Libertarian League incrementally modified their beliefs in response to the achievements of SNCC and the black freedom struggle more broadly. This process is evident when later *Views and Comments* articles are compared with the League's 1957 editorial about the Little Rock crisis.

### **Cracks in Anarcho-syndicalist Economism**

By 1963, the Libertarian League had softened its line regarding the institutional sources of progress. An unsigned article, almost certainly penned by Dolgoff, acknowledged that, "The church, which has been for years the Negro's major social gathering place, naturally was to become, with the changing times, a lever for social change. As much as we may wish its replacement in this role by the union hall, it must be considered an important factor in today's civil rights outlook."<sup>87</sup> Still, the article, "Leaders and Led in the Negro Revolt," cautioned against the "undemocratic and hierarchical" structures of some movement organizations. Dolgoff wrote, "the civil rights ministers, despite their long fiery speeches favoring direct action, too often have carried the preacher-preached relationship into the human rights movement."

---

<sup>87</sup> No author, "Leaders and Led in the Negro Revolt," *Views and Comments*, No. 45, Fall 1963, 1-3. As noted above, Dolgoff claims to have penned most of the unsigned articles. The reference to Robert Michels' "iron law of oligarchy" makes it especially likely that he was the author of this particular contribution, for the reasons discussed below.

Like Baker and other members of SNCC, Dolgoff worried that rank and file initiative and ideas would be stifled. Dolgoff further warned that “as long as the intra-organizational tendencies toward control-from-above are not persistently counter-balanced by libertarian tendencies, there is a great potential danger of bureaucratic ossification and the sell-outs and stagnation this implies.”

Dolgoff didn't make this claim based on his reading in anarchist theory, but rather on his experiences in the labor movement in the 1920s, and his conflicts with authoritarian Communists in the 1930s. In a nod to Swiss political scientist Robert Michels, he continued, “To prevent the tendency toward oligarchy from becoming an iron law, individuals within the human rights movement must open free discussion on the nature of leadership in general and...foster the spread of complete, unhindered discussion on all questions organizational policy.” Michel's widely read *Political Parties* examined a variety of political movements, including anarchism, and concluded that in all large-scale organizations power tends to accumulate in the hands of a few individuals, who then attempt to hold on to it and use it for personal ends. Dolgoff had carefully read Michel by the time he penned “Leaders and Led” in 1963. As the East Coast spokesperson of the IWW, Dolgoff was interviewed in 1962 on Columbia University's student radio station. Asked to comment on Michel's argument, Dolgoff provided a nuanced answer that clarified his thinking about radical political organizations.

Michel does have a point there that all organizations and all groupings of people are subject to an abuse of power...I think that all organization

carries within itself the germ of bureaucratization. I don't really believe that we will ever get rid of it fully. So that reduces the problem to the proposition of reducing the dangers of usurpation of power, or bureaucratization, to its minimum.

Dolgoff dismissed the idea that social change could occur without any form of organization.

To say that we need no organization at all is, of course, simply fantastic and idiotic in view of the interdependence of social life and the fact that man is by nature a social being who must combine with his fellow man in order to achieve common aims. So we must have organization, and the problem revolves around, as I said before, the problem of reducing to a minimum the apparent and real danger of concentration of power.

Understanding this, Dolgoff explained, the IWW “built into our constitution and into our practice certain safeguards against such usurpation of power, trying at all times to reduce it to a minimum.”<sup>88</sup> Since the late 1920s, Dolgoff had debated “the organization question” with other anarchists. Against the organizationally confused Road to Freedom Group and the anti-organizationist editors of *L'Adunata dei Refretarri*, he had defended the importance of formal, yet egalitarian and democratic, unions and anarchist organizations in which members were accountable to one another and dedicated to putting masses in motion. With regard to much of the civil rights movement, Dolgoff voiced the opposite concern: a warning that undemocratic organizations reliant on a few individuals present multiple dangers to struggles in pursuit of freedom and equality. Ella Baker, Bob Moses, and Sam Dolgoff, then, all recognized the serious challenge and importance of developing forms of organization

---

<sup>88</sup> Sam Weiner Interview, WKCR-FM, NYC, December 1962, compact disc, Labadie Collection.

most conducive to the goals of establishing a radically egalitarian world. Having joined the anarchist movement in the 1920s, when it had already entered a period of steep decline, Dolgoff had never had the opportunity or responsibility of trying to actualize such an mass organization amongst activists involved in a life and death struggle. That was precisely the challenge Baker, Moses, and other SNCC members set for themselves.

“Leaders and Led” is notable because it demonstrates the extent to which the Libertarian League had moved away from its earlier insistence that radical labor unions constituted the only viable organizational form for freedom struggles. The group shifted from insisting on a single *form* of organization to supporting a set of *principles* of organization consistent with the anarchist tradition and informed by the experiences of anarchist organizers. The article concluded, “If we desire freedom and Freedom Now, we must today, within our organizations, work for the greatest possible freedom of discussion and freedom to plan and coordinate our own actions. We must build the tendency for control-from-below.”<sup>89</sup> Dolgoff’s words could have as easily been spoken by Moses or Baker.

By the summer of 1964 the League had moved even further in its thinking about the sources of progressive change. In a short article titled “Bigots” it denounced the “shameful” tradition of racial discrimination within the U.S. labor movement. It pointed to a recent instance in which white members of a New York local of the

---

<sup>89</sup> No author, “Leaders and Led in the Negro Revolt,” *Views and Comments*, 45, Fall 1963, 1-3.

Plumber's Union refused to accept one African-American and three Puerto Rican workers as members. The League editorialized, "Only the magnificent, around-the-clock demonstrations of civil rights organizations FORCED the union to consider the applications of the four men."<sup>90</sup> This incident raised "disturbing" questions for League members that cut to the heart of some of their most deeply held political assumptions. "Why did not the rank and file protest this outrageous discrimination?" the article asked. "Can all the blame be placed exclusively against the officials of the union? The sad fact is that the officials, in this instance, echoed the racist sentiments of the members." Here we see evidence of League members' economistic thinking breaking down. Many traditional anarchists, including Dolgoff, had long held that conservative policies and actions within the mainstream labor movement stemmed from the mis-leadership of officials compromised by their positions of power.<sup>91</sup> They believed that workers would instinctually fight to overturn inequality if their energies were not diverted by leaders with ulterior motives.<sup>92</sup> While League members had subscribed to similar views, they now implicitly admitted that rank and file workers

---

<sup>90</sup> No author, "Labor Comments: Bigots," *Views and Comments*, No. 47, Summer 1964, 18-19.

<sup>91</sup> In the United States Luigi Galleani and Marcus Graham exemplified this perspective. See Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 129-130; Paul Avrich, *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 52-53.

<sup>92</sup> This position was based on an essentialist logic that assumed that class position ensured a principled radical subjectivity and privileged the working class as revolutionary subject. For a critique of such thinking see Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (New York: Verso, 1985); Anna Marie Smith, *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

were themselves at least partially responsible for divisive racism within the unions. “In exposing these social sores,” they wrote, “the civil rights demonstrators are performing a great service towards the moral regeneration of the unions.”<sup>93</sup> “Bigots” serves as one indication of broader political reconsiderations engendered by the attack against white supremacy. League members began to recognize that white workers were not, by nature, anti-racist—or for that matter anti-capitalist—just as elites within the African American community were not exempt from perpetuating their own class biases. Whereas in 1957 the League had believed unions would defeat segregation, by 1964 they could admit that civil rights demonstrators might save the labor movement, and hence the class struggle, from a hopeless conservatism.

### **New Directions in SNCC**

SNCC’s enfranchisement work culminated in the infamous Mississippi Freedom Summer in which hundreds of white and black college students from the north joined SNCC staffers for a blitzkrieg effort to secure the right to vote. They were met with persistent legal harassment and extreme violence. Early in the summer, three volunteers, one black and two white, disappeared and were later found to have been murdered in Philadelphia, Mississippi. SNCC and their partners in CORE and other organizations continued the campaign, building a mass base of poor, mostly rural African Americans in Mississippi. They organized the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, which contested the right of the state’s delegation to be seated at the

---

<sup>93</sup> No author, “Labor Comments: Bigots,” *Views and Comments*, No. 47, Summer 1964, 18-19.

Democratic Party's 1964 national convention. MFDP delegates rejected a compromise offered by the Johnson administration that would have seated two delegates, but left decision-making power in the hands of the party regulars who had been elected only by white voters.

Rebuffed by the Democratic Party, the MFDP campaign served to further radicalize many SNCC members, including figures such as Stokely Carmichael, James Foreman, and H. Rap Brown, who would become some of the most articulate and best-known proponents of Black Power later in the decade. Recognizing ever more clearly how entrenched white supremacy was, and how compromised the Johnson administration's support for the movement was, some SNCC activists increasingly turned towards African national liberation movements and forms of "third world Marxism" for guidance. The set-back at the Democratic National Convention also left many SNCC staffers and volunteers dispirited, and strategically disoriented.

Marijuana usage began to rise, and some staffers took to travelling from one SNCC program to another, without settling down to organize in any one area for long.

Though the organization needed to coalesce on a strategy to continue building on the momentum of the previous summer, a rift opened amongst the staff that centered, on the surface, around questions of organizational structure, decision-making, and staff discipline. Participants memoirs and exhaustive research by historians and sociologists, published long after the fact, indicate, however, that underlying the decision-making debates lay deep uncertainties about the organization's strategic

direction and complex disagreements emanating from racial tensions, class divisions, different organizational philosophies and competing visions of what revolutionary change entailed.<sup>94</sup>

The details of the debate are too numerous to fully elaborate here, but its outcome and issues it raised are important to the future development of anarchism in the United States. Beginning in the fall of 1964, the staff of SNCC gathered to discuss its program for the next year and to debate the request of approximately two hundred Mississippi Freedom Summer volunteers, the majority white, to remain in the south and join the staff of SNCC as the summer came to an end. Both were timely questions, and staff members held many concerns about an influx of white northerners into the organization. These issues were quickly sidelined, however, by staff members who raised concerns about the manner in which proposals and the meeting agenda were crafted, and how decisions would be arrived at. During the week of discussions which followed two loosely defined factions emerged, representing competing visions and different social groups within the organization.

One faction formed around Executive Secretary James Foreman, who argued that it was time for SNCC to become “a revolutionary organization in every sense.” He envisioned SNCC transforming itself from a small cadre organization of staff organizers into a mass-based organization that would, itself, seek to win power at local, state, and national levels. While it would develop electoral campaigns, it would

---

<sup>94</sup> Francesca Polletta provides a useful partial bibliography of scholarly and participant considerations of the debate in Polletta, *Freedom*, 249, Note 1.

not shy away from armed self-defense and, eventually, armed struggle. Foreman asserted that political conditions were forcing the organization “to choose between reform or revolution, violence or nonviolence. And an organization that is seeking revolution, and willing to use violence, cannot afford the fear of power. It cannot afford weak or vacillating leadership; it cannot afford liberalistic forms of self-assertion.”<sup>95</sup>

A second faction formed in the name of Bob Moses and his perspectives, although he was unwilling to directly lead it. This grouping believed it was crucial for SNCC to continue building local organizations controlled by area residents that could act collaboratively, but not as members of a centralized SNCC. Some members of this faction recognized the concrete benefits collective decision-making and local control over the direction of campaigns had brought to SNCC’s organizing efforts to date. At the same time, however, some members, including Moses himself, began to feel paralyzed by their own critiques of leaders and leadership. In promoting an alternative way of doing politics that shifted focus from charismatic leaders to everyday people, the most talented and dedicated among them became path-setters that others admired and looked to for direction. This problem was felt most acutely by Moses, who felt he held undeserved sway over other activists, and his own participation impeded them from further developing their own ideas and capabilities.

---

<sup>95</sup> James Foreman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997 [1972]), 413.

Foreman accused the decentralist faction of having contracted a dangerous malady, “local people-itis,” or the belief that poor, rural, blacks possessed an innate sense of what should be done that those from more privileged backgrounds lacked. This, he and others in his camp believed, led to much of the paralysis and inaction SNCC was experiencing. Staff members were becoming self-absorbed “floaters” because they were unsure what to contribute or how to relate to local residents—the targets of their organizing. The problem was compounded by the fact that, beginning with Freedom Summer, SNCC had taken many white northern students under its wings. Nearly everyone involved acknowledged that white people should not direct the campaigns for black equality. But what about northern college-educated blacks? Critics of decentralism and collective decision-making acknowledged that many black staffers also supported the organization’s traditional practices, but suggested their primarily middle-class backgrounds led them to over-intellectualize and defend the group’s anti-hierarchical forms purely on philosophical grounds, as a matter of principle. Cleveland Sellers, for example, denounced the decentralist faction, “philosophers, existentialists, anarchists, floaters and freedom-high niggers.” Although he was obviously critical, Sellers does not seem to have been using “anarchism” as an a-political pejorative simply meaning “chaos” or “senseless violence.” He acknowledged, for example, that his centralist faction was urging a departure from SNCC’s “freewheeling, anarchistic origins.”

Francesca Polletta astutely concludes, “As black staffers struggled to find a way to give voice to new feelings of racial identity, they grew frustrated with a deliberative style on which whites seemed to be insisting as a way to hang onto their positions in the organization. Participatory democracy came to be seen as white, and, in contrast, a centralized and top-down organizational structure came to symbolize not only programmatic certainty but also a black orientation.”<sup>96</sup> With Moses unwilling to defend the practical benefits of SNCC’s leadership and organizational innovations, for fear of becoming an overreaching leader himself, the faction around Foreman eventually triumphed in the spring of 1965. As SNCC leaders increasingly embraced the demand for “black power” first articulated by Carmichael and sociologist Charles Hamilton, the organization also renounced its commitment to nonviolence and required all but a few white staffers and volunteers to leave the organization.

Despite its political reconsiderations, the Libertarian League consistently worried that the black freedom movement was in danger of being derailed in one way or another. In one of the League’s final articles on the movement, contributor “P.K.” worried that SNCC’s focus on establishing the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party in the summer of 1964 indicated that even the most radical organization of the movement was likely to soon be co-opted into liberal electoralism.<sup>97</sup> This prediction turned out to be off base—SNCC shifted towards Marxism and revolutionary nationalism rather than liberalism, as we have seen. The Libertarian League did not

---

<sup>96</sup> Polletta, *Freedom*, 90.

<sup>97</sup> P.K., “SNCC and the Vote in Dixie,” *Views and Comments*, No. 49, Spring 1965.

endure long enough to comment on these departures, having dissolved in the summer of 1965 due to tensions discussed in Chapter Six. However, League members would likely have found not only the Marxism but also the nationalism of the later black freedom movement disturbing and even reactionary, judging from their earlier analysis of national liberation movements in Africa and other parts of the third world, as we will see below. Importantly, however, a younger generation of anarchists, which gained political consciousness in the early 1960s, drew considerable inspiration from, and were deeply influenced by black power militants. As the next chapter makes clear, that influence would lead them to develop a form of anarchism quite different from that inspired by SNCC's activity in its first five years.

### **National Liberation**

While the anarchist-pacifists affiliated with *Liberation* and the members of the Libertarian League were debating the tactics of the black freedom movement in the United States, they also analyzed—and, to a small extent, participated in—struggles for national independence taking place abroad. Their thinking about the process of change and the challenges of non-authoritarian leadership in national liberation struggles abroad informed their perspectives on developments in the domestic civil rights movement, and vice versa.

Eventually, conflicting positions on the Cuban revolution opened a rift within the libertarian left, contributing to a further diminishment of an institutional anarchist

presence at just the moment when anarchism had the potential to gain a wider appeal within the burgeoning New Left.

The Libertarian League began its consideration of national liberation movements by reprinting an article penned by the British anarchist Colin Ward about the efforts of the people of Ghana to throw off British colonialism. Ward noted:

There is an inevitable paradox in the attitude of the anarchists...towards the struggles of colonial peoples for political independence. We are bound to support their aspirations and to play our part in changing opinion about them in this country...But when a colonial territory has gained its freedom from imperial control, and a new state comes into being, with the usual panoply of armies, law courts, prisons, parliaments and ambitious politicians, we are bound to recognize that from the point of view of human freedom, one struggle is over only to give birth to a new one. And often those leaders who have been most worthy of support in the first one, become the adversaries in the second.

Ward's article is indicative of the way anti-colonial struggles had long posed challenges for anarchist political theory. As advocates of local, direct, political decision making, anarchists universally opposed the military and political control of people by a far away state apparatus. However, since the anarchist movement emerged in the 1860s, successful movements against colonial domination had generally resulted in the establishment of new nation-states based on the Western European model that anarchists stridently rejected. Ward lamented, for example, the fact that the leader of Ghana's Convention People's Party, Kwame Nkrumah, seemed eager to reproduce the statist structures of Western democracies and to win the support of the Ghanian people through the type of charismatic appeal and mass

communication techniques that increasingly defined politics in the West. In doing so, Ward felt Nkrumah overlooked the benefits of the indigenous, pre-colonial traditions of village level decision-making and an ethic of mutual aid based on an extension of familial obligation to the entire local community. “The whole tragedy of the new nations,” Ward averred, “is that their leaders are shaped in their thinking by the same assumptions which lie behind the political systems of their former masters...the worst remaining aspects of indigenous social systems are exploited because they are useful politically, and the best aspects of tribalism are destroyed.”<sup>98</sup>

Given this contradiction, anarchists had historically taken a variety of positions regarding colonialism. Those adopting the most simplistic and dogmatic analyses refused to recognize a difference between a colonial state and a self-governing republic, arguing that all forms of state authority are commensurate with one another. Marcus Graham, for instance, endorsed the struggle by Ethiopians to expel Italian troops in the late 1930s, but insisted that if they didn’t then carry out an anarchist revolution, they were just exchanging rulers with of one skin color for those of another. Anarchists from colonizing countries primarily understood colonialism to be a form of political domination designed to extract wealth from the colonized people. They paid less attention to the changes in cultural patterns, sexual norms, and belief structures demanded by imperial rulers and settlers who justified their domination by claiming it was an attempt to civilize racially inferior people.

---

<sup>98</sup> Colin Ward, “Ghana and African Freedom,” *Views and Comments*, No. 23, August 1957.

Building on Ward's perspective, the League adopted an official position on the issue of imperialism and colonialism in 1957. It retained the anarchist skepticism for the state structures but also recognized the progressive character of anti-colonial movements.

Although most anti-imperialist movements aim at setting up native governments, Libertarians should support these movements because the people engaged in the colonial struggles are fighting out common enemy – imperialism.

Once the colonial countries are free from foreign domination, however, our position should change, for independence from foreign control is meaningless to the people unless they have economic independence also....A native government can be – and usually is – just as oppressive as that of a foreign imperialist power...Therefore in countries which have won their independence, Libertarians must support the struggle against the new government and fight for ever greater freedom...Partial struggles must be supported, with libertarian participation always aimed at carrying a “national” revolution into more progressive social stages; if possible, into a libertarian revolution.

In recognizing the moral and strategic importance of supporting “partial struggles,” the League verbally disavowed an absolutism that, in the past, had left anarchists disengaged from important social justice struggles when they didn't precisely fit anarchist expectations regarding methods and final objectives. Yet the League's statement also contained provocative, but underdeveloped, claims about national belonging.

Nationalism and self-determination are, in the final analysis, incompatible. True self-determination transcends nationalism. We are opposed to the so-called national unification or reunification of peoples

as imposed from above. This becomes a block against the broader concept of international unity and basic human solidarity.<sup>99</sup>

In this and other articles, the League hints at, but does not clearly distinguish between processes of state formation, the inculcation of a sense of national identity amongst the subjects of those states, and the acknowledgement of a sense of belonging amongst groups of people that have shared common experiences, languages, and lands—all of which have, in different times and places, been indexed by the term “nationalism.” The League built its analysis on the nineteenth century European anarchist tradition which generally called for a borderless world in which people would make decisions locally without regard to “race.” This universalistic social vision clashed with the desire of many colonized and formerly colonized people to assert self-rule in a defined territory while celebrating the particularities of their own cultures as distinct and equal—or superior—to European cultures. The League was insightful in recognizing that in colonial and post-colonial situations, state agents typically saw the inculcation of a sense of national belonging and identity as necessary to effective rule, and therefore worked intensively to “impose” a sense of community “from above.” However, the League’s reticence to recognize race as a central social category hindered it from differentiating racial belonging from national belonging, while its ideal of “international unity and basic human solidarity” prevented it from

---

<sup>99</sup> “Position of the Libertarian League on Imperialism and Colonialism,” *Views and Comments*, No. 24, October 1957, pg. 13-15.

recognizing the desire for nationhood status as an authentic or acceptable radical demand from formerly colonized—and therefore racially oppressed—people.

The League's position paper on imperialism and colonialism might have provided a starting point for a renewed exploration by anarchists of the complexities of race, nationalism, and state formation in a rapidly decolonizing world. Instead, it marked the intellectual high point of the Leagues' consideration of post-colonial politics. Over the next seven years, Libertarian League members regularly substituted pre-established anarchist claims about the nature of states in general for original analysis of the complexities national independence and state formation in Africa and other parts of the world. In a 1958, for example, an anonymous contributor to *Views and Comments* claimed a single academic journal article about Ghana demonstrated, "The power of foreign colonial rulers is now wielded by the new native government...It appoints swarms of officials who poke their long noses into everybody's business, regulate everything, and exacts tribute (taxes) which supports the parasitic State apparatus."<sup>100</sup> Articles emphasized authoritarian developments in newly independent states such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Congo, reaffirming members' beliefs that state-oriented liberation struggles almost inevitably decline into authoritarian social systems<sup>101</sup> This perspective had the advantage of forcing a clear-

---

<sup>100</sup> "Ghana—Birth of a State," *Views and Comments*, No. 26, February 1958, 22-24.

<sup>101</sup> See, for example, "National Independence is Not Enough," *Views and Comments*, No. 30, August 1958; "Liberated Tunisia," *Views and Comments*, No. 31, October 1958; "Nationalism vs. Freedom," *Views and Comments*, No. 35, May 1959; Gee, "Congo: Greenbacks and Black Blood," *Views and Comments*, No. 49, Spring 1965.

eyed acknowledgement of undemocratic developments within the post-colonial states that some other sectors of the left overlooked or minimized due to their anti-imperialist sympathies. The League's cynical perspective about the dangers of political elites consolidating power turned out to be prescient and historically valid, given the history of dictatorship and brutality against common people that has plagued many African, Middle Eastern, and other post-colonial states since the late 1950s.<sup>102</sup> However, the predominantly critical tone of Libertarian League articles did little to help rebuild a radical movement at home. In the culturally and politically stifling environment of the Cold War, the successful struggles of millions of people of color to emancipate themselves from racist colonial regimes were some of the most profound and potentially energizing developments to occur anywhere in the world. The League chose, however, to represent them as further evidence of how just how difficult unlikely achieving a truly free and equal—that is, anarchist—world had become.

*Liberation* magazine also regularly published articles about the newly independent nations of the formerly colonized world. The editors related to these struggles differently than the Libertarian League did, however, in keeping with their desire to provide a forum for those involved in struggles to speak for themselves, and for outsiders to consider dilemmas raised from a variety of perspectives. The editors

---

<sup>102</sup> See for example, Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World* (New York: New Press, 2007); Mahmoud Mamdani, *When Victims become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); Martin Meredith, *The Fate of Africa from the Hopes of Freedom to the Heart of Despair: A History of 50 Years of Independence* (New York: Public Affairs, 2005).

did not articulate a detailed position on decolonization movements in “Tract for the Times” or other collective statements, likely assuming their opposition to colonialism would be taken for granted by readers. They did, however inveigh against non-aligned nations developing their own nuclear arsenals as a means of jockeying in the Cold War order. They clearly spoke for domestic as well as international social movements when they declared, “Seizure of the war-making and repressive machinery of the State cannot be a step toward transforming society into a free and humanly satisfying pattern.” Therefore, the editors sought to investigate and promote international movements that sought to transform society by other means than seizing power. “Such groups as the Asian Socialist parties, the Gandhian Constructive Workers, and the Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave in India illustrate this trend, as do the non-violent responses to Colonialism in Africa,” they explained, in the first issue.<sup>103</sup>

*Liberation* touched on some of the same figures and themes as did *Views and Comments*. In 1962, it published an article by the Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere on the African tradition of “communitarian socialism.” Nyerere argued precisely for a revitalization of the mutual aid tradition that Colin Ward believed was being lost in Ghana, and by extension, elsewhere in Africa. He noted, “Modern African socialism can draw from its traditional heritage the recognition of ‘society’ as an extension of the basic family unit. But it can no longer confine the idea of the social family within the limits of the tribe, nor, indeed, of the nation... Every individual on this continent is

---

<sup>103</sup> Editors, “Tract for the Times,” *Liberation*, March, 1956, 5-6.

his brother.”<sup>104</sup> The magazine had earlier printed a speech in which Nkrumah himself had derided France’s test detonation of a nuclear bomb in the Sahara as “nuclear imperialism.” The editors explained, “we are aware that some practices of the Ghanaian government are not fully democratic,” but they felt compelled to print the speech due to the emphasis Nkrumah placed on non-violent resistance to nuclear development, which they found “unique in a contemporary head of state.”<sup>105</sup>

Connections between the nonviolent revolutionaries, Nkrumah, and African anti-nuclear activity ran considerably deeper than coverage in *Liberation*. Following the Paris to Moscow ride for peace, Bill Sutherland travelled to England to speak about the project and promote the Peacemakers vision. There he met African college students who excitedly described the liberation movements growing in their home countries. Politically depressed by the U.S. American political scene of the early 1950s, he decided to move to Africa and take part in the anti-colonial struggle there. He was prevented from entering Nigeria by British officials, but Ghana, which had one the right to internal self-governance at the time, provided him with a visa. Sutherland still considered himself an anarchist at the time and recognized that fighting for the creation of independent nation states represented a contradiction on one level. However, he believed that mass movements to throw off foreign political domination, racial apartheid, and capitalist economics were in line with anarchist goals

---

<sup>104</sup> Julius K. Nyerere, “Communitarian Socialism, An African View,” *Liberation*, July-August 1962.

<sup>105</sup> Kwame Nkrumah, “Against Nuclear Imperialism,” *Liberation*, May 1960, 16.

on a deeper level, and that he would be more useful there than as a member of the stagnating Peacemakers in the United States.<sup>106</sup>

One of Sutherland's contacts in England was a South African journalist who informed him of the launch of the Defiance of Unjust Laws Campaign. Sutherland conveyed this news to Rustin and Houser of CORE, since the campaign used non-violent direct action tactics similar to those developed by CORE to resist apartheid. Houser and Rustin launched Americans for South African Resistance to support the campaign, which they later broadened to become the American Committee on Africa (ACOA). Throughout the 1950s, '60s, and '70s Sutherland and ACOA worked to build support for African struggles and to link them with African American campaigns. Sutherland lobbied to have Martin Luther King, Jr. invited to the Ghanian independence celebration in 1957, and he organized African liberation movements to endorse the 1963 March on Washington.

When the French announced their intentions to test a nuclear bomb in the Sahara, Sutherland helped to coordinate the International Sahara Protest Team, in

---

<sup>106</sup> Bill Sutherland, interview with the author, Brooklyn, New York, June 27, 2008. When I interviewed Bill Sutherland his health was declining (he has since passed away) and his answers were brief. I asked him, "Do you remember what your politics were in the 1940s and '50s, before you went to Africa? How would you describe yourself?" He answered, "My most vivid memory is the anarchist movement." I asked, "Did you consider yourself an anarchist?" "Yes," he replied. Later, I asked, "Did your views change when you went to Africa?" He replied, "Well, I adhered to the anarchist movement while I was in Africa, but I worked with the independence movements." To clarify, I asked, "So you felt that you could believe in anarchism as an ideal, but that you should also work for the independence of African nations?" He responded, "Yes."

which Africans, Europeans, and Americans (including Rustin and Muste) attempted to travel from Ghana to the test site to prevent the bomb's detonation. Although the team was apprehended by French West African military forces, the action inspired a Nkrumah to sponsor a Positive Action Conference for Peace and Security in Africa. Conference participants outlined ways in which non-violent governmental groups could take action, alongside activities by the newly independent nations, to prevent "nuclear imperialism" and other forms of neo-colonialism. After the 1960 Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa, Sutherland accepted the legitimacy of armed struggle. Later in life he explained, "I'm a person who believes in nonviolence on principle. And true nonviolence is a spiritual force that the people can have, which can be the most powerful thing going. But I respect the revolutionist who adopts a violent method, because I think that the most important thing is the revolution." Sutherland likewise accommodated his anarchism to state-based efforts to secure independence and well-being for Africans. However, his anarchist and radical pacifist convictions and activities inspired him to lend his support to African liberation struggles, and they helped to determine *Liberation's* stance in relation to decolonization movements on that and other continents.<sup>107</sup>

---

<sup>107</sup> Bill Sutherland and Matt Meyer, *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000). Interviews with Bill Sutherland and George Houser, No Easy Victories website, [www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int01\\_sutherland.php](http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int01_sutherland.php); [www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int02\\_houser.php](http://www.noeasyvictories.org/interviews/int02_houser.php) (accessed August 9, 2010).

In the 1950s and early 1960s, the editors of *Liberation* chose to focus their coverage on what they saw as positive social developments in the post-colonial states. While they were most excited by decentralist and non-violent strategies and tactics, they hesitated to openly criticize the activities of freedom movements operating in contexts with which they felt unqualified to evaluate. This practice was put to the test, however, with regard to the Cuban Revolution, which had communist and anarchist factions that shared characteristics similar to those of the United States.

### **Cuba Libre**

The debate amongst anarchists about how to relate to post-revolutionary states sharpened into a controversy and confrontation in the aftermath of the successful Cuban Revolution. On New Year's Day, 1959, the July 26<sup>th</sup> Movement, an armed band of socialist revolutionaries lead by Fidel Castro, succeeded in overthrowing the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Batista had deep ties to U.S. businessmen and organized crime families, as well as military support from the U.S. government. His regime's authoritarian repression of political opposition and economic orientation toward the United States created a society characterized by rural areas rife with poverty and urban areas renowned as vice-choked playgrounds for international business elites. The editors of *Liberation*, unsurprisingly, were eager to cover developments in Cuba. Between 1959 and 1965 they ran articles from a variety of perspectives that explored both progressive aspects and worrisome trends in the post-revolutionary government and society.

After travelling throughout Cuba for two weeks in the fall of 1960, David Dellinger penned a two-part article exploring nature of the U.S.-Cuban relationship, the conditions he witnessed on the ground, and concerns he had about certain practices he witnessed. By the time of his trip, U.S. officials and major media outlets regularly portrayed Castro's government as Communist controlled, and claimed Cuban society was being made over in the style of Soviet-bloc nations. Dellinger toured urban and rural areas and spoke extensively with Castro supporters and opponents. "To talk with Cubans," he wrote, "is to be convinced that the Cuban Revolution has not been fashioned after any foreign revolution... It has been a native response to the ugly realities of day-to-day life under the grip of a nefarious combination of American financial interests and corrupt Cuban collaborationists." Dellinger reported that peasants and workers overwhelmingly supported the revolution, and that dissenters from the Castro camp were, in the main, anti-Batista democrats who chafed at the government's post-revolutionary socialist programs. Dellinger saw marked improvements in the lives of rural Cubans under government run agricultural co-operatives and remarked, "I was convinced that there is no present evidence of overweening state control, thought control, or suppression of meaningful freedom." Cuba had begun purchasing oil and other materials from Soviet bloc countries, but only after the U.S. organized an embargo on it by the Western democracies. Dellinger criticized the execution of opponents of the regime, and urged it to begin preparing for elections. Overall, however, he viewed it as a "humanistic" revolution distinct from

either pole of the Cold War.<sup>108</sup> The article was hailed by many on the anti-Stalinist left—the *New Left Review*, and the *Catholic Worker* reprinted it, for example.

However, members of the Libertarian League and *Liberation* editor Roy Finch found much to fault in it.

In the early months of 1961, approximately two dozen Cuban anarchists left the island and resettled in Miami and New York, claiming they would have been jailed, or worse, for their objections to Castro's government, had they remained. In February, the *Views and Comments* printed a statement from the "Cuban Libertarians in exile." Finch participated in an interview with twelve of the Cubans, facilitated by the League's Russell Blackwell, and published part of the dialogue in the March issue of *Liberation*. The portrait of the country painted by the exiles contrasted starkly with that provided by Dellinger. The exiles claimed nearly all of the country's unions had been taken over by Communists, anarchists had been expelled, and "real wages" had decreased. In fact, the Cubans claimed that Communists controlled, "education, the Army, the Secret Police, the trade unions, the Presidency, the press and mass media, the agrarian reform and the tourist industry." The exiles concluded that they would approve of Castro being deposed, even by conservative forces. "It would be preferable to a Stalinist dictatorship because at least you could move around and express yourself," they asserted. Impressed with the information provided by such

---

<sup>108</sup> David Dellinger, "Cuba: America's Lost Plantation, Part 1," *Liberation*, December 1960; David Dellinger, "Cuba: America's Lost Plantation, Part 2," *Liberation*, January 1961.

longtime revolutionaries, Finch and the League concluded that the “Cuban Revolution has all but been stolen from the Cuban people.”<sup>109</sup>

The exchange brought a flurry of letters from readers and the other editors of *Liberation*. Jim Peck, Dachine Rainer, and Jack Jones, former proprietor of the Dil Pickle Club in Chicago, lined up with Finch. Sidney Lens expressed serious doubts about the accuracy of the Cuban Libertarians’ claims, while Latin American scholar Carleton Beals called Finch’s piece a “hatchet job.” Dellinger dug in his heels and penned a polemical rejoinder to Finch and to unnamed pacifists who denounced the revolution for its use of violence. Admitting that Communists had acquired some influence in Cuba, Dellinger insisted not all Communism was “Communism at its worst and most powerful.” American intellectuals who dismissed any movement which had “a few Communist supporters,” he argued, was “hardly in the real world.” Indeed, he felt, the U.S. government was most concerned with painting the Cuban revolution as fully in the mold of Stalin, in order to discredit the more dangerous idea that anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist revolutions could develop in any other fashion. “Many ‘Libertarians,’” he claimed, “are aiding this process by washing their hands of the Revolution.” Dellinger provided evidence contradicting many of the claims made by the Cuban Libertarians.

In response to his pacifist detractors, Dellinger expanded upon the position he had articulated with regards to Robert F. Williams. He chose to direct his criticism not

---

<sup>109</sup> Roy Finch, “Interview with Cuban Libertarians,” *Liberation*, March 1961.

at “the Cuban revolutionists, who had carried out so superbly Gandhi’s teaching that it is better to resist injustice violently than not to resist it at all.” Instead he announced, “I was more concerned about my own failure and that of my fellow pacifists who have failed to be revolutionists, whatever verbal concessions we may make to the need for economic change.” While Dellinger reiterated his concerns about violations of civil rights by the new regime, he felt that by denouncing the revolution alongside right-wing “counter-revolutionists” they only helped their predictions that Cuba was moving towards the Communist camp become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Instead he urged his anarchist and pacifist allies to bring “revolutionary nonviolence into the real world by taking nonviolent action in support of the Cuban Revolution” by, for instance, establishing work camps in Cuba to “engage in the constructive tasks of the Revolution.”<sup>110</sup>

In May, Roy Finch resigned as co-editor of *Liberation*. “What is in the making in Cuba,” he stated, “appears to be a system of state capitalism, in which a large part of the economy and probably other aspects of life are likely to be increasingly controlled by the state.” In such a situation, the “system is not directly controlled by the people” and those in charge “tend to remain in office indefinitely” and become difficult to remove if they begin to abuse their power. *Liberation*, he noted, had begun with a dedication to third-camp politics and a clear denunciation of dictatorship of any kind. Whether beneficent or not, Castro was a dictator, and by the Spring of 1961 it

---

<sup>110</sup> Dave Dellinger, “The Campaign Against Castro,” *Liberation*, April 1961.

was clear that he was not a neutralist in the Cold War. Since four out of five editors supported the Cuban government any way, Finch felt he had to resign to remain true to his principles.<sup>111</sup>

Shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis, the League laid out its strongest statement about Cuba to date. It denounced in no uncertain terms reactionaries and liberals who urged an invasion or internal struggle to restore capitalism and U.S. influence in the island nation. It then moved on to critique those on the Left in the United States that considered the Castro regime “revolutionary” and therefore important to defend, despite reservations. With an eye toward Dellinger, the League wrote, “Totally illogical is the viewpoint of those who argue that Communist-totalitarianism is counter-revolutionary, or otherwise undesirable, but still support Castro. They usually contend that U.S. policy forced a reluctant Castro into the Communist bloc.” Others still argued that the Cuban regime was essentially democratic. To the League, both positions were absurd: Castro had openly declared himself a Marxist-Leninist, and had brought the country into the Communist bloc. Those who defended the Cuban government, then, defended Communist totalitarianism. The League argued that the Cuban revolution had been overtaken in precisely the way the Russian revolution had in 1917. The new rulers had come to power with the support of a people desirous of freedom and economic justice, but had then “imposed a ferocious dictatorship more absolute than Batista’s.” The League,

---

<sup>111</sup> Roy Finch, “Cuba and Liberation...An Editor Resigns,” *Liberation*, May 1961.

then, denounced interference from either bloc but announced, “We are convinced that the line of total revolutionary action is the only viable way for the Cuban people to reconquer their lost freedom and liquidate the present dictatorship.” Unlike Finch’s call for non-violent revolution, the League urged Cuban’s to adapt the methods of the Irish Republican Army and Algerian Resistance to their particular situation, and launch a guerrilla war.<sup>112</sup>

Dellinger was invited to the 1964 May Day celebration in Cuba. Upon his return *Liberation* published another favorable article and sponsored a speaking event in which Dellinger was to share his experiences and perspective. Viewing his continued support of the Castro regime as a betrayal of anarchist principles, the Libertarian League picketed the event, and distributed a leaflet calling vaguely for “support” of the Cuban people against domination from both Cold War blocs. Sam Dolgoff recalls that, “I, and a few other comrades, denounced him as a liar and a turncoat. I challenged him to debate the issue anywhere, anytime, at our expense.”<sup>113</sup>

The demonstration and criticism by more of his former allies, after the break with Finch, was hurtful and dispiriting to Dellinger. In an October 1964 letter to David Wieck, Dellinger sarcastically snipped, “I was sorry to miss you and Diva this summer although I understand that you and all true anarchists were at a conference,

---

<sup>112</sup> “Cuba: For an End to Muddled Thinking,” *Views and Comments*, No. 44, April 1963.

<sup>113</sup> Dolgoff, *Fragments*, 87.

which I might have attended if I had been qualified.” He added, that was “meant to be a crack, I guess, but not to be aimed at you.”<sup>114</sup>

Wieck responded to his old friend that he found “the Blackwell-Libertarian League thing...monstrous,” but that he harbored his own criticisms of Dellinger’s position on Cuba.<sup>115</sup> In a long theoretical article published in *Liberation*, Wieck argued that it was untenable to claim—as the Libertarian League had—that the Cuban regime was totalitarian and that conditions were worse for the majority of its citizens than they had been under Batista. Yet, it was also wrong to describe the society as free and socialist, as Dellinger had done. Wieck believed, “the Cuban state presents the unusual phenomenon of the paternalistic and generally benevolent rule of a group of individuals.” Wealth was being redistributed, but Wieck saw little indication of the growth of “initiative from below, the delegation of responsibility by the working people themselves, and control over the persons to whom responsibility was dedicated.” Such control, he maintained, was a defining principle not only of anarchism, but also of the broader socialist tradition from which it had sprung. Conceding that the situation was beneficial to poor Cubans in the short term, Wieck noted, “I cannot believe that such a (relatively) disinterested rule can persist indefinitely.” The bigger question was not what type of ruler Castro was, but “what type of power structure is being created?” Puncturing the self-important tone of other contributions to the debate, Wieck concluded by arguing that the positions taken by

---

<sup>114</sup> Dellinger to Wieck October 30, 1964, DTW, TL.

<sup>115</sup> DTW to Dellinger, November 2, 1964, DTW, TL.

tiny libertarian socialist formations in the U.S. would have little impact on Cuba. The point, rather, was to maintain a clear vision of the type of world U.S. American radicals were fighting for, so they would not misdirect their own efforts towards achieving it.<sup>116</sup>

In a letter to Roy Finch, shortly after the article was published, Wieck added, “I think its rather important to define the Cuban situation accurately because there are analogies between the enthusiasm for Castro and enthusiasm for the N.L.F. [National Liberation Front] in Vietnam and I expect there will be more of this.”<sup>117</sup> Wieck was right; as the war in Vietnam escalated after 1965 Dellinger began writing articles first about the Communist government of North Vietnam and then about China, which advocated the same position of critical support for the regimes as his Cuba articles had done for Castro.<sup>118</sup> With the black freedom struggle entering a new phase, and the student movement growing rapidly, Dellinger was again travelling constantly and serving as a mentor to a new generation of radical activists. In private correspondence, Wieck expressed strong disappointment in what he saw as a clear shift towards authoritarian socialism by his old friend. Dellinger admitted, “I think that you and I are looking in somewhat different directions politically these days.” He recognized his ideas were changing, but he felt that was necessitated by the changing

---

<sup>116</sup> David T. Wieck, “Cuba: An Effort at Interpretation,” *Liberation*, May 1965.

<sup>117</sup> DTW to Roy Finch, May 20, 1965, DTW, TL.

<sup>118</sup> These articles, most originally published in *Liberation*, were collected and reprinted as David Dellinger, *Revolutionary Nonviolence* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971).

political climate of the mid-1960s. “In a period of new thought there are bound to be hazards and I can’t guarantee that...I will always please you...I think our understanding is too fragmentary at this point for us to be the cutting edge anymore without making a number of errors of formulation or emphasis.”<sup>119</sup> Dellinger’s tone in the letters he exchanged with Wieck in the mid-1960s indicates that although he continued to view himself as an anarchist, he was feeling increasingly estranged from the small community that had carried the anarchist mantle since the Second World War. The personal animosities that arose in the debate over Cuba help explain why Dellinger refrained from openly declaring himself an anarchist during the height of his influence in the late 1960s.<sup>120</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Resistance to Jim Crow helped call the mid-century anarchist-pacifist movement into existence. In turn, this movement and its “third camp” radical pacifist allies influenced the strategies and organizational style of the black freedom struggles of the 1950s and 60s. Anarchists helped invent and promote forms of non-violent direct action against racial segregation during and after the Second World War. They created and lived in multi-racial intentional communities during the politically hostile years of the early Cold War. Anarchists staffed institutions such as the War Resisters

---

<sup>119</sup> Dellinger to Wieck May 18<sup>th</sup>, 1965; Dellinger to Wieck, December 1, 1965, DTW, TL.

<sup>120</sup> Late in life, Dellinger returned to openly declaring himself an anarchist, as did some of his close associates, such as Bill Sutherland. See the documentary “A Peace of the Anarchy.” Lovarchy-Shalom, “A Peace of the Anarchy: Ammon Hennacy and other Angelic Troublemakers in the USA,” DVD (Lovearchy-Shalom, 2004).

League that served the movement by paying the salaries of controversial but skilled leaders, such as Bayard Rustin, and providing tactical advice and support for non-violent campaigns in the south. They also established media outlets, including *Views and Comments*, the *CORElator*, and especially, *Liberation*, which promoted black freedom struggles and served as important forums to debate strategy, forms of leadership, and other issues of consequence to the movement. In the pages of these periodicals, in the non-violence trainings they provided, and in other interactions, anarchists and their radical pacifist allies advocated for non-statist, mass-based, and direct action focused strategies of anti-racist struggles. In words and in deeds they promoted and exemplified decentralized, egalitarian, and prefigurative forms of organization that prioritized community-building. The organizations and individuals that comprised the civil rights and black power movements drew from a myriad of political and religious perspectives, including liberalism, Marxism, black nationalism, Southern Baptism and Christian personalism, next to which the anarchist precepts of direct action, decentralized organization, and belief in the leadership capabilities of ordinary people, formed one significant, but not overriding, thread. Very rarely were these influences explicitly perceived as deriving from the anarchist tradition.

For all the various contributions anarchists made to the black freedom movement, it is likely that movement had more of a transformative impact on U.S. anarchism than anarchists had on it. Anarchism, after all, remained a tiny, marginalized political current in the 1950s, probably claiming no more than a few

hundred adherents nation-wide and boasting very limited funds and institutional resources with which to promote civil rights organizing. The black freedom movement, in contrast, encompassed a political upheaval carried out by millions of people. New styles of organizing and forms of organization, new examples of bravery and militancy, and new political expectations arose out of the energy that it unleashed. Mass movements for national liberation in formerly colonized areas of the world also forced U.S. anarchists to reevaluate deeply held convictions.

Activists such as David Dellinger and Bill Sutherland, who embraced anarchist-pacifism at the beginning of the 1950s, were persuaded by the exigencies and accomplishments of these movements to adopt a more flexible set of politics by the decade's end. The anarcho-syndicalists affiliated with the Libertarian League changed in different ways. The group's early ruminations on civil rights initiatives indicated they remained tied to theories of social change that privileged struggles over economic class. The growth and success of black freedom struggles over the course of the next ten years, however, challenged League members to begin thinking in a more multi-dimensional way about oppression and liberation. By 1964 they recognized that social movements based around racial identity and demands for racial justice had the potential to inspire large numbers of people to take militant action that had the potential to reconstruct fundamental social relations, including the class structure of the country. These reconsiderations of traditional anarchist perspectives were another step in the transformation of anarchist thought from a classic tradition that focused

primarily (though never exclusively) on class struggle to a more contemporary form that set itself against all forms of “social domination.”

The black freedom movement, and especially SNCC, came to represent a new historic model of a successful *mass* movement that relied on direct action, eschewed authoritarian leaders in favor of “group centered leadership” and worked to expand the democratic control of ordinary people over the institutions that ordered their daily lives. Not since the Industrial Workers of the World lost its mass base during the repression of World War I, had U.S. anarchists witnessed a movement that seemed to confirm their beliefs about the process of social change. It provided a tangible example of people making change through self-organization, mass mobilization, and direct action, with a focus on the poorest. SNCC organized primarily around racial identity rather than class identity, but it nevertheless contributed to class struggle. It fought for working-class power and economic justice through the demand for racial equality and constituted a class struggle within the race struggle, by placing the priorities of the poorest African-Americans before those from the middle class.

Of significance for later generations of anarchists, SNCC was not, in its early years, an effort to “smash” the capitalist state, with the assumption that new society would arise the day after. Rather, it became an attempt to reconstitute the very idea of democracy in day to day life—by extending decision-making power to those previously excluded from it, and by defining democracy as each person having a say in all of the decisions that affect their lives. The vision of democracy taking place at

the lowest possible level and directly involving as many people as possible, shared much in common with the anarchist vision of popular self-rule. CNVR and Peacemakers hoped to build a movement on similar principles in the years after WWII, but they were never able to find a way to cross over from activism to organizing. For these reasons, SNCC proved attractive and inspirational to the small number of anarchists active in the United States in 1960s. More importantly, the example of SNCC served as an important nodal point in the transmission of horizontal styles of organizing between the traditional, labor-based, anarchists of the pre-war period, and the ecology and anti-nuclear-focused anarchist campaigns of the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Students for a Democratic Society leader Tom Hayden later claimed that Bob Moses “created the pattern of non-leadership that affected many of us for years.”<sup>121</sup>

SNCC’s influence on SDS, the women’s liberation movement, and other sectors of the New Left boded well for anarchism, in that anti-authoritarian and participatory democratic ideals circulated widely during the 1960s and helped to spark, by decade’s end, a renewed interest in explicit anarchist politics that infused movements up to the present day. Yet, Polletta’s conclusions regarding SNCC’s structure debate provide crucial insights into the development of anarchism, its racial character, and anarchists relationships with other sectors of the U.S. left after 1965. Throughout this period conflicts and divisions have repeatedly resurfaced between

---

<sup>121</sup> Quoted in Farrell, *Spirit of the Sixties*, 99.

radicals that map anarchism and non-hierarchical organization as white, philosophical, and impractical, in contrast to (working-class) people of color led organizations that are results driven, and therefore accept the need for strong, central leadership.

Anarchists have exacerbated such conceptions through their confusions about the ways participatory democracy contributed to SNCC's successes. In CNVR and Peacemakers, anarchists promoted consensus and non-hierarchical forms as prefigurative practices amongst a committed group, that could sustain the group and perhaps provide a persuasive example of an alternate social system to others. SNCC participants drew on these concepts, but developed them in new directions and for different ends. They found consensus decision-making and local, grassroots leadership development to be beneficial in raising a mass movement to confront and transform unjust political institutions. Tension and confusions between the exemplary and the developmental benefits of these organizational forms complicated organizations debates about when and how to use them, as well as whether or not their use should serve as a means of defining what groups are or are not radical.

SNCC's example was only route among many by which anarchist ideas and values came to inform the mass movements of the 1960s, however. In the next chapter, we will see how the nonviolent organizing tradition of anarchism both clashed and fused in a powerful alchemy with the prefigurative and dissociative tradition that developed in the San Francisco Libertarian Circle and spread throughout the country under the auspices of the Beat Generation.

## Chapter 6: “White Skin, Black Masks” Anarchism, Counter-Culture, and the New Left, 1965-1975

George Woodcock wrote in the revised edition of his omnibus history of anarchism that anarchist ideas influenced the movements and counter-culture of the United States in the 1960s, but it was unclear in precisely what ways they did so. He could only claim that anarchism comprised one ingredient in a “mental nutrient broth” of ideas that infused the mentality and general approach of participants in the social upheavals of that period.<sup>1</sup> Journalists, activists, and scholars writing as the decade unfolded clearly recognized the major contributions of anarchist thinkers, institutions, and ideas on the growing student and anti-war movements. In his book *A Prophetic Minority*, published in 1966, *Village Voice* editor Jack Newfield wrote with profound clarity:

The New Radicalism is pluralistic, amorphous, and multi-layered. Its three political strands— anarchism, pacifism, and socialism—mingle in different proportions in different places... In Berkeley there is a strong sex-drug-literary orientation. In New York there is a politically sophisticated component. In the South there is extra emphasis on the nonviolent religious element.<sup>2</sup>

By 1971, a young philosophy professor, Arthur Lothstein, had compiled a collection of essays, “*All We Are Saying...* ”: *The Philosophy of the New Left*, that prominently featured chapters by anarchists Murray Bookchin and Fredy Perlman. It argued that a

---

<sup>1</sup> George Woodcock, *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, rev. ed. (Ontario: Broadview Encore Editions, 2004), 403.

<sup>2</sup> Jack Newfield, *A Prophetic Minority* (New York: New American Library, 1966), 30.

defining aspect of the movement was its “anti-authoritarian” character. A year later, the publishing house of the Communist Party-USA felt compelled to issue a book-length treatise, *The New Radicalism: Anarchist or Marxist?*, denouncing the “various anarchist and terrorist ideological trends” that its author saw saturating the New Left, the counter-culture, and the movement for black power.<sup>3</sup>

Despite early analyses such as these that indicate the critical role anarchism played during the “long 1960s,” more recent scholarly accounts of the period, with a few notable exceptions, have dramatically underplayed the importance of anarchist contributions to the movements of the period. Nor have they investigated the specific historical moments and means by which anarchist elements were incorporated, modified, and defeated when put in play alongside other ideological tendencies—democratic socialism, third world Marxism, cultural nationalism, and feminism, among them—that also contributed to the period’s radical culture and politics.<sup>4</sup> This chapter takes a sieve to the mental nutrient broth of the 1960s in an attempt to discern

---

<sup>3</sup> Arthur Lothstein, ed., “*All We Are Saying...*” *The Philosophy of the New Left* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1970); Gil Green, *The New Radicalism: Anarchist or Marxist?* (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

<sup>4</sup> Leading accounts that downplay the influence of anarchism include, James Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, 1987); Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Exceptions to this tendency which I have drawn on include, Gregory Nevala Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart: Spiritual Values, Decentralism, and Democratic Idealism in the Movement of the 1960s* (Eugene, OR: Communitas Press, 1991) and James J. Farrell, *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

the specific qualities and the primary transmission routes of anarchist politics during “world-historical” period.<sup>5</sup>

An anarchist sensibility came to inflect 1960s radicalism through two primary avenues: the counter-culture and Students for a Democratic Society. Beginning in 1955, the cultural anarchism developed in and around the San Francisco Libertarian Circle of the late 1940s was diffused throughout the United States (and beyond) through the popularity of the poetry and prose of Beat Generation writers including Allen Ginsburg and Jack Kerouac. Anarchist ideas and impulses were watered-down but also disseminated much further than they had been since WWI due to the mass marketization of books such as *Howl* and *On the Road*. By 1964, beatnik teenagers in a handful of U.S. cities had traced the inspiration of their older, literary idols to anarchism and European avant-garde traditions. Mixing these sources with their admiration for the hip culture and ghetto rebellions of African Americans in the mid-1960s, anarchist writers and artists, such as Penelope Rosemont and Ben Morea, gave the rapidly expanding youth culture an explicitly political content.

Beginning in 1961, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the primary organization of the white student movement, incorporated anarchist ideas and values into its program, indirectly, via the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee and from the influence of *Liberation* magazine and the anarchist-pacifists, such as Dave Dellinger and Paul Goodman, associated with it. The concepts of participatory

---

<sup>5</sup> See George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968* (Boston: South End Press, 1987).

democracy, decentralized socialism, third-camp politics, anti-Stalinist radicalism, and the search for allies outside the white, industrial working-class, that characterized SDS in its early years owed much to the long history of anarchist thought. A variety of SDS chapters, such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology's "Rosa Luxemburg SDS," drew more explicitly on libertarian socialist history and fought—unsuccessfully—to push the organization in an explicitly anarchist direction in 1969. By the end of the decade, the counter-cultural and participatory democratic strands of New Left anarchism began to conflict sharply with one another, establishing a pattern that would play out repeatedly in the U.S. libertarian left for the next forty years.

### **The Beat Generation**

If the Beat Generation was symbolically inaugurated by Allen Ginsberg's first public reading of "Howl" in 1955, as literary critics have come to agree, then Beat was born of the collision of a circle of drug addled queer New York City hipsters and the Bay Area's community of anarchist poets. The Six Gallery, in which Ginsberg read that night, had until recently been known as the King Ubu—the performance and gallery space established by the anarchist Robert Duncan and his lover. Ginsberg shared the stage with Bay Area up-and-comer Michael McClure, Surrealist anarchist Phillip Lamantia, and the Buddhist anarchists Gary Snyder and Phillip Whalen. Kenneth Rexroth, the man who had worked tirelessly for over a decade to meld

anarchism and poetry into something new and ecstatic in San Francisco, played master of ceremonies.

Rexroth—whose writing never garnered the popularity or critical acclaim accorded to Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and others—was not above claiming that the community he had nurtured since the early 1940s served as a crucial augur in which the rising literary stars had developed. In an article for the *New York Review of Books* that tracked the influences of the “new poets,” Rexroth claimed Allen Ginsberg “showed up in San Francisco and stayed for a brief visit. The permissive atmosphere seems to have exploded him.” He went on to argue, “The now widely publicized San Francisco Renaissance owes more to [Robert] Duncan than to any other one person.”<sup>6</sup> The Renaissance might, in fact, have owed more to Rexroth, himself, than to Duncan, but more than any individual it was the product of a large and creative community of anarchists and pacifists.

By 1956 the Libertarian Circle had disbanded, but the sense of community formed between self-identified anarchists and experimental poets endured. In April of that year, for instance, David Koven launched a short-lived “libertarian journal” called *The Needle*. As a teenager, Koven had participated in the Brooklyn Vanguard Juniors and became an active member of the Why? Group in the 1940s. He moved with his partner, Audrey Goodfriend, to San Francisco in 1947, and founded the Walden

---

<sup>6</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, “The New Poetry” *The New York Times Book Review*, February 12, 1961. Reprinted in Kenneth Rexroth, *Assays* (Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1961), 192-193.

School with her in the early 1950s.<sup>7</sup> Koven devoted approximately a third of each issue of *The Needle* to poetry and major players in the community, such as Robert Duncan, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, and Gary Snyder contributed. In his opening editorial, Koven largely reiterated political position that *Resistance* had arrived at before ceasing publication a few years earlier. “We are not concerned with what society in the future will be like, *if*. But rather with how to make the life we live less threatened and more a positive, growing, satisfying experience,” he wrote. More than *Resistance* ever had, however, Koven spoke to the growing sense of pessimism and isolation that would soon become a hallmark of beat self-identity:

This is not the age for the political broadside addressed to a revolutionary mass movement. The revolutionary masses seem to have dwindled to a handful of individuals like ourselves, grimly holding out against the onslaught of growing totalitarian forms. So *The Needle* will not be theoretical and polemical, but rather, we hope an unorthodox expression of criticism reflecting the thinking of those individuals not yet captured by our statist culture.<sup>8</sup>

Whereas David Wieck had attempted to re-theorize anarchism in hopes of contributing to a surge of nonviolent activism following World War II, *The Needle* sounded a note similar Hippolyte Havel’s *Road to Freedom* editorials of the mid-1920s: the anarchist periodical’s primary role was to spiritually sustain the small community of believers through difficult days. The magazine, however, was never able to sustain even itself. Despite an attempt at humor, its contents were dry and its contributors (save for the

---

<sup>7</sup> David Koven, “Live an Anarchist Life!” *Social Anarchism* 42 (2008-2009): 72-77; Audrey Goodfriend, interview with author, Berkeley, California, November 10, 2008.

<sup>8</sup> David Koven, “The Needle,” *The Needle*, April 1956, 1.

poets) not capable enough cultural critics to develop a large readership. *The Needle* folded in November after only three issues.

If San Francisco's North Beach became the Mecca of beat activity, Manhattan's Greenwich Village placed a close second. As they had been in the 1910s, anarchists were also crucial in fomenting the Village bohemian scene of the 1950s. In an insider account of the Beat culture published in 1958, Lawrence Lipton profiled the lives of three scenesters, including Chris Nelson, who found his way to Greenwich Village's political and artistic community while a student at the New School for Social Research in the late 1940s. Nelson recalled,

One thing about the Village, it had a tremendous tradition, and that was the first thing that hit you. There were people who knew the tradition and they were the important people. There was a folk group, mostly Stalinists...And all the old anarchists. There was an anarchist hall on Broadway. There was the Spanish anarchists, there was the Catholic anarchists who had a soup kitchen down near the Bowery on Christy Street...The anarchist group was the most powerful group at that time. It was the intellectual force of the Village – and it fell apart suddenly.<sup>9</sup>

Nelson's "Catholic anarchists" are clearly Catholic Workers; the anarchist hall, the Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA) Hall; and the "anarchist group," the Resistance Group in its final years. Nelson recalled once bringing a date to the anarchist hall "too early, before the party started" and being snapped at by "those old people left over from the Spanish Civil War."<sup>10</sup> It wasn't until David Wieck, Diva Agostinelli, and others in the *Resistance* crowd arrived, that students and other young

---

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Lawrence Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians* (New York: Julian Messner, 1959), 58-59.

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in Lipton, *Holy Barbarians*, 58.

people felt comfortable there. Nelson's recollections echo, with surprising precision, both Judith Malina's and Dave van Ronk's memories of this period.<sup>11</sup> Another transplant from the East to the West Coast was Stuart Perkoff. Perkoff was a member of the Resistance Group in the late 1940s. In the 1950s, Perkoff became a fixture of the Venice Beach beat community, and his poetry appeared in *The Needle*, as well as in *Liberation*.<sup>12</sup>

Together these accounts indicate the influence the Spanish anarchists and, especially, the Resistance Group had on incubating a community of cultural resistance that fed into the beat culture in the 1950s, ironically, after the demise of *Resistance*. Despite the different sensibilities of the older and younger generation of anarchists, the Spanish anarchists lent both their physical venue and the gravitas of their participation in the Civil War, while the Resistance Group organized lectures and discussion forums touching on subjects—pacifism, the relation between art and politics—that attracted young residents of the village.

By keeping the tradition of a political tinged avant-garde and bohemian community alive, San Francisco and New York City created the atmosphere and institutional framework (galleries, bookstores, publishing houses, theater troupes) from which the much larger and geographically more disparate cultural phenomenon

---

<sup>11</sup> See Chapters 4 and 5.

<sup>12</sup> Judith Malina, *Diaries, 1947-1957* (New York: Grove, 1984), 110; Stuart Perkoff, "If Everything Returns..." in *Seeds of Liberation*, ed. Paul Goodman (New York: George Braziller, 1964), 528-529; Stuart Z. Perkoff, "O, Para/ O, Dox," *The Needle*, November 1956.

of the beat sub-culture could emerge. Rejecting claims that the Beat Generation consisted of only a few dozen published authors, Franklin Rosemont—a high school beatnik who we will return to shortly—insists that “the term Beat Generation signified a broad radical social/cultural movement involving thousands of young people all over the country and indeed, all over the world.”<sup>13</sup> One indication of the international stature of the beat counter-culture also indicates its deep ties to anarchism. In 1964, a fifteen-year old named Ian Bone read about anarchism in a popular magazine he’d picked up in the dentist office of the small Welsh town he’d grown up in. “For the next two years,” he recalled, “I made the frequent solitary trip to London visiting Freedom Press, Indica and Better Books, bringing back to Hampshire Lenny Bruce, Alan Ginsberg [sic], The Beats and incomprehensible copies of *Anarchy* magazine.” Bone subsequently attended an advertised meeting of the “Anarcho-United-Mystics,” finding “it was full of the beautiful people: Long-haired, velvet-jacketed, eye-shaded beatniks.”<sup>14</sup> In the 1980s, Bone would launch the scandalous and influential anarchist tabloid *Class War*.

The rapid diffusion of beat literature and culture was set in motion, ironically, by forces of repression and by marketing innovations. Soon after the Gallery Six

---

<sup>13</sup> Franklin Rosemont, “To Be Revolutionary in Everything: The *Rebel Worker* Story, 1964-1968,” in *Dancin’ in the Streets! Anarchists, IWWs, Surrealists, Situationists and Provos in the 1960s as Recorded in the Pages of The Rebel Worker and Heatwave*, ed. Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2005), 3.

<sup>14</sup> Ian Bone, *Bash the Rich: True Life Confessions of an Anarchist in the UK* (Bath, UK: Tangent Books, 2006), 20-21.

reading, Lawrence Ferlinghetti issued *Howl and Other Poems* as an edition City Lights' books Pocket Poets series. The small paperback books, printed in England, were deemed obscene by a customs inspector and seized. The subsequent trial, in which Ginsberg and City Lights prevailed, became a cause célèbre and gave the book, and the scandalous literary scene from which it emerged, national notoriety.<sup>15</sup> The "Howl" trial might be seen as a California "free speech fight" in the tradition of the Wobblies determined stand in pre-WWI San Diego, and in anticipation of Berkeley Free Speech Movement of 1961. Sales of *Howl* were greatly acceded, however, by *On the Road*, the 1957 literary sensation that put Kerouac on the map. *On the Road* fictionalized its author's travels in the late 1940s, amongst the proto-beats pilloried in Harper's "New Cult of Sex and Anarchy" article.<sup>16</sup> Kerouac's follow-up, *The Dharma Bums*, is a barely-disguised account of his run-in with the San Francisco anarchists, especially Snyder. In the book's opening pages, the protagonist accompanies his Buddhist poet buddy, Japhy Ryder, to a bar. Ryder,

and some other poets were schedule to give a poetry reading at the Gallery Six in town. They were all meeting in the bar and getting high...The other poets were either hornrimmed intellectual hepcats with wild black hair like Alvah Goldbook [Ginsberg], or delicate pale handsome poets like Ike O'Shay (in a suit) [McClure], or out-of-this-world genteel-looking Renaissance Italians like Francis DaPavia (who

---

<sup>15</sup> See Bill Morgan, *Howl on Trial: The Battle for Free Expression* (San Francisco: City Lights, 2006); Jonah Raskin, *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 4.

looks like a young priest) [Lamantia], or bow-tied wild-haired old anarchist fuds Rheinhold Cacoethes [Rexroth]...<sup>17</sup>

Kerouac explains that Ryder—that is Snyder—“learned Chinese and Japanese and discovered the greatest Dharma Bums of them all, the Zen lunatics of China and Japan. At the same time, being a Northwest boy with idealistic tendencies, he got interested in old-fashioned IWW anarchism and learned to play the guitar and sing old worker songs to go with his Indian songs and general folksong interests.”<sup>18</sup>

The turn from mass-marketing to market segmentation and the incorporation of the cool pitch in advertising helped make Kerouac’s masculinist tales of adventure, orgies, and pharmacologically enhanced jazz gigs a mass phenomenon.<sup>19</sup> As interest in bebop jazz grew, clothing stores began offering to outfit their customers in Dizzy Gillespie-style jackets and berets. Hollywood was quick to produce sensational movies depicting beats as junkie sex-addicts. Meanwhile beatnik joke books and television programs made beats into jive-talking clowns.<sup>20</sup> While the marketing and

---

<sup>17</sup> Jack Kerouac, *The Dharma Bums* (New York: Viking, 1958), 11. Lawrence Lipton notes that responsibility for the narrowly literary interpretation of the beats lies partially with beat prose writers themselves. Singly out Kerouac, he argues, “Writers writing about fellow writers can make interesting reading but this fails to provide the reader with anything like a comprehensive pictures of the beat generation.” Lipton, *The Holy Barbarians*, 251.

<sup>18</sup> Kerouac, *Dharma Bums*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumer Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003), 292-344; Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

<sup>20</sup> John Leland, *Hip: The History* (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), 129; Alan Bisbort, *Beatniks: A Guide to an American Subculture* (New York: Greenwood Press, 2009).

commercialization of beat and bebop aesthetics and themes indicated the easy co-optability of oppositional culture, it also alerted millions of young people to the possibility of another way of life and the existence of opposition; many thousands responded to the call.

When considering the relationship of anarchism and the beats, then, it is useful to discern two groups: the circle of writers who created the genre's most recognizable literature and the broader group inspired by these author-heroes to adopt a dissident, sub-cultural lifestyle. While the first group was directly influenced by the anarchist-pacifists of the 1940s, in the second anarchist ideas were more diffuse. In 1957, Rexroth wrote of the former, "Politically they are all strong disbelievers in the State, war, and the values of commercial civilization. Most of them would no longer call themselves anarchists, but just because adopting such a label would imply adherence to a 'movement.' Anything in the way of an explicit ideology is suspect."<sup>21</sup> As the influence of writers like Ginsberg and Kerouac trickled down, avoidance of the old terms of political engagement deepened.

The term "beatnik" was originally used as a pejorative intended to associate beats with communists (the suffix "nik" meant to conjure "Sputnik" or "apparachnik"). Nevertheless, beats rejected Stalinist and Trotskyist communism fervently. The brutality of the Soviet regime, finally acknowledged by Khrushchev in 1956, cemented

---

<sup>21</sup> Kenneth Rexroth, "Disengagement: The Art of the Beat Generation," *World Outside the Window: The Selected Essays of Kenneth Rexroth*, ed. Bradford Morrow (New York: New Directions, 1987), 43

their intuition that political claims for equality, freedom, or security, were usually corrupt justifications for self-serving ideologues. Moreover, by the mid-1950s beats saw few indications that industrial workers were a force for egalitarian change in the world. Their acceptance of the rewards of “golden age” capitalism made union workers just as square as white-collar types in the eyes of most beats.<sup>22</sup> Still, Rexroth perceptively noted, “the youngest generation is in a state of revolt so absolute that its elders cannot even recognize it.” This generation, he argued, had taken a cue from two of the greatest artists of recent years, Dylan Thomas, and Charlie Parker, both of whom communicated the same central theme: “Against the ruin of the world, there is only one defense — the creative act.” And such restorative, redemptive creativity required disaffiliation. Rexroth stated categorically, “It is impossible for an artist to remain true to himself as a man, let alone an artist, and work within the context of this society.”<sup>23</sup>

Rexroth’s invocation of the combined spirit of Dylan Thomas and Charlie Parker, the white poet and the black jazz musician, is indicative of the deep and complex ways that bebop and beat intertwined in these years. Hip jazz musicians provided a towering example of disdain for white bourgeois culture, and their improvisational, ecstatic music seemed to incarnate the anti-rationalist impulse behind Beat dissent. As literary scholar Scott Saul notes, “The hipster was in some sense the civil rights movement’s less charitable double, the face of a defiance that did not

---

<sup>22</sup> See Lipton, *Holy Barbarians*, 107.

<sup>23</sup> Rexroth, “Disengagement,” 49.

unconditionally turn the other cheek. He plugged into long-running debates in the black community about whether social protest should take direct or more evasive forms, whether it should be easily legible in its aims or should adopt the slyness of the trickster.”<sup>24</sup> To a significant extent, bop served as an expression of the resentment many Northern, urban African Americans felt over the unfulfilled promises of the post-war era: the growth of ghetto conditions and the continuity of discrimination by employers and police. If bebop marked a break in the sonic qualities of jazz from the swing-era, it also represented a change in attitude of the performers. Music critic Jon Leland notes that at a John Coltrane or Miles Davis show, “white audiences faced musicians who were self-possessed, inscrutable, wrapped in a dialog that did not include them. Bop was a secret from which it was easy to feel left out.”<sup>25</sup>

Though they were mostly white, beats adopted this exclusivity and disdain for the outside world as well. In the 1940s, anarchists such as Cantine and Wieck promoted a form of prefigurative politics in which anarchists would lead lives thought to be saner and more rewarding than those offered by the post-war consumer culture. These “daily acts of life” would not only make their own lives more bearable, but, they hoped, would also serve as an example of superior social relations that others should adopt. The beats embraced this disaffiliation, but frequently they combined it with the disdain for the “straight” world modeled by the jazz musicians they emulated.

---

<sup>24</sup> Scott Saul, *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 33.

<sup>25</sup> Leland, *Hip*, 125.

Leland perceptively notes that bop musicians demonstrated that “alienation could be a deliberate choice—a position of critical distance, not a condition imposed from above.”<sup>26</sup> This remains one of the enduring legacies of the 1950s triangulation of jazz, beat, and anarchism. “Beatville” became a community whose boundaries were strictly policed—out of fear of drug busts, but also of fear of infection of square attitudes and gawking posers. The insularity of a hip community had a real appeal to those increasingly radicalized by the events of the 1960s: it was only a short step from seeing bop and beat as secrets shared among knowing cognoscenti to imagining the hip community as a conspiracy. Variations on this attitude extended through the late-1960s counter-culture and into anarcho-punk in the 1980s and 1990s. In 1992, Kathleen Hanna of the feminist punk band Bikini Kill would scream, dripping with sarcasm, “I’m so sorry that I’m alienating some of you! You’re whole fucking culture alienates me!”<sup>27</sup>

While jazz musicians’ sartorial defiance was attractive to many beat writers, the spontaneous, intuitive, and emotive qualities of the music they played also resonated with beat poets’ critique of the scientific rationalism they saw driving U.S. culture. This anti-rational impulse, which connected the beats to Romantic-era utopian socialists, was cultivated by Zen Buddhism, which became a major influence for beats living or passing through the Bay Area. Zen was promoted in the United

---

<sup>26</sup> Leland, *Hip*, 135.

<sup>27</sup> Bikini Kill, “White Boy” on *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*, split LP with Huggy Bear, LP (Olympia, WA: Kill Rock Stars, 1993).

States after World War II by figures such as D.T. Suzuki and Suzuki Roshi, who established a meditation center in San Francisco and penned accessible books about the practice intended for Western readers. Phillip Whalen and Gary Snyder studied with Roshi in San Francisco, and later travelled to Japan to deepen their understanding of the practice. A British-born student of Suzuki, Alan Watts, also promoted Zen Buddhist practice in a series of books and a weekly radio program that ran concurrently to Rexroth's book review program on Pacifica radio. Watts connected the spiritual themes of Zen practice to the critical outlook of young poets and artists. Religious scholar James Brown argues, "Those poets who adopted Zen did so in large part because the critique of Western culture it offered confirmed their anti-authoritarianism and provided an alternative to what they saw as the deadening effects of rationalism on the human spirit, evident in postwar U.S. culture's technocracy and alienation."<sup>28</sup>

In 1961 Gary Snyder made these connections explicit in a short article, "Buddhist Anarchism." According to Snyder, "Buddhism holds that the universe and all creatures in it are intrinsically in a state of complete wisdom, love and compassion; acting in natural response and mutual interdependence." That which blocks the realization, or experience, of such a state is the Ignorance that Buddhists attempt to overcome through meditation. Snyder saw the Buddhist perspective as consummate

---

<sup>28</sup> James Brown, "The Zen of Anarchy: Japanese Exceptionalism and the Anarchist Roots of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 19, no. 2 (2009), 211.

with the anarchist belief in the possibility of a social world imbued with the ethic of harmony and mutual aid. He was not the first anarchist to make such connections. Dyer Lum, friend to the Haymarket martyrs and uncle of Voltairine de Cleyre, had declared himself a Buddhist in 1893. For Lum, the concept of karma validated the anarchist belief in the sufficiency of self-government in accordance with natural law, obviating the need for formal law and government.<sup>29</sup> Despite its insights, Snyder found the Buddhism of his day to be overly focused on the ways ignorance manifested individually and psychologically as “fear and needless craving,” and to have underappreciated the ways in which human suffering and ignorance derive from social structures. Still, Snyder found room in the Buddhist tradition to incorporate practical attempts to make the social order more humane.

The mercy of the West has been social revolution; the mercy of the East has been individual insight into the basic self/void. We need both. They are both contained in the traditional three aspects of the Dharma path: wisdom (*prajna*), meditation (*dhyana*), and morality (*sila*). Wisdom is intuitive knowledge of the mind of love and clarity that lies beneath one’s ego-driven anxieties and aggressions. Meditation is going into the mind to see this for yourself — over and over again, until it becomes the mind you live in. Morality is bringing it back out in the way you live, through personal example and responsible action, ultimately toward the true community (*sangha*) of “all beings.”

Zen Buddhism provided a sophisticated critique of Western cultural traditions, individualistic competition, consumerism, and militarism. Moreover, it provided a strategy of its own for overcoming these tendencies, but this strategy was individualistic in a different sense. It called for individual practitioners to develop an

---

<sup>29</sup> Brown, “Zen of Anarchy,” 213.

entirely different way of knowing and being in the world, through the practice of meditation, and to encourage others to do so as well. Yet for Snyder, struggling to achieve self-awareness didn't preclude collective action. To his mind "responsible action" included voicing criticism, protesting, the use of civil disobedience, and "affirming the widest possible spectrum of non-harmful individual behavior," including drug use and non-normative kinship and sexual relations. He summed up his call to action with yet another invocation of the Wobblies' conception of their work as "forming the new society within the shell of the old."<sup>30</sup>

The Zen critique of scientific rationalism, and the more general interest in non-Western cultures inspired by the study of Eastern religion, also contributed to the beat interest in anthropology and the study of pre-modern peoples. Against what they saw as the vacuity of contemporary life, beats looked to cultures that imbued everyday life with meaning through the practice of ritual and the appreciation of the sacred. Poetry readings, drug use, and casual sex were defended by some as attempts create new ritual practices—efforts to intensify communication during a state of heightened consciousness. The focus on pre-modern peoples promoted a reconsideration of the relationships of humans to the natural world and inspired a growing consciousness of the encroachment of cities and technology on the landscape. Interest in the "re-enchantment" of life, investigation and appreciation of "primitive" ways of living, and

---

<sup>30</sup> Gary Snyder, "Buddhist Anarchism," *Journal for the Protection of All Beings* 1 (1961). Available at Bureau of Public Secrets, <http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/garysnyder.htm> (accessed August 2, 2010).

an interest in protecting the environment became central features of anarchist thinking and activism for the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The combination of ideas, influences, and practices that beats honed in the late 1950s amounted to a strategy that Timothy Leary would popularize in the late-1960s: “Tune in, turn on, drop out.” Tuning-in could serve as a literal definition of “hip”—the world derives from the African Wolof language’s word “hepi,” meaning “to open one’s eyes” or become enlightened. In this context, the hip were those perceptive enough to recognize what Rexroth termed the “social lie.” After 1966 turning on usually entailed drug use, but in the 1950s it more likely meant enhancing one’s perceptions or having a mystical experience through meditation. Dropping out entailed the acts of disaffiliation and disengagement described by Rexroth and Lipton. In an early 1960s poem, Phillip Lamantia captured the sensibility of the period with a poetic economy of words:

I forsee a couple of  
Essential changes:  
a Break Out Generation  
of poet-kings setting up  
*The Realm Apart*  
of sweet natural play  
and light metal work  
matter lovingly heightened  
by meditation, and spirit  
transmuted into matter,  
the whole commune conducted by  
direct rapid transcription  
from a no-past reference  
anti-rational, fantastically poetic  
violently passive and  
romantically unprejudiced

Each one his own poet  
and poetry the central fact  
food & excrement of culture<sup>31</sup>

Although beats may have desired to exist in a “realm apart” in the late-1950s, as the black freedom movement intensified and as many of their peers dedicated themselves to halting the war in Vietnam, many were drawn back into the realm of U.S. society and direct political engagement. As Michael Albert notes, “The sixties counterculture was much bigger than the Left. The counterculture recruited from mass society. The Left recruited from the counterculture. The Left, in that sense, swam in a congenial sea.”<sup>32</sup> The New Left which emerged in the 1960s, then, was unquestionably conditioned by the diluted bohemian anarchism of the beats. It was also influenced, however, by the egalitarian, participatory political vision and the communal values jointly promoted by anarchists, radical pacifists, and the decentralist faction of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

### **Prefigurative Politics in Students for a Democratic Society**

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the largest and most influential New Left student organization, was created by members of the youth wing of the democratic socialist League for Industrial Democracy who broke from their parent organization in January 1960. The student sit-in movement erupted in Greensboro only four months later, and SNCC immediately became a major inspiration to early

---

<sup>31</sup> Philip Lamantia, “Astromancy” in *Selected Poems, 1943-1966* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1967), 93.

<sup>32</sup> Michael Albert, *Remembering Tomorrow: From SDS to Life After Capitalism, A Memoir* (New York: Seven Stories, 2006), 114.

SDS members.<sup>33</sup> Members, or soon-to-be members, including Tom Hayden, Casey Hayden, and Paul Potter, worked with SNCC in the summer of 1961 and absorbed political lessons directly from Ella Baker and Bob Moses.

SDS' founding document was drafted by Tom Hayden and collaboratively revised when 59 members of the organization met in June of 1962. The Port Huron Statement, named after the town in which the meeting took place, shows the clear influence not only of SNCC, but also of the editors of *Liberation* magazine on Hayden and the other students. The statement was a complex, not wholly consistent document that mixed a declaration of decentralist and radically democratic values with a concrete program in which traditional social democratic ideas predominated. This was due, largely, to its genesis as a collectively written document that tried to incorporate ideas of students most inspired by SNCC and *Liberation* as well as those close to Socialist Party leaders like Michael Harrington.<sup>34</sup> The second section of the document, on values, was the most attractive to anarchist-minded activists of the period. The "Values" section was, in many ways, a brilliant extension of the project

---

<sup>33</sup> Standard accounts of SDS include Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Vintage, 1974); Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*; Gitlin, *The Sixties*. Recent reconsiderations include, Dan Berger, *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006) and John McMillian and Paul Buhle, eds., *The New Left Revisted* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003). The interpretation presented here relies most heavily on Francesca Polletta, *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2002); Wini Breines, *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989); Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*.

<sup>34</sup> Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*, 88-114; Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, 106-127.

of reworking anarchist philosophy that had played out in the pages of *Retort*, *Resistance*, and *Liberation* since 1942.<sup>35</sup>

Echoing the personalist position of *Liberation*'s "Tract for the Times," the drafters of the Port Huron Statement noted, "We oppose the depersonalization that reduces human beings to the status of things—if anything the brutalities of the twentieth century teach that means and ends are intimately related, that vague appeals to 'posterity' cannot justify the mutilations of the present."<sup>36</sup> As David Wieck had done in *Resistance*, the statement rejected the classical anarchist faith in an essential human beneficence. Yet it affirmed the potential goodness that could—and should—be nurtured in people. "Men," the statement read, "have unrealized potential for self-cultivation, self-direction, self-understanding, and creativity. It is this potential that we regard as crucial and to which we appeal, not to the human potentiality for violence, unreason, and submission to authority."<sup>37</sup> The statement also took a nuanced position on the tension between individual freedom and social equality that had animated anarchism from the start. SDS members felt the burden of mass society, political conformity, and the "social lie" that Holley Cantine, Ammon Hennacy, and Kenneth Rexroth had declared their independence from. Having read *The Lonely Crowd*, *The Organization Man*, and other sociological treatises, the students called for a renewed individualism to resist consensus politics and quiescent lifestyles. Yet, they

---

<sup>35</sup> The Port Huron Statement is reprinted in full as an appendix to Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, 329-374. The following citations are to that edition.

<sup>36</sup> "Port Huron Statement," 332.

<sup>37</sup> "Port Huron Statement," 332.

clarified, “As the individualism we affirm is not egoism, the selflessness we affirm is not self-elimination. On the contrary, we believe in generosity of a kind that imprints one’s unique individual qualities in relation to other men, and to all human activity.”<sup>38</sup>

The first sentence of this formulation might be read as both a repudiation of Max Stirner’s individualism and a rearticulation of the Libertarian League’s call (echoing Bakunin) for a freedom checked by socialism, and a socialism bound to respect individual freedom. One should cultivate unique qualities, but not to prevail over others. And one should be self-less enough as not to deny others their due, but not so self-effacing as to accept unjust or unequal treatment. The second sentence was a reiteration of Kropotkin’s ethical vision of a society of individuals who willingly put their unique talents to work for the benefit of the whole.

From this declaration of personal ethics, the statement proceeded immediately to its most famous assertion:

As a social system we seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation, governed by two central aims: that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life; that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation.<sup>39</sup>

The drafters elaborated this vision in regards to both political and economic spheres of life. “In a participatory democracy” they declared, “decision-making of basic social consequence [would] be carried on by public groupings” and politics would be

---

<sup>38</sup> “Port Huron Statement,” 332.

<sup>39</sup> “Port Huron Statement,” 333.

understood “as the art of collectively creating an acceptable pattern of social relations.” Hayden and his collaborators presented a transformative vision of economic life that went far beyond democratic socialist and Leninist calls for nationalization of industry. They asserted that in a participatory democracy,

Work should involve incentives worthier than money or survival. It should be educative, not stultifying; creative, not mechanical; self-directed, not manipulated, encouraging of independence, a respect for others, a sense of dignity, and a willingness to accept social responsibility...

As a whole, the “means of production should be open to democratic participation and subject to democratic social regulation.”<sup>40</sup> The implications of this vision were vast. Making a society that was truly democratic involved not only a transformation of formal political processes, but also the extension of the principle of democracy—that is, egalitarian self-governance—into all spheres of life. Doing so, especially in the realm of economic life, was likely to lead to fundamental changes in personality, values, and ways of relating to one another.

This vision of participatory democracy was developed, to a significant degree, as a theorization of the work SNCC was undertaking at the same time in the South. Paul Booth, who participated in the Port Huron conference, later asserted, “If everything could be restructured starting from the SNCC project in McComb, Mississippi, then we would have participatory democracy.”<sup>41</sup> Members of both SNCC and SDS were struggling to invent a version of democracy that exposed the unequal distribution of

---

<sup>40</sup> “Port Huron Statement,” 333.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, 144.

power (amongst citizens and subjects of U.S. imperialism) denied and papered over by the two-party representative system claiming the mantle of “democracy.”

Yet, participatory democracy was an ambiguous term that meant many things to many people. Greg Calvert, who served as the National Secretary of SDS in from 1966-1967, notes “it probably covered a spectrum of belief from radical democrats to anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists through democratic socialists and even some social democrats.”<sup>42</sup> In terms of political philosophy, Calvert asserts, “The notion of participatory democracy...laid the groundwork for a reexamination of the concept of direct democracy that the world inherited from 5<sup>th</sup> century Athens and that had not been seriously reevaluated since Rousseau in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>43</sup> Such a reexamination of direct democracy, the city-wide general assembly, and related concepts would prove central to anarchist political theory for the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>44</sup>

Inspired by the tangible successes of their fellow students in the south, SDS adopted SNCC’s tactical embrace of non-violent direct action as well as its decentralist organizational form. Still, members debated whether participatory democracy was an end goal to be fought for through traditional means, whether it was a practice that needed to be implemented and lived within SDS itself, or some middle-

---

<sup>42</sup> Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*, 68.

<sup>43</sup> Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*, 10.

<sup>44</sup> Murray Bookchin’s work is the most prominent example of this trend. See, for example, Murray Bookchin, *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997).

ground between these. SDS' most significant attempt to use participatory democracy as both a tactic and a goal took the form its Economic Research and Action Project (ERAP). Beginning in late 1963, some SDS members left their campuses and settled in impoverished neighborhoods of Northern cities, such as Chicago, Cleveland, and Newark. Their intent was to follow the model SNCC had established of helping communities of marginalized people develop self-directed organizations to fight for better housing conditions, work or income support, and other immediate issues. SDS organizers also hoped to combat racism in poor white communities in order to build an "interracial movement of the poor." Though they were not certain as to the direction their organizing would take, ERAP volunteers were inspired by the idea of community unions, espoused by movement intellectuals like James O'Conner and Stanley Aronowitz, which argued genuine working-class movements in the 1960s would likely come from organizing unemployed people in their neighborhoods, rather than workers on the job site.

ERAP programs were only successful in a few locations, and there only modestly so. White and middle-class students found it difficult and time-consuming to build trust with their neighbors. They often found that unlike the rural black communities that SNCC organized, Northern ghetto dwellers didn't have a tradition of resistance to draw on and had a difficult time articulating their grievances. This made building organizations capable of challenging local institutions, much less national ones, difficult, since, as one participant put it, "An ERAP community union is one of

those rare organizations where the founders define their task largely in terms of how successfully they give away their own power.”<sup>45</sup> ERAP organizers faced the same dilemmas that SNCC organizers did: they wanted to help people who had traditionally been given little decision-making power gain more of it, but they found this required telling them what to do. The challenge was exacerbated in the case of SDS given the greater class and racial divisions separating organizers from community members.

Sociologist Wini Breines notes that while such theoretical hang-ups about leadership were often paralyzing, “the instinct of wanting to encourage indigenous leaders, of wanting to be a catalyst but not a directive or manipulative leader, sprang from a rejection of authoritarianism and of the use of middle-class skills for manipulation and exploitation.”<sup>46</sup> Precisely these instincts and desires had structured anarchist debates about strategy and political leadership since the 1870s. Kropotkin spoke of anarchists playing “mid-wife” to revolution and the turn to propaganda of the deed was, in part, occasioned, by the desire to demonstrate what workers *could* do, rather than explicitly tell them what they *should* do to. Holley Cantine’s reading of the destructive role of “leaders” in the Russian Revolution two decades earlier had led him to advocate the strategy of simply beginning to live as one would in a post-revolutionary society. Tellingly, some ERAP organizers took a similar turn.

Chicago ERAPers hoped their office might begin to function as a common meeting space, where people could undertake daily activities, meet and help one

---

<sup>45</sup> Richard Rothstein quoted in Breines, *Community and Organization*, 136-137.

<sup>46</sup> Breines, *Community and Organization*, 143.

another, thereby deepening their sense of collectivity and visions of what a community could be. A New Jersey ERAP organizer argued, “It is important to make real what kind of society we want and we think is possible...the real power relationships in the society will become apparent as we create a new ‘counter-society.’” SDS members went considerably further than Cantine and others of his generation had done by trying to build this new kind of society with strategically chosen groups of people outside their friends and the insular anarchist community. However, they found, like the anarchist colonists of the 1920s and 1930s, that doing so was a long process with few obvious victories to encourage participants or benchmarks for evaluating effects on the broader world. Though ERAP organizers had a difficult time deepening the experience of community on a neighborhood-wide basis, organizers who shared living accommodations often grew close and found ways of practicing participatory democracy amongst themselves; they promoted the idea of urban communal living by radical activists, which has endured to the present day.

Overall, however, ERAP organizers found that to build trust and interest in their activities, they had to win concrete, if minor, victories, such as forcing a landlord to make repairs in his or her rental units. Importantly, both Wini Brienes and Sara Evans note that the most successful ERAP projects were lead by female SDS members who were “less theoretically preoccupied with questions of leadership.” They were better able to relate to the women they were organizing and saw the process as one of helping them develop skills rather than waiting for them to display such skills

instinctively. These projects endured into the late 1960s. The majority of ERAP projects were abandoned, however, when conflicts on campuses began to spread in 1965.

The Free Speech Movement at the University of California served as a harbinger of this rapid growth in the student movement. New forms of political expression displayed during the Free Speech Movement also indicated a growing convergence between student radicals and the counter-culture. As we have seen, in the 1950s and early 1960s the counter-culture remained largely hostile to organized politics. As the decade progressed, beats warmed to the ideas espoused by their more explicitly political peers. This process, which can partially be read as the transition from beat to hippie, was facilitated by circles of beats heavily influenced by anarchism in Chicago, New York, San Francisco and Detroit.

### ***The Rebel Worker and Chicago's Surrealist Wobblers***

In the working-class Chicago suburb of Maywood, Illinois, high school sophomore Franklin Rosemont learned of Jack Kerouac from a magazine article at the dentist's office in 1958 (dentists seem to be an underacknowledged force for politicizing teenagers in the 1950s). After devouring *On the Road* and *The Dharma Bums*, Rosemont and his friends launched a high school literary magazine, *The Lantern*, which earned them reputations as communists and beatniks. Rosemont preferred to think of his multi-racial circle as "high school hipsters." He recalled that although *The Lantern* community was supportive of the civil rights movement, "only

with my discovery of the Beat poets, did I begin to appreciate the vitality and richness of African-American culture, and particularly jazz.”<sup>47</sup> The beats also lead Rosemont to explore the French Surrealists. With the discovery of Surrealism, Rosemont felt that he had found a set of ideas that tied his love of poetry, jazz, and his growing interest in radical politics together. “As early as the 1950s,” he claimed, “some of us recognized the new jazz as the auditory equivalent of Surrealism in painting...Our most extravagant revolutionary dreams were summed up, renewed and expanded in the untrammelled loveliness” of the music of John Coltrane, Thelonious Monk, and Archie Shepp.<sup>48</sup>

Enrolling in Chicago’s Roosevelt University, Rosemont met other students who shared his interests in poetry, jazz, and radicalism such as Tor Faegre, Robert and Judy Green, and Penelope Bartik. Bartik, born in 1942, grew up in the Fox Lake suburb of Chicago, where her progressive family ran a weekend getaway for members the city’s working-class eastern European community.<sup>49</sup> Already a beat when she enrolled at Roosevelt, Bartik began dating Rosemont and later married him. These young poets and students, most from working-class backgrounds, ventured to the IWW’s General Headquarters where they were welcomed by old-timers happy to see renewed interest in their struggling organization. The Roosevelt University students became members and proceeded to organize migrant farm workers in southwest

---

<sup>47</sup> F. Rosemont, “To Be Revolutionary,” 5-6.

<sup>48</sup> F. Rosemont, “To be Revolutionary,” 45.

<sup>49</sup> Penelope Rosemont, *Dreams and Everyday Life: André Breton, Surrealism, Rebel Worker, SDS & the Seven Cities of Cibola* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2008), 10-13.

Michigan in the summer of 1964. In the fall, as the Free Speech Movement was erupting in Berkeley, they opened Solidarity Bookstore, a prototype of the modern infoshop. The store sold castoffs from the IWW Work People's College, anarchist classics, and a large selection of underground newspapers and radical periodicals from abroad.<sup>50</sup> Penelope Rosemont recalls, "My first days at Solidarity I began reading all the books on anarchism in the place." Bakunin, Rocker, Goldman, and the speeches of the Haymarket martyrs who had haunted the same neighborhood eighty years earlier, made a lasting impression.<sup>51</sup> Later in the year, the bookstore group used the IWW mimeograph machine to launch a journal, *The Rebel Worker*, which broke new ground by pairing traditional workerist politics with considerations of the revolutionary potential of art and popular culture. The young Rebel Workers learned about revolutionary unionism from Wobblies like Fred Thompson, who had been imprisoned under the criminal syndicalism laws passed during the WWI-era Red Scare. However, their growing labor analysis also benefitted from friendly interactions with the Detroit-based unorthodox Marxist group Facing Reality and the British libertarian socialist organization Solidarity.

Facing Reality was an organizational offshoot of the Johnson-Forest Tendency, a dissident caucus within the U.S. Trotskyist movement during the 1930s and 1940s, grouped around the Trinidadian Marxist C.L.R. James, the Russian-American theorist

---

<sup>50</sup> P. Rosemont, *Dreams*, 18-19

<sup>51</sup> P. Rosemont, *Dreams*, 24-25.

Raya Dunayevskaya, and the Chinese-American philosopher Grace Lee.<sup>52</sup> Johnson-Forest exchanged ideas with the French group Socialisme ou Barbarie, which had likewise broken with Trotskyism in the 1940s.<sup>53</sup> In the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising of 1956, James, Lee, and one of Socialisme ou Barbarie's leading intellectuals, Cornelius Castoriadis, co-authored a treatise on anti-Stalinist and non-vanguardist Marxism called *Facing Reality*, from which the American group took its name.<sup>54</sup> In the 1960s, Castoriadis served as a the strongest influence on the political positions of the British group Solidarity, which translated, reprinted, and commented on many of his articles.<sup>55</sup> Each of these organizations developed a criticism of 'democratic centralist' vanguard revolutionary parties, argued that labor unions had become incorporated into the post-war capitalist production system, and promoted forms of worker self-management and council democracy.<sup>56</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> Frank Rosengarten, *Urbane Revolutionary: C.L.R. James and the Struggle for a New Society* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2008); Grace Lee Boggs, *Living for Change: An Autobiography* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

<sup>53</sup> Arnold Hirsch, *The French Left: A History and Overview* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982), 108-135; Harry Cleaver, *Reading Capital Politically* (Anti/Theses and AK Press, Leeds and San Francisco, 2000), 59-64.

<sup>54</sup> C.L.R. James, Grace C. Lee and Cornelius Castoriadis, *Facing Reality: The New Society, Where to Look for It and How to Bring it Closer* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2006 [1958]).

<sup>55</sup> See the Introduction to the collection of writings of Solidarity's principle theorist, David Goodway, ed., *For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton* (Oakland: AK Press, 2004).

<sup>56</sup> Martin Glaberman, *Punching Out and Other Writings*, ed. Staughton Lynd (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2002); George Rawick, *Listening to Revolt: Selected Writings*, ed. David Roediger and Martin Smith (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2010).

The influence of Facing Reality and Solidarity was apparent in *Rebel Worker* articles about the role of mainstream union officials in policing workers' shop floor resistance to managers. However, articles about the workplace competed for space with essays like Franklin Rosemont's "Mods, Rockers, and the Revolution," a defense of rock and roll music as an expression of working-class youth's "refusal to submit to routinized, bureaucratic pressures." This article, and others like it, predicted many of the themes academic cultural studies would take up a decade later.<sup>57</sup> The *Rebel Worker* also consistently covered forms of black music and black radicalism.

By the mid-1960s the face of black freedom struggles in the United States was changing quickly. In the spring of 1965, SNCC did away with its decentralized structure and practice of consensus decision-making. Declaring the need for "black power" the next year, the organization also shed its commitment to non-violence and an interracial staff.<sup>58</sup> These shifts marked a response to the intransigence and violence of southern racists as well as the federal government's unwillingness to defend and support civil rights organizers. July 1964 also saw the first of a series of massive riots, or "uprisings," in the black ghettos of northern and western cities, usually touched off by incidents of police brutality but expressive of the generalized hostility of communities suffering from segregation, discrimination, and unemployment. Seeking

---

<sup>57</sup> Franklin Rosemont, "Mods, Rockers and the Revolution," *Rebel Worker* 3 (1965) reprinted in *Dancing in the Streets*, 127-131).

<sup>58</sup> Polletta, *Freedom*, 88-119; Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995 [1981]), 133-211; Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006).

an adequate response to such conditions, SNCC leaders such as James Foreman, Stokely Carmichael, and H. Rap Brown increasingly looked to national liberation struggles in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.<sup>59</sup> From writers such as Franz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Che Guevara, and Ho Chi Minh, they ingested a “third-world marxist” politics that counseled tighter forms of organization, strong leadership, and eventually, the pursuit of a strategy of armed struggle.<sup>60</sup> While older anarchists, such as Wieck and Dolgoff, were dubious of these developments, many in the new generation saw them as indications of a growing radicalism and, perhaps, a coming revolution. The *Rebel Worker* published a first-hand account of the ‘Harlem insurrection’ of 1964 (penned by Robert Calese of the Libertarian League) and hailed a similar rebellion that broke out in Chicago two years later. Franklin Rosemont noted, “Just as our labor perspective focused not on ‘leaders’ but on ‘actions by the workers themselves, in or out of the unions’ so too we identified ourselves strongly

---

<sup>59</sup> James Foreman, *The Making of Black Revolutionaries* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997 [1972]); Stokely Carmichael with Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael* (Kwame Toure) (New York: Scribner, 2003); Jalil Al-Amin (H. Rap Brown), *Die, Nigger, Die! A Political Autobiography* (New York: Dial Press, 1969)].

<sup>60</sup> On the ways third world Marxism departed from orthodox Marxism, and other variants, see Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2001). On third world Marxism in the United States see, Laura Pulido, *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006) and Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che* (New York: Verso, 2002).

with the masses of black proletarian youth who outgrew the increasingly conservative older civil-rights groups and took up direct action in the streets.”<sup>61</sup>

In 1966 Penelope and Franklin Rosemont embarked on a trip to Europe in order to meet with contacts established through the journal as well as some of their political idols. In Paris the couple befriended André Breton and his cohort of Surrealists, who welcomed them into the fold.<sup>62</sup> The Rosemonts also visited with Guy Debord of the Situationist International (SI). The SI had formed in 1957 through the affiliation of several small groups of European artists, writers, and architects. The organization sought to extend the critique of everyday life in capitalist societies that had been developed by generations of avant-garde theorists, beginning with the romantic poet Lautremont and extending through Dada, Surrealism, and other 20<sup>th</sup> century currents. The Situationists combined this tradition with the critique of authoritarian communism developed by the Socialisme ou Barbarie group and western marxists such as Henri Lefevre. A year after meeting with the Rosemonts, Debord would publish his opus, *The Society of the Spectacle*. Debord and others in the SI argued that with the invention of television, Hollywood-style movies, sophisticated marketing techniques, and other features of post-war society, capitalism had reached a new stage where the “spectacle” rather than the commodity had become the most important product of capitalist relations. In this new environment, complacent citizens now merely consumed representations of aspects of life that that they had formerly

---

<sup>61</sup> F. Rosemont, “To be Revolutionary,” 45.

<sup>62</sup> P. Rosemont, *Dreams*, 52-105; F. Rosemont, “To Be Revolutionary,” 55-57

lived and experienced directly. The situationist critique incisively argued that the working and middle-classes of Western countries who supposedly benefited most from post-war prosperity, had, in fact, lost what was most significant—self-knowledge, genuine connection to other people, and unmediated, non-manipulated emotions. Stemming from this analysis, the SI suggested that activism needed to turn the realm of representations; members experimented with intervening in the routines of daily life—playing pranks and creating “situations”—in ways that denaturalized the social roles people unwittingly played and exposed the constructed nature of the behavioral norms they adhered to.<sup>63</sup>

The Rosemonts did not fully gel with Debord when they met in 1966, largely because of the Frenchman’s dismissal of the continuing relevance of Surrealism, as well as his arrogance. While the SI promoted a form of anti-authoritarian council communism in its literature, the organization itself was known as elitist and highly centralized. Situationists wrote in a complex, intentionally obscure, jargon that many readers found difficult to comprehend, but that added allure and a patina of certitude and authority to the group’s ideas. Membership in the SI was exclusive, and those that did not meet the standards or agree with the opinions of Debord and a small cohort of his associates quickly found themselves publicly rebuked and purged. These qualities were not obvious during the Rosemont’s visit, however. Despite their disagreements

---

<sup>63</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1995 [1967]). See Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (London: Routledge, 1992); Simon Ford, *The Situationist International: A User’s Guide* (London: Black Dog, 2005).

with Debord, they left on friendly terms with a box of Situationist literature and a commitment to stock future publications in Solidarity Bookstore. Franklin Rosemont claims that Solidarity Bookstore and its mail-order service were the first distributors of Situationist literature in the United States, though most of it remained untranslated until the 1970s.<sup>64</sup>

Before returning to the United States, the Rosemonts travelled to London where they found soul-mates in a young radical couple, Charles Radcliffe and Diana Shelley. Together they produced the 6<sup>th</sup> issue of *Rebel Worker*, and after the Rosemonts return to Chicago, Radcliffe, Shelley and Christopher Grey published a British counterpart, *Heatwave*. African-American culture also proved an central influence for the editors of *Heatwave*. A veteran of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, a fan of Solidarity, and a contributor to *Anarchy* magazine, Radcliffe recalls that in 1964, “I was still very interested in libertarian politics but I knew a new approach was necessary ... I was now infinitely more excited by music, particularly by blues and jazz, than by the old politics.”<sup>65</sup> Radcliffe went on to join the Situationist International, prompted by his appreciation of their analysis of the black urban uprising in Los Angeles, *Watts 1965: The Decline and Fall of the Spectacular*

---

<sup>64</sup> P. Rosemont, *Dreams*, 105-109; F. Rosemont, “To Be Revolutionary,” 59-64.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Radcliffe, “Two Fiery Flying Rolls—The *Heatwave* Story, 1966-1970” in *Dancin’ in the Streets! Anarchists, IWWs, Surrealists, Situationists & Provos in the 1960s as recorded in the Pages of The Rebel Worker and Heatwave*, ed. Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2005), 344-345.

*Commodity Economy*.<sup>66</sup> Even across the Atlantic, African American resistance and European cultural radicalism formed a potent mixture.

In 1967 members of the Rebel Worker Group ceased publishing the journal and shifted their focus elsewhere. Inspired by their encounter with the French Surrealist group, the Rosemonts and some of their Chicago associates focused on creating a greater Surrealist presence in the United States, launching the journal *Arsenal: Surrealist Subversion* and opening an exhibition space, the Gallery Bugs Bunny. Solidarity Bookstore remained open through 1968 and served as an important source of hard-to-find radical texts and news about movements abroad for many new left activists. Penelope Rosemont also organized an anarchist chapter of SDS and worked for the organization's printshop.<sup>67</sup>

### **White Skin and Black Masks in New York**

*The Rebel Worker*, *Heatwave*, and (for a time) the Situationists, also recognized as political compatriots a small group of New York artists who produced the magazine *Black Mask*. *Black Mask* was founded by Ben Morea, a working-class Italian American painter and agitator who developed his anarchist politics in a trajectory similar to Rosemont's. Morea grew up in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan, home to Thelonius Monk and other stars of the bebop scene. Morea immersed himself in the jazz community until he picked up a heroin habit and was

---

<sup>66</sup> Reprinted in Guy Debord, *A Sick Planet*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK and New York: Seagull Books, 2008).

<sup>67</sup> F. Rosemont, "To Be Revolutionary," 68-79.

arrested for possession. In a prison art therapy class, he determined to take his life in a different direction. Still, he appreciated the instinct for rebellion that the jazz scene had imbued in him. ‘Culturally, it was subversive,’ Morea asserted.

The dominant culture, which I’ve never been comfortable with, could not understand jazz. It was a subculture. And so I gravitated towards subcultures. The beatniks picked up on all of that. After I quit heroin, I was about 18, I already had this subcultural context, so I struck a friendship with a lot of beatniks. Especially, first, The Living Theatre. Judith Malina and Julian Beck, they’re the ones that put the name to the way I felt, [gave me] the term *anarchist*.<sup>68</sup>

Morea spent days in a New York Public Library branch dedicated to art history. He remembers, “I used to go there and spend hours reading about Dada and Surrealism. All of that, the Constructivists—the Russians, the Futurists from Russia and Italy. I was really interested in the Bhagava Gita, I was interested in Zen.”

During the same period Morea read Bakunin and Kropotkin, but they didn’t prove to be as central to his political development as they had been for previous generations.

As he put it, “I never saw myself as an ideologue....I pieced together everything: music, art, politics, jazz...”<sup>69</sup> Over the next few years, Morea attended meetings of the Libertarian League, as well as a group called East Side Anarchists, organized by Murray Bookchin in the early 1960s.

Bookchin was born in 1921 to Russian Jewish parents living in the Bronx. His family had fled Russia to avoid repression after the failed 1905 revolution, and he was raised primarily by a grandmother who had been a member of the Social

---

<sup>68</sup> Ben Morea, interview with author, New York, NY, March 29, 2009.

<sup>69</sup> Morea, interview.

Revolutionaries. Murray participated in Communist youth organizations during the 1930s, but disagreed with Communist Party positions on the Popular Front, the Spanish Civil War, and the Nazi-Soviet Pact; he was expelled in 1939. In the early 1940s, Bookchin joined the Trotskyist movement and organized unions in the New Jersey foundries and auto plants in which he found work.<sup>70</sup> In the late 1940s, Bookchin began associating with a small group of radicals grouped around a German libertarian socialist (and ex-Trotskyist) named Joseph Weber. The group produced a journal, *Contemporary Issues*, that was critical of both poles in the Cold War and skeptical that workers in the United States would even again constitute a force for radical change. The group called for a “democracy of content”—a deepening of democracy not unlike the vision outlined by SDS in the Port Huron Statement—and searched for social groups that had the potential to constitute a significant force for change under post-war conditions. In 1952, Bookchin contributed a long essay, “The Problem of Chemicals in Food,” inaugurating a life-long interest in ecology and the radical potentials of activism in defense of the natural world.<sup>71</sup>

While writing for *Contemporary Issues*, Bookchin participated in Dorothy Day’s civil defense protests and other activities organized by New York radical

---

<sup>70</sup> See Janet Biehl, “Introduction,” in *The Murray Bookchin Reader*, ed. Janet Biehl (London: Cassell, 1997); Damian F. White, *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal* (London: Pluto, 2008), 12-24; Murray Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1999).

<sup>71</sup> Marcel van der Linden, “The Prehistory of *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*: Joseph Weber and the Movement for a Democracy of Content (1947-1964),” *Anarchist Studies* 9 (2001).

pacifists. In the early 1960s, he joined the Lower East Side chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE). Through his studies and interactions with New York's anarchist-pacifist community, Bookchin embraced anarchism and helped organize a "study circle" called the Lower East Side Anarchists (later shortened to East Side Anarchists) in 1963 or 1964. In 1965, the group launched a bookstore, *The Torch*, and a short-lived magazine called *Good Soup*.<sup>72</sup> Bookchin served as the driving intellectual force of the group. During these years he penned a number of essays linking his concerns about ecological degradation to classical anarchist thought. Though it is unclear how often they met in person, Bookchin clearly respected David Wieck's thinking, and sent Wieck copies of his articles for comment. Despite Wieck's own innovations in anarchist theory during the 1940s and 1950s, he had never given much consideration to issues of ecology, and wrote to Bookchin, "I think you do have something quite good here."<sup>73</sup>

Though Ben Morea attended discussions organized by East Side Anarchists and the Libertarian League, he felt more comfortable at the latter. "They were working class," he explained. "Murray's was a little more intellectual. I used to get into arguments with them all the time because it seemed more removed. But I liked Murray, I liked him a lot." Morea was one of a handful of younger, beat-oriented activists that gravitated towards the Libertarian League in the mid-1960s. Another

---

<sup>72</sup> Bookchin, *Marxism, Anarchism*, 73-74.

<sup>73</sup> David Wieck to Murray Bookchin, October 20, 1966 and Murray Bookchin to David Wieck, December 4, 1966, DTW, TL.

was Jonathon Leake, who, with League member Walter Caughey, produced a mimeographed magazine, *Resurgence*, that promoted Surrealism, drug-use, and youth cultural revolution. The influx of young radicals interested in cultural transformation and eager for confrontation led to tensions that dissolved the Libertarian League in 1966. Founding member Sam Dolgoff bitterly recalled (likely with a fair bit of exaggeration), “People like Leake aroused the hostility rather than the support of the neighborhood...A new element of crazies, nuts, acid-heads, and junkies, some with authoritarian tendencies, came in...They were disruptive and did little constructive work. Their talk was dominated by sex, drugs, and violent action...The group collapsed amid bickering and quarrels.” Other changes also contributed to the League’s demise. Russell Blackwell increasingly devoted his time to civil rights organizing, the Ellingtons moved to California, and Walter Caughey was tragically murdered by a drug addict in his apartment building.<sup>74</sup>

Unsatisfied with existing anarchist groups, in 1966 Morea and his friend Ron Hahne launched a four page broadsheet devoted to avant-garde art and radical politics titled *Black Mask*. Allan Hoffman, a member of the East Side Anarchists, became a contributor, as did the poet and activist Dan Georgakas.<sup>75</sup> For Morea, the name *Black Mask* had a number of resonances:

---

<sup>74</sup> Dolgoff quoted in Paul Avrich, *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America* (Oakland: AK Press, 2005), 427; Sam Dolgoff, *Fragments: A Memoir* (Cambridge, UK: Refract, 1986), 89-91.

<sup>75</sup> Ben Morea, interview; Osha Neumann, interview with author, New York, NY, January 31, 2009.

There was a book written by Franz Fanon, *Black Faces, White Masks*. Well, I always thought, “white faces, black masks.” I was also friends with the black nationalists, and some of them used an African mask as a symbol. The color black was an anarchist symbol, but the mask fit the art side more, say, than Black Flag. So it was all of these things, but Franz Fanon was a big part of it.<sup>76</sup>

The editors of *Black Mask* identified as artists and, therefore, felt it their responsibility to attack the museums and other symbols of high culture which, they argued, served to conceal the true brutality of U.S. culture, exemplified by the war in Vietnam and the treatment of African Americans. From the beginning *Black Mask* declared its support of the rising tide of black radicalism. “A new spirit is rising. Like the streets of Watts we burn with revolution... The guerrilla, the blacks, the men of the future, we are all at your heels,” read an early statement. The magazine’s first issue, tellingly, reprinted an interview with existentialist Albert Camus’ (also a major inspiration for Bob Moses of SNCC) and a flier from the Lowndes County Freedom Organization, the SNCC-organized project that was the first to adopt the Black Panther as its symbol.<sup>77</sup> Writings by Fanon, the urban uprisings, and the turn towards armed self-defense by the black freedom movement collectively drew Morea and his friends away from the pacifism embraced by their beat friends. “I liked Allen [Ginsberg] a lot,” Morea recounted, “but at some point I became very vociferously

---

<sup>76</sup> Ben Morea, interview.

<sup>77</sup> Ron Hahne and Ben Morea, *Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker: The Incomplete Works of Ron Hahne, Ben Morea and the Black Mask Group* (London: Unpopular Books and Sabotage Editions, 1993), 7-12.

anti-pacifist. So he'd say, 'Omm' and I'd say, 'Arm!' That was a mantra we had. He'd go 'ommm,' and I'd go, 'aaaarrrrmmm!'"<sup>78</sup>

In February 1967, *Black Mask* contributors and their friends literalized the publication's name when they marched through New York City's financial district donned completely in black, wearing black ski masks, and carrying skulls on poles and a sign that read "Wall Street is War Street." This stark and provocative demonstration against the war in Vietnam appears to have been the first recorded deployment of the "black bloc" aesthetic developed in Europe in the 1980s and made famous in the United States during the Seattle anti-WTO demonstrations of 1999. Future issues of *Black Mask* carried images of the protest and a provocative photo of black-masked individuals prepared to attack a respectable white couple as they returned home.<sup>79</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> Morea, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Hahne, *Black Mask*, 26, 55.



**Figure 14:** Black Mask Cover. Courtesy of the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan

The group's newspaper and creative political interventions earned it the attention of representatives of the Situationist International, who briefly encouraged *Black Mask* to

affiliate with the short-lived U.S. section, but soon retracted the offer.<sup>80</sup> Like the Rebel Worker group, the *Black Mask* editors communicated, visited with, and traded publications with creative and militant young radicals from around the world, including the Dutch Provos, and the Japanese Zengakuren.<sup>81</sup>

Morea also travelled to California and met the Diggers, a group of actors–cum-cultural revolutionaries inspired by the 17<sup>th</sup> century English defenders of common property. The modern day Diggers evolved from the San Francisco Mime Troupe, which shared ideas about the transformative potential of drama with the Living Theatre. The Diggers honed these artistic techniques to articulate a critique of capitalist culture that shared similarities with the Situationists (though they were unfamiliar with the SI at the time).<sup>82</sup> Digger Peter Coyote explained:

---

<sup>80</sup> The conflict was indicative of the ideological purity and authoritarianism of the SI's small inner circle. As recounted in the pages of *Internationale Situationniste*, Situationist theorist Raoul Vaneigem visited New York in 1967 to make contact with potential recruits. Vaneigem had "been obliged to break off a conversation with a certain [Allan] Hoffman, who was eulogistically expounding to him a mystical interpretation of his text "Basic Banalities" and who was at that time the main collaborator in Morea's publications: the enormity of this fact naturally led Vaneigem no longer event to want to discuss our other more general divergences with Morea." What's more, the entire British section of the SI was subsequently excluded because they continued to communicate with Morea after the French members had forbid them from doing so. "The Latest Exclusions," *Internationale Situationniste* 12 (1969) reprinted in Ken Knabb, trans. and ed., *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), 293-294.

<sup>81</sup> Morea, interview. On the Provos, see Richard Kempton, *Provo: Amsterdam's Anarchist Revolt* (New York: Autonomedia, 2007). On the Zengakuren, see Stuart Dowsey, ed., *Zengakuren* (Berkeley: Ishi Press, 1970).

<sup>82</sup> On the Diggers, see Julie Stephens, *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Timothy Hodgdon, *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counter-Cultural*

From our point of view, freedom involved first liberating the imagination from economic assumptions of profit and private property that demanded existence at the expense of personal truthfulness and honor, then living according to personal authenticity and fidelity to inner directives and impulses... Our hope was that if we were imaginative enough in creating social paradigms as free men and women, the example would be infectious and might produce self-directed (as opposed to coerced or manipulated) social change.<sup>83</sup>

The Diggers devised interventions in daily life, what they called “life acting,” that would challenge cultural preoccupations with fame and fortune. They began by serving food in Golden Gate park; it was free, but those partaking were asked to first walk through a wooden rectangle deemed “a free frame of reference.” After the counter-culture swelled in early 1967, inaugurated by the famous Human Be-in (which featured Snyder, Ginsberg, and Suzuki Roshi), the Diggers established a Free Store, free “crash pads,” and free medical services for the legions of young counter-culturalists, by that time deemed hippies, flooding their neighborhood. In opposition to media spectacle and celebrity, Diggers were determined to undertake their activities not only without compensation, but also anonymously. Coyote noted, “Our intention was to ‘assume freedom’ as opposed to ‘winning’ it.”<sup>84</sup> Against a culture built on money and celebrity, therefore, they sought to remain anonymous. Against the aspiration for personal fame they saw manifested in many political radicals of the day, they avowed to be “leaderless.” Morea was not the only New Yorker to visit the

---

*Communities, 1965-1983* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008); Peter Coyote, *Sleeping Where I Fall: A Chronicle* (Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1998); Emmett Grogan, *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps* (NYRB, 1970).

<sup>83</sup> Coyote, *Sleeping*, 69-70.

<sup>84</sup> Coyote, *Sleeping*, 77.

Diggers. Abbie Hoffman studied them assiduously and built on their tactics when he formed the Yippies in 1967. The Diggers angrily noted that Hoffman and his collaborator Jerry Rubin had not imbibed their dedication to anonymity. However, anonymity and “leaderlessness” proved chimerical for Coyote, Emmett Grogran, and other Diggers as well. They depended largely on donations from rock musicians, Hell’s Angels, and other patrons; as their activities and ideas gained notoriety, they began to enjoy celebrity status themselves.

Back on the East Coast, the Black Mask Group collaborated with other artists on New York City’s Lower East Side to organize an “Agy Arts” week in early 1967. Police arrested participants at St. Patrick’s Cathedral on Easter Sunday as they unveiled posters denouncing the cardinal’s endorsement of the Vietnam war. In the aftermath of Angry Arts week, the Black Mask “family” grew to include ten to fifteen core members, primarily white and male, including Osha Neumann, the step-son of the celebrated critical theorist Herbert Marcuse. Early in 1968, the group organized a theatrical demonstration in front of the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts, signing an explanatory leaflet, “Up Against the Wall, Motherfucker.” The line was drawn from a poem penned by black nationalist LeRoi Jones during “race riots” that had convulsed Newark, NJ the previous year.<sup>85</sup> The name stuck, and the group remade itself accordingly.

---

<sup>85</sup> Osha Neumann, *Up Against the Wall Motherf\*\*ker: A Memoir of the ‘60s, with Notes for Next Time* (New York: Seven Stories, 2008), pp. 53-67. LeRoi Jones later changed his name to Amiri Baraka. On Baraka and the Newark uprising, see, Komozi

Jones had contemptuously declared:

... you can't steal nothin from a white man, he's already stole it he owes you anything you want, even his life. All the stores will open if you will say the magic words. The magic words are: Up against the wall mother fucker this is a stick up.<sup>86</sup>

The uncompromising—some would say apocalyptic—position of Jones and other black militants appealed to the Motherfuckers. (Apparently they missed the irony in “stealing” their name and image from the black poet.) Already by 1966 *Black Mask* had proclaimed that only a total break with the U.S. social and cultural order would be sufficiently liberating. A pamphlet prepared in the early 1970s by the British radicals King Mob noted, UAWMF “demanded the complete identity of theory and practice ... which at the time left only one force with which they could identify: the post-Watts BLACKS. Only the Blacks’ rejection of everything was as high-handed and demonic as their own. Only the Blacks’ were in a position where they had to DO something, not just sit on their arses and talk.”<sup>87</sup>

Calling themselves “a street gang with an analysis,” UAWMF organized hippies, drop-outs, bums, and Puerto Rican youth on the Lower East Side, created a free store, squatted empty buildings, and regularly instigated small scale riots and

---

Woodard, *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

<sup>86</sup> Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka, “Black People!” *The Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*, ed. W. J. Harris (New York: Thunder’s Mouth Press, 1991), p. 224.

<sup>87</sup> “Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker: The Story of a Small, Underground 1960s Revolutionary Group in New York City,” pamphlet, Subject Vertical File: Up Against the Wall Motherfucker, Labadie Collection. Identified as authored by King Mob in Hahne, *Black Mask*, back cover.

brawls with the police. The group's strategy was to push members of the white counter-culture to increase the level of their confrontation with institutions of authority as a means of forging another "front" in the struggles being waged by oppressed racial groups in the United States and anti-colonial forces in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The turn to trashing and clashes with the police were deeply informed by the black ghetto uprisings which wracked the United States, especially after Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated in April, 1968. However, UAWMF was also influenced by the increasing willingness of the Provos, Zengakuren, and others international groups to claim urban territory and confront police, as indicated, especially, by the events of May and June 1968 in France.

UAWMF simultaneously devoted itself to resisting the rapidly increasing commodification of the counter-culture. Members fought for a "free night" at the premier rock venue in New York City. They also travelled north to Saugerties, New York, and used bolt cutters to dismantle fences at the August 1969 Woodstock festival. Morea proudly recalled, "We stormed the entrance to the Pentagon—the only people in history to actually penetrate into the building. *And* we cut the fences at Woodstock. So here you've got this hippie cultural [thing], and this [other thing]. And that was *us*."<sup>88</sup> As Neumann put it, "We advocated a politics of rage and tribal bonding, 'flower power with thorns.'"<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Morea, interview.

<sup>89</sup> Neumann, *Up Against the Wall*, 66.

Both UAWMF and the Diggers remained overwhelmingly male groups that evinced an extraordinary machismo, modeled in large measure on their perceptions of the masculinity of black and Puerto Rican street youth and the hardnosed style of groups such as the Black Panthers and the Young Lords. Their declarations of solidarity and willingness to fight earned them respect from at least some members of those organizations. UAWMF provided security for Black Panther meetings in New York, and Morea was asked to run as Eldridge Cleaver's vice presidential candidate in the Peace and Freedom Party, a position which Yippie Jerry Rubin eventually accepted in his place. The Diggers, meanwhile, printed the first issues of the Black Panther newspaper and funneled donations to the organization. Both groups also declared themselves chapters of Students for a Democratic Society in early 1969 but used that status primarily to berate student radicals for what they regarded as physical timidity and intellectual posturing. This brash style impressed some members of Columbia University SDS, such as Jeff Jones and Mark Rudd, who would later take the Motherfuckers' welding of youth counter-culture and violent confrontation to another level as members of the Weather Underground.<sup>90</sup> Neither group had a long lifespan. The core members of UAWMF left New York City in 1971 to escape the escalating cycle of incarceration, violent protest, and drug use they found themselves increasingly trapped in, dissolving soon afterwards. Rural communes, the Hell's

---

<sup>90</sup> Neumann, *Up Against the Wall*, 75-90; Morea, interview; Mark Rudd, *Underground: My Life with SDS and the Weathermen* (New York: William Morrow, 2009).

Angels, and heroin use came to dominate the energies of many Diggers in the same years.

### **The Motor City Is Burning: The White Panthers, MC5 and *Fifth Estate***

The counter-culture in Detroit and Ann Arbor, Michigan, developed in a pattern similar to those of Chicago and New York, except that it didn't incorporate explicitly anarchist ideas until the end of the decade. The Michigan political-cultural community was also unique for the central role the avowedly revolutionary rock band the MC5 played in raising funds, broadcasting ideas, and blurring the line between creating music and creating radical social change. Although the counter-cultural radicals of southwest Michigan didn't embrace anarchism in the 1960s, the ideas, aesthetics, and impulses that incubated there in those years fundamentally shaped two distinct anarchist tendencies of the 1970s and 1980s: the turn to European "ultra-left" theory, which eventually developed into anarcho-primitivism, and the rise of an explicitly political punk music community. It is therefore crucial to understand the development of Detroit radicalism, and its relation to related currents elsewhere, if we are to understand where anarchism stood at the conclusion of the long 1960s.

Beginning in 1964, the Detroit counter-culture grew up around a series of institutions based in the Warren-Forrest neighborhood, near Wayne State University: the Detroit Artists' Workshop, the *Fifth Estate* newspaper, the rock band The MC5, the Trans-Love Energies commune, and the White Panther Party. The Artist's Workshop was established in 1964 by Leni Arndt, her lover John Sinclair, and

approximately a dozen of their beat friends. Arndt was a photographer and a student at Wayne State who had immigrated from East Germany. Sinclair was born into a Flint, Michigan autoworker family in 1941. At Albion College in the late 1950s, he was introduced to the music of John Coltrane and the poetry of Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti. Becoming an instant devotee, Sinclair habituated jazz and blues clubs of Southeast Michigan and devoted himself to writing poetry. He and Arndt organized the Artist's Workshop to serve as a focal point for the local hip community. The workshop consisted of a storefront that doubled as a studio and a performance space used to hold jazz shows, poetry readings, exhibitions, and film screenings. The community was insular and focused on cultural invention. Sinclair recalled, "Jazz, it's all we did. We used to sit around and smoke dope... You didn't want to go out much, because, you know, people were a drag."<sup>91</sup>

In 1965, a teenager named Peter Ovshinsky launched an underground newspaper, the *Fifth Estate*, which covered the growing resistance to the war in Vietnam, protests in the black community, as well as the city's new cultural offerings.<sup>92</sup> It attracted writers such as Peter Werbe, a former SDS leader who had

---

<sup>91</sup> Quoted in Jeff A. Hale, "The White Panthers' 'Total Assault on the Culture,'" unpublished mss., 8, Subject Vertical File: Youth & Student Protest—Michigan—White Panthers, Labadie Collection. Hale draws on interviews with John Sinclair and other members of the White Panther Party conducted by Bret Eynon in 1977 for the American Social History Project.

<sup>92</sup> On the *Fifth Estate*, see Peter Werbe, "The History of the *Fifth Estate*," *Fifth Estate* 368-369 (2005), 8-19; Bob Hippler, "Fast Times in the Motor City" in *Voices from the Underground, Vol. 1: Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press*, ed. Ken Wachsberger et al. (Tempe, AZ: Mica Press, 1993); Steve Millett, "Technology is

been politically mentored by a leading acolyte of Wilhem Reich.<sup>93</sup> The *Fifth Estate* set up in a storefront adjacent to the Artists' Workshop and invited Sinclair to contribute a column, which he did. The building also housed the offices of the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, an organization that Werbe and other *Fifth Estate* contributors were active in. Police, uncomfortable with this growing zone of dissent, set up a number of drug busts in 1966 which landed Sinclair in jail for six months.

At the end of 1966, Detroit, like many other cities, witnessed an influx of young drop-outs interested in the cultural scene. Demonstrations by black residents against discrimination in the workplace and their unions, police brutality, and other issues, were expanding and growing more radical as national organizations began to call for black power<sup>94</sup> LSD hit the streets of Detroit in the same period, bringing with it new perspectives. In the same months the MC5 began to distinguish themselves from other high school rock bands as they began channeling feedback from their amplifiers into walls of noise and developed a more explicitly sexual stage presence.

---

Capital: *Fifth Estate's* Critique of the Megamachine" in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, ed. Jonathon Purkis and James Bowen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

<sup>93</sup> Peter Werbe, interview with author, Royal Oak, Michigan, April 25, 2008.

<sup>94</sup> On the black freedom movement in Detroit, see Heather Thompson, *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit I Do Mind Dying* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998); Muhammad Ahmad, *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975* (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007); Angela Dillard, *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

When he was released from jail, Sinclair responded to these developments by urging the Artists' Workshop to transform itself into a commune and production company called Trans-Love Energies. Sinclair took over management of the MC5 and plowed revenue generated by their growing popularity into organizing events rock shows and other events at large venues such as the Grande Ballroom. Trans-Love Energies incorporated a number of new collaborators into the fold, including Pun Plamondon and Genie Johnson. Plamondon was raised in a working-class family in Traverse City, Michigan, where he wracked up a police record for fighting and drinking as a high-school student. Plamondon recalled that in 1964 he met "a twenty-three year-old beatnik from New Jersey....He gave me Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*, and my life was changed forever."<sup>95</sup> Johnson, the daughter of an Army colonel, had lived in Texas and Georgia before hitch-hiking to Detroit and discovering the Trans-Love commune at age seventeen. She married Plamondon after he was arrested on drug charges to ensure visitation rights, though they maintained an open relationship.

Throughout 1967 Trans-Love Energies worked to provide services to the mushrooming counter-culture in much the same fashion as the Diggers. They created a "crashpad," a free rehearsal space, a free store, and a bail fund for those facing drug charges. Plamondon later explained, "I always thought of Trans-Love Energies as the link between the beatniks, which was the Artists Workshop, and the hippies. Trans-Love Energies was more open and you could tell it in the clothes people wore and the

---

<sup>95</sup> Pun Plamondon, *Lost from the Ottawa: The Story of the Journey Back* (Self-published, 2004), 38.

colors and everything bright and out-going as opposed to things dark and closed in.”<sup>96</sup> Sinclair spoke to this transformation as well, noting, “When beatniks started taking acid, it brought us out of the basement...the fringes of society—and just blew us apart. From being cynical and wanting to isolate yourself forever from the squares...one was suddenly filled with a messianic feeling of love and brotherhood.”<sup>97</sup> While LSD surely played a role, Sinclair’s narco-determinist perspective underplays the extent to which the period’s successful social movements encouraged young people to believe social change was possible.

For a time, Trans-Love Energies, the MC5, and the *Fifth Estate* functioned as a semi-coherent whole. Werbe recalls, “The MC5 used to practice in the basement of the *Fifth Estate* while we were doing layout. Those of us around the *Fifth Estate* were really into the cultural scene as well, with rock and roll, the Grande, and psychedelic drugs and smoking a lot of reefer, and psychedelic art.” Issues of *Fifth Estate* from 1967 indicate the extent to which counter-cultural practices meshed with interest in international revolutionary movements. Werbe explained, “One of the things we wanted to do was [write about] everything that was rebellious. So we did have stuff about anarchism, we had stuff about Indians, we had stuff about Tai Chi, we had Mao, we had support the National Liberation Front. And in some ways that was part of the

---

<sup>96</sup> Pun Plamondon quoted in *20 to Life: The Life and Times of John Sinclair*, Dir. Steve Gebhardt, DVD (Steve Gebhardt, 2007).

<sup>97</sup> Quoted in Hale, “The White Panthers.”

eclecticism.”<sup>98</sup> While such eclecticism may have indicated a lack of political sophistication, for Werbe it also reflected a certain strategic logic. He recalled, “I was still always focusing through this Reichian model of *subversion*. How do you subvert loyalty to power? How do you subvert loyalty to the empire? Well you privilege or you affirm all these things that are thought to be marginal or to be exotic or even illegitimate.”<sup>99</sup> By the end of the year, however, differences in priorities were beginning to show. *Fifth Estate* editors began to think of the MC5 as “goofy rock and roll kids.” According to Werbe, “They were cool, they came to demonstrations and all that. But they weren’t steeped in the revolutionary traditions and knowledge that we were.”<sup>100</sup>

A series of events in 1967 sent the Detroit counter-culture in a new direction. In April, Trans-Love organized a “Love-in” on Belle Isle, a city park located on an island in the Detroit River. Mounted police waded into the crowd of some 20,000 stoned hippies, hitting and arresting them. Undercover police infiltrated Trans-Love activities, leading to more drug busts. More significantly, for over a week in July the African American community of Detroit, enraged at mistreatment, police violence, and the slow pace of civil rights reforms, fought police in the street, looted stores, and burned cars and buildings. The National Guard was called in and patrolled the streets in army jeeps and tanks. The Trans-Love commune was repeatedly raided during the

---

<sup>98</sup> Werbe, interview.

<sup>99</sup> Werbe, interview.

<sup>100</sup> Werbe, interview.

crisis and members were followed and harassed as they attempted to distribute food to hungry neighbors. Under these circumstances, the core group decided to decamp, MC5 in tow, to the college-town of Ann Arbor, forty-five minutes east.

The Trans-Love Energies commune, consisting of approximately 30 people, purchased and moved in to two massive houses on the fraternity row of the University of Michigan. As Plamondon notes, “This was a monumental undertaking that would have been impossible without the financial, musical, and spiritual support of the MC5. They were as committed to creating a new culture and lifestyle as we were, and were willing to put their lives, careers and money on the line for it.”<sup>101</sup> The income generated by a successful rock band allowed the Michigan cultural radicals to undertake projects that other groups lacked the resources for. Trans-Love Energies quickly got to work organizing free concerts in city parks in addition to paid gigs, featuring the MC5 and a variety of other bands in the Trans-Love orbit, including The Stooges, and The Up!. Before and during the bands’ sets, Sinclair called for drug law reforms. The MC5 gave explosive performances laced with profanity, overt sexual posturing, and calls for revolution. Their anthem, “Kick out the Jams,” relied on the same profane terminology that Morea, Neumann, and their gang used to provoke the police, media, and cultural institutions of New York City. As Werbe put it, “Just this little phrase, this forbidden phrase of, “Kick out the Jams, Motherfucker!” was more

---

<sup>101</sup> Plamondon, *Lost*, 108.

of a clarion call than, “Workers of the World, Unite!”<sup>102</sup> MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer explained the assumptions that defined the period: “That the music could represent the possibility that we could change the world. That we could stop the war, that we could change the reefer laws, that we could reinvent ourselves and that we didn’t have to go along with the program.”<sup>103</sup> Though they weren’t subject to curfews or tanks outside their doors, repression followed the group to Ann Arbor. Wherever the MC5 played, police charged them with violation of obscenity laws, slapping them with fines and shutting down shows, often causing near-riots in the process. Trans-Love members also faced a mounting series of drug charges. In 1966, Sinclair had given two joints to an undercover police officer and faced a sentence of up to ten years in jail if found guilty.

Pun Plamondon was jailed for three months in the summer of 1968 on marijuana charges of his own. While Plamondon was locked down, the MC5 and their entourage narrowly escaped a police riot after performing at the Festival of Life, a gathering organized by the Yippies to protest the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Nearly every sector of the New Left mobilized to protest the war in Vietnam, repression of the black freedom movement, and other issues in a week of activity surrounding the convention. SDS students marched in the streets, clashing with Chicago’s notoriously brutal police force, Dellinger and Ginsberg teamed up to try to keep the demonstrations non-violent, and the Yippies, in one of their most

---

<sup>102</sup> Werbe, interview.

<sup>103</sup> Wayne Kramer quoted in *20 Year to Life*.

successful media-stunts, nominated a pig for president. The refusal of the Democratic Party to engage in dialogue and the extent of the repression meted out against demonstrators pushed the Movement, as the forces of resistance were then collectively referred to, in a more revolutionary, and violence-prone, direction.<sup>104</sup>

While incarcerated, Plamondon read an interview with Black Panther Chairman Huey Newton. When asked what white people could do to support the Panthers, he off-handedly suggested they form a White Panther Party. Plamondon took this suggestion literally and suggested it to Sinclair upon being released in early September, 1968. The constant harassment Trans-Love and the MC5 faced, the increasing repression against the New Left, and the exciting specter of a rapidly growing black power struggle, encouraged the group to begin seeing their situation in explicitly political terms. Plamondon later noted, “We weren’t ‘political activists’... We were ‘cultural activists’ striving to build a new culture... To be left alone to live our lives differently than those in the dominant culture was all we wanted. Our legal troubles erupted when our lifestyle smashed into their laws.”<sup>105</sup> Sinclair, likewise, reasoned that “our culture itself represented a political threat to the established order, and any action which has a political consequence is finally a political action.”<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>104</sup> See Berger, *Outlaws of America*.

<sup>105</sup> Plamondon, *Lost*, 117.

<sup>106</sup> Hale, “White Panthers,” 20.

Events moved rapidly after that. Later in September, the MC5 signed a contract with Elektra records, a major producer with nation-wide distribution. Three days later bombs exploded in a secret CIA recruiting station in Ann Arbor and a weapons research lab at the University of Michigan. On November 1, 1968, Trans-Love Energies held a press conference announcing that it was transforming itself into the White Panther Party (WPP). The White Panthers issued a political statement, which read in part,

Our program is cultural revolution through a total assault on the culture...Our culture, our art, the music, newspapers, books, posters, our clothing, our homes, the way we walk and talk, the way our hair grows, the way we smoke dope and fuck and eat and sleep – it is all one message, and the message is FREEDOM!

The statement announced the outlines of the group's "program" and strategy:

Our program of rock and roll, dope, and fucking in the streets is a program of total freedom for everyone....We breathe revolution. We are LSD-driven total maniacs in the universe. We will do anything we can to drive people out of their heads into their bodies. Rock & roll music is the spearhead of our attack because it's so effective and so much fun. We have developed high-energy guerrilla rock & roll bands who are infiltrating the popular culture and destroying millions of minds in the process.

The statement concluded with an invocation of respect for black political leaders and musicians, followed by a bald-faced attempt by the White Panthers to cloak themselves in the credibility, authenticity, and heroic masculinity attributed to these figures:

The actions of the Black Panthers in America have inspired us and given us strength, as has the music of black America...I might mention brother James Brown in this connection, as well as John Coltrane and

Archie Shepp. Sun-Ra. Robert Williams. Malcolm X. Huey P. Newton, Bobby Seale, Eldridge Cleaver, these are magic names to us. They are *men* in America. And we're crazy as they are, and as pure. We're *bad*.<sup>107</sup>

The White Panthers adopted a 10-point program. The first point was full support for the 10-point program of the Black Panthers. The remaining nine points expanded on the Digger idea of “the free.” The White Panther Party (WPP) demanded everything—from food to G.I.s to time and space—be made free. Though they called for it elsewhere, demands for forms of social equality were conspicuously absent from the WPP 10-Point Program and other documents.

The WPP was inspired by the Yippies' use of provocative ideas and pranks to push their message but critical of their decision to only maintain the spectre of a party instead of constituting an actual political formation that could organize members of the youth culture. The Black Panthers, American Indian Movement, Young Lords, and other organizations calling for self-determination of their communities seemed much more serious and substantial. Plamondon recalls that the White Panthers decided to “organize ourselves along the Black Panther model, with a Central Committee (CC), ministers and such. Everything was to come and go from the center; the CC was to direct and control all Party activity.”<sup>108</sup> Sinclair appointed himself Chairman, Pun Plamondon became Minister of Defense, and Genie Plamondon took the title Minister of Communications. The group cribbed other aspects of third world

---

<sup>107</sup> John Sinclair, *Guitar Army: Rock and Revolution with MC5 and the White Panther Party* (Los Angeles: Process, 2007 [1972]), 90-91.

<sup>108</sup> Plamondon, *Lost*, 118.

left politics as well. “We had political education classes every morning where we read and discussed Marxist/Leninist/Maoist thought” as well as writings by Fanon, Ho Chi Minh, Castro, and other international leaders.<sup>109</sup> This attempt to make themselves over in the image of a democratic centralist party existed uneasily with the anti-authoritarianism and anti-leader dimensions of earlier counter-cultural formations such as the Diggers and UAWMF. The first version of the WPP’s 10-Point Program, for example, concluded with the plank, “Free the people from their “leaders” – leaders suck – all power to all the people – freedom means free everyone!”<sup>110</sup> At some point before the end of 1969, Point 10 was altered to read, “Free the people from their phony ‘leaders’—everyone must be a leader—freedom means free every one! All Power to the People!”<sup>111</sup> Both versions demonstrate the dilettantish nature of the White Panther’s politics, but the evolution also suggests the confusing competing claims regarding “leadership” circulating at the time. If “leaders suck” was the cry of the Diggers and Motherfuckers, “everyone must be a leader” rang closer to the position sounded by the early incarnations of SNCC and SDS. Yet, by changing the first phrase to “free the people from their phony ‘leaders,’” the program seemed to make room for the more genuine leadership which members of the WPP central committee, emulating the Black Panthers, felt compelled to provide. White Panther statements on authority and leadership were never consistent. A newspaper produced

---

<sup>109</sup> Plamondon, *Lost*, 119.

<sup>110</sup> “White Panther Statement,” Leaflet, 1969, Subject Vertical File: Youth & Student Protest—Michigan—White Panthers, Labadie Collection.

<sup>111</sup> Sinclair, *Guitar Army*, 91.

by the New England branch of the WPP, likely published in the later half of 1970, relied on an anarchist vocabulary:

To take collective responsibility for one's own affairs, that is self-government. To destroy all hierarchies which merely serve to paralyze the initiative of groups and individuals. To make all those in whom any authority is vested permanently responsible to the people....<sup>112</sup>

While its various statements on leadership, organization, and governance suggest the WPP tried to paper over complex and contradictory strands of radical thought, they also indicate that it was constantly evolving and refining its practices over its short life-span. To its credit, the group also began incorporating feminist and gay liberation politics into both its public pronouncements and daily operations by 1970.

---

<sup>112</sup> New England Region White Panther Party, *Survival Manual-1*, no date, no page, Subject Vertical File: Youth & Student Protest—Michigan—White Panthers, Labadie Collection.



**Figure 15:** Peter Werbe, Pun Plamondon, Jeanie Plamondon, and Jerry Rubin at Underground Press Conference, Madison, WI, 1968. Photo: Leni Sinclair. Courtesy of the Labadie Collection, University of Michigan.

After forming, White Panthers took seriously the task of fighting for a world that was less serious. The MC5's debut album and promotional material featured a centerfold of the band wearing White Panther pins (directly on their bare chests) while brandishing rifles alongside their guitars. The band distributed thousands of the small pins at concerts, sparking interest in the Party. Meanwhile Genie and Pun Plamondon

travelled the country, establishing branches in approximately two dozen cities. They helped to organize a series of Underground Press Conferences and met with representatives of the Black Panthers, Young Patriots (a group of white working-class radicals from Chicago), and militants from Europe, establishing themselves as earnest revolutionaries seeking to organize counter-cultural youth into a coalition with other sectors of society. In New York, Plamondon and Sinclair tried to convince Hoffman and Rubin to merge the Yippies with the WPP and made friends with Morea and UAWMF.

The WPP only operated at full capacity for eight months. In July 1969, Sinclair was sentenced to ten years in prison for giving two joints to an undercover officer, who sought to entrap him, in 1966. In October, Plamondon and Sinclair were indicted for the bombings of the CIA office and weapons-research laboratory the year before. Court documents revealed that a Detroit hippie-turned-political bomber had implicated the WPP leaders as a means of reducing his own charges. Plamondon decided to go “underground” to avoid prosecution. After living on a variety of counter-cultural communes, he travelled to Algeria, where he socialized with Eldridge Cleaver of the Black Panthers, all the while releasing a flurry of militaristic statements warning counter-culturalists to prepare for revolution. With Sinclair in prison and Plamondon on the lam, the WPP dedicated most of its resources to building a legal and political defense. Genie Plamondon, Leni Sinclair, and other WPP women devoted extraordinary effort into maintaining the group as a functioning political party

while raising funds and sympathy for the men who continued to dominate the limelight even when locked up and in hiding.

Although they participated in Underground Media Conferences organized by the WPP, Werbe and the other mainstays of the *Fifth Estate* were not entirely impressed with the direction of their former collaborators politics. “In the paper we dutifully reported on Sinclair’s thing of ‘Dope, Rock’n’Roll and Fucking in the Streets,’” Werbe recalls. “But that seemed like a pretty silly political demand.”<sup>113</sup> As repression against radicals mounted in Detroit following the urban uprising of 1967, the *Fifth Estate* took on a more serious tone. Werbe recounts, “Strident calls for revolution became standard fare on our covers with frequent images of armed Black Panthers or Viet Cong guerillas.”<sup>114</sup> In the early 1970s, however, *Fifth Estate* contributors such as Werbe, his wife Marilyn Werbe, and David Watson were introduced to situationist politics and other currents of European “ultra-left” thought by Lorraine and Fredy Perlman, a slightly old radical couple who moved to Detroit from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Fredy Perlman had participated in and been deeply moved by the student uprising and general strike that had convulsed France in May and June of 1968. Back in Kalamazoo, where he briefly held a teaching post, Fredy collaborated with Lorraine and a few friends to produce a journal, *Black and Red*, which promoted the situationist critique, aided by the Perlmans’ ability to read and

---

<sup>113</sup> Werbe, interview.

<sup>114</sup> Werbe, “History of the Fifth Estate,” 14.

translate French.<sup>115</sup> In Detroit, the Perlman's turned their journal into a small publishing operation.

The *Fifth Estate* went through a period of decline as repression, factionalism, and exhaustion took its toll on the left in the early 1970s. By mid-decade, however, the *Fifth Estate* and Black and Red had begun to publish and comment on ideas of a variety of (mostly European) radical thinkers, including the anti-technologist Jacques Ellul, Maurice Brinton of Solidarity, and Jean Baudrillard.<sup>116</sup> These and other writers helped them cobble together a critique of the economic and industrialist biases of traditional Marxism, as well as the authoritarian tendencies of revolutionaries they had celebrated only a few years before. Werbe recalls that by 1971, “everyone else was at best going to live in rural communes and getting in touch. Everyone in the New Left was just exhausted. The papers all collapsed, people weren’t interested in it. But we were just fired up by these ultra-left ideas!”<sup>117</sup> That energy helped the *Fifth Estate* and the Black and Red publishing house play a defining role in U.S. anarchist circles for the next twenty-five years.

The White Panthers and the *Fifth Estate* were hardly the only New Left organizations struggling to remain afloat as the 1960s came to an end. While organizations such as the Black Panthers faced massive retaliation from the police and FBI, Students for a Democratic Society was dissolving amongst heated factional

---

<sup>115</sup> Lorraine Perlman, *Having Little, Being Much: A Chronicle of Fredy Perlman's Fifty Years* (Detroit: Black and Red, 1989), 42-60.

<sup>116</sup> Perlman, *Having Little*, 79-90.

<sup>117</sup> Werbe, interview.

infighting between Stalinists, third world-oriented Marxist-Leninists, social democrats, and anarchists, though the contributions of the latter have rarely been explored.

### **Rosa Luxemburg SDS, Louis Lingg SDS, and the Radical Decentralist Project**

By 1967, SDS had expanded exponentially. At its peak it counted approximately 100,000 official members, but staff members found themselves unable to keep up with the flood of applications and eventually stopped processing them. Moreover, many students associated or identified with their local SDS chapters without ever officially seeking membership. With the growth of the organization's national profile and with anti-war, black power, student power, and other struggles rapidly intensifying, SDS' politics evolved rapidly and unevenly. Existing accounts have emphasized tensions in late-SDS between supporters of a worker-oriented politics by members of the Progressive Labor Party and a focus on solidarity with anti-racist and national liberation struggles by the faction that would later emerge as the Weather Underground Organization. However, by 1967 anarchists and libertarian socialists also began articulating distinct perspectives and proposing alternate strategic directions for SDS. Though none of these formations was particularly influential at the time, two of them served as important experiences for activists who made important contributions to anarchist politics in later decades. Moreover they help explain the paths by which anarchist ideas circulated during the 1960s.

At the end of 1967, Penelope Rosemont, Jon Dunn, and Chicago radicals affiliated with Solidarity Books organized the Louis Lingg Memorial Chapter of SDS. Louis Lingg was one of the eight anarchists convicted in the Chicago Haymarket affair of 1886. Perhaps the most uncompromising advocate of revolutionary violence amongst the accused, he refused to let the state of Illinois carry out its intended punishment. On November 10, 1887, the night before he and four of his co-defendants were to be executed by hanging, Lingg placed a smuggled dynamite cartridge into his mouth and lit it, killing himself before his political enemies were able to do so.<sup>118</sup> The Lingg Memorial Chapter of SDS was organized in this spirit of total resistance. Its hastily composed statement of purpose, in part, announced:

This chapter is formed in unrelenting opposition to “law and order” and to those things they seek to maintain: ‘Law and order’ which means their law and their order; law which protects those with property from those without property; ... order which means the rich before the poor, white before black, and old before young. ... ‘Law and order’ which seeks only to suppress or contain social revolution, maintain imperialism and refine the repressions of daily life.<sup>119</sup>

Though it sent a representative to the Spring 1968 SDS National Convention in East Lansing, Michigan, (where both red and black flags flanked the speakers podium) the Lingg Memorial Chapter does not appear to have had a long life or cohered as an influential anti-authoritarian pole within the larger organization. Penelope Rosemont turned her focus to Surrealist efforts shortly after a new slate of officers, including

---

<sup>118</sup> Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 175, 282, 375-378.

<sup>119</sup> P. Rosemont, *Dreams*, 190-191.

Mike Klonsky and Bernadine Dorhn, took over day-to-day operations at the national office after the in the spring of 1968.

After 1967, the SDS chapter at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) also leaned heavily in a libertarian socialist direction. The chapter's political direction was influenced by a young, highly-regarded linguistics professor, Noam Chomsky, who served as an advisor and participated in demonstrations, teach-ins, and other activities. Chomsky was born in 1928 and raised in a progressive Jewish family in Philadelphia. Interested in politics at a young age, he wrote an article in support of the Spanish anarchists that at war with Franco's forces for his elementary school newspaper at age 10. As a teenager he regularly travelled to New York to visit a left-leaning uncle who exposed him a variety of radical thinkers including non-Bolshevik marxists like Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Korsch. On these trips, Chomsky frequently visited the offices of the *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme*, bringing books by Rudolf Rocker, Diego Abad de Santillán, and other anarchists home with him.<sup>120</sup> Though he was deeply influenced by classical liberals, labor Zionists, and others, the writings of Rocker and other anarcho-syndicalists left a distinct imprint.<sup>121</sup> By the early 1960s, Chomsky had already established himself as an internationally renowned linguist, secure in his position at MIT. As the anti-war movement heated up in Boston, Chomsky began helping to organize demonstrations as a member of the group Resist.

---

<sup>120</sup> Robert Barsky, *Noam Chomsky: A Life of Dissent* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 16,

<sup>121</sup> Robert Barsky, *The Chomsky Effect: A Radical Works Beyond the Ivory Tower* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 136-143.

He served as an advisor to the campus' SDS group, helping them to organize a sanctuary space for an AWOL G.I.<sup>122</sup> In *American Power and the New Mandarins*, his first book on politics, published in 1969, Chomsky excoriated American intellectuals for their tacit or explicit support for the war in Vietnam and again lionized the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist movement.<sup>123</sup>

Chomsky worked with a variety of talented student-activists, among them Michael Albert, Stephen Shalom, George Katsiaficas, and Robin Hahnel. Albert, who entered MIT as a crack physics student and fraternity member, became deeply involved in SDS by his sophomore year. The group organized a direct action blockade when representatives of Dow Chemicals (producers of Agent Orange) attempted to hold a recruiting session on campus. They collaborated with other area chapters to organize anti-war demonstrations on the Boston Commons that drew upwards of 100,000 people by 1967. In 1968, Albert was elected student body president, having run on a program calling for MIT to end all weapons-related research and supportive of the Black Panthers and the National Liberation Front. Members of the chapter drew on diverse ideological influences—Chomsky's reasoned advocacy of anarchism alongside the exciting draw of the Vietnamese Communists at that moment successfully resisting the U.S. military. These influences and tensions became apparent when the chapter decided to rename itself. As Albert remembers, "We voted

---

<sup>122</sup> Barksy, *Noam Chomsky*, 127-139.

<sup>123</sup> Noam Chomsky, *American Power and the New Mandarins* (New York: New Press, 2002 [1969]).

among Ho Chi Minh SDS, Sacco and Vanzetti SDS, and Rosa Luxemburg SDS.” Sacco and Vanzetti would have been appropriate, given the students location in Boston, while Ho Chi Minh was a hero to most SDS members by 1968. However, Albert explains, “We went for Rosa for her gender and her anti-Leninism.”<sup>124</sup> The choice of Luxemburg is indicative of the political direction the group was heading—they respected the conceptual clarity of marxist economics, but were growing weary of Leninist authoritarianism. Although Albert was expelled 1969 for his involvement in demonstrations that turned violent, he was asked to express his views in the school’s yearbook. After informing graduating students that they had to make a choice between joining the international revolutionary struggle or working against it, he specified lessons on the best way to contribute:

The movement for achieving [a better world] is itself the embryo of the new society. Any defects that it might have will appear in full grown horror in the world we are to build...Revolutionary violence must be self conscious and seek its own dissolution. Revolutionary leadership must be antiauthoritarian, it must come from the initiative of the people. Revolutionary discipline must be offered and not demanded. Revolutionaries must always struggle against their own tendencies toward racism, chauvinism, and the accumulation of the power of privilege.

Albert concluded, directly addressing the graduates, “At every state in our development they will attempt to hand us the maudlin grey gowns of the aggressor.

---

<sup>124</sup> Albert, *Remembering Tomorrow*, 222.

We must be strong and direct and we must choose instead the Black and Red of revolution.”<sup>125</sup>

Despite its clear promotion of anarchist values, Rosa Luxemburg SDS is less significant for what it accomplished in the 1960s than for the contributions core members of the group made later in life (and continue making). George Katsiaficas was trained as a graduate student by Herbert Marcuse. He went on to write or edit ground-breaking books on New Left movements around the world, the Black Panther Party, European autonomous movements of the 1980s, and the global justice movement of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century. The latter two, especially, have served as important guides to recent generations of anarchists trying to establish their political bearings.<sup>126</sup> Albert and his partner Lydia Sargeant established the publishing house South End Press and, later, *Z Magazine*, which published key works by Chomsky, bell hooks, and other writers that for-profit publishers wouldn't touch. South End Press developed a system of collective ownership and “balanced job complexes” that served as a working model for the theory of Participatory Economics (or Parecon) that Albert

---

<sup>125</sup> Albert, *Remembering Tomorrow*, 110.

<sup>126</sup> George Katsiaficas, *The Imagination of the New Left*; Kathleen Cleaver and George Katsiaficas, eds., *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and their Legacy* (New York: Routledge, 2001); George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1997); Eddie Yuen, Daniel Burton-Rose, George Katsiaficas, *Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches from a Global Movement* (Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2004). On Katsiaficas' influence, see Douglas Bevington and Chris Dixon, “Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism,” *Social Movement Studies* 4, no. 3 (December 2005): 185-208.

and Robin Hahnel developed in an influential series of books. Built on the economic values section of the Port Huron Statement, Parecon has been embraced by activists around the world as an economic vision and program compatible with anarchist values and commensurate to the complexities of the contemporary world.<sup>127</sup>

A third anarchist contribution to SDS came from New York City, in the form of the Anarchos Group and their Radical Decentralist Project. Murray Bookchin organized the Anarchos Group in 1967 as a successor to the East Side Anarchists. The group created a journal (also titled *Anarchos*) primarily comprised of Bookchin's writings on anarchism, ecology, and libertarian organizational forms, which would eventually be issued as *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*.

Following the Democratic National Convention of 1968, Anarchos recognized the need for more coherence and coordination amongst the many organizations and tendencies that comprised the Movement as a whole, and determined that SDS was the most likely vehicle to achieve that aim. At the same time, members recognized with alarm the growing tendency of some SDS members to adopt the tactics, organizational forms, and posture of old-line Marxist-Leninist groups. Therefore, the group decided to participate in the June 1969 SDS convention with hopes of pulling together a libertarian caucus within the organization that would be able to lead the student

---

<sup>127</sup> See, for example, Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel, *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Boston: South End Press, 1991); Michael Albert, *Parecon: Life After Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 2003). On the influence of Parecon, see Chris Spannos, ed., *Real Utopia: Participatory Society for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Oakland: AK Press, 2008).

movement in an anarchist direction. Bookchin later admitted, “We were not students, nor official members of SDS, but by 1969 SDS was so loose organizationally that anyone could attend its conventions if he or she was a known radical.”<sup>128</sup> In advance of the convention Bookchin penned a polemic, “Listen, Marxist!” (a play on C. Wright Mills famous article in support of the Cuban Revolution, “Listen, Yankee!”) and the group printed 7,000 copies with a cover adorned with images of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Mao, and Bugs Bunny. It is unclear how many members of Anarchos attended the convention in Chicago that June. However, they distributed 2,000 copies of the pamphlet in the first days of the convention and found many delegates receptive. Anarchos invited these supporters to a meeting at the IWW General Headquarters, where they constituted themselves as the Radical Decentralist Project (RDP). The RDP adopted two resolutions, drafted primarily by Bookchin, which they circulated at the convention, asking for delegates to join them.

The second RDP proposal called for a restructuring of SDS in accordance with anarchist principles. The proposal first outlined an historically informed theory of revolutionary change that served as a rationale for the proposed changes. According to the resolution, “The most dangerous myth that tends to turn the most well-intentioned revolutionary organizations into socially regressive forces is the belief that a centralized, tightly disciplined ‘vanguard’ organization is indispensable to the

---

<sup>128</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998* (Edinburgh and San Francisco, 1999), 99.

success of a revolution.”<sup>129</sup> The RDP argued, instead, that in revolutionary situations “deep-seated historical forces” compel huge numbers of people to spontaneously take action. The proposal argued that during mass uprisings participants tend to invent novel forms of “revolutionary self-management,” and cited the Spanish Civil War, the aborted Hungarian revolution of 1956, and the Paris Commune as examples. In the past, conditions of scarcity and the meddling of purportedly revolutionary organizations had ensured that efforts at self-management had been short lived. The proposal asserted that revolutionary organizations “tend to acquire the mentality, structures, and elitist features of the very society that they profess to oppose” and that in revolutionary situations such organizations “almost invariably” attempt to impose their own “hierarchy and elite” on those practicing self-management. The RDP argued radical organizations were necessary, but that these tendencies needed to be put in check proactively. Therefore it asserted that SDS should seek to function as a “catalyst” rather than to dominate or manipulate popular movements. “Its essential role,” the proposal continued, “is to develop consciousness by means of education and action; to help develop libertarian human beings who will act resolutely and honorably in promoting forms of popular self-management...[and] to defend them against all authoritarian organizations from the ‘left’ as well as the right.”

To shift SDS in this direction, the proposal outlined a number of concrete organizational changes. First, the proposal called on SDS members to adopt more

---

<sup>129</sup> “Radical Decentralist Project, Resolution No. 2, On Organization,” Box 2, Folder 2, Sam Dolgoff Papers, Tamiment Library, New York University.

libertarian lifestyles as a means of shaking off patterns of bourgeois authoritarianism and to “reawaken imagination [and] spontaneity.” Therefore the proposal urged “all chapters to restore their contacts with the youth culture of our time, to become cultural as well as social movements.” It urged SDS members “to develop genuine, living communes in their midst,” and “to develop a wide variety of life experiences that manifest themselves creatively in such activities as guerrilla theater, artistic groups, rock groups, cinema groups, etc.” Structurally, the proposal called for chapters to reorganize themselves “on an assembly basis, based on direct democracy with no formalities.” Parliamentary procedure would be “abolished” and replaced by “a simple roster” of speakers. Local chapters would meet regularly in Regional Assemblies and National Assemblies, in which all members could participate. Regional and National assemblies would aim to “suggest policies and coordinate them through regional action committees” but would have “no authority over the local organizations.” If these aspects of the proposal were distinctly reminiscent of early SNCC, a final plank reached all the way back to the 1884 Pittsburgh Congress of U.S. anarchists organized by Johan Most. The RDP proposal called for the current SDS National Committee to be replaced by a “Committee of Correspondence and Contact” whose responsibilities were limited to organizing National Assemblies, producing the organization’s newspaper and bulletins, and facilitating contact between local chapters. In the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, International Anarchist Congresses regularly established similar correspondence committees. Committee members were

charged with keeping members of the International Workingmen's Association, and other loose anarchist federations, in communication with one another. However, they were strictly limited to administrative roles so as to avoid organizational power from accumulating in the hands of a few members. Despite (or perhaps because of) their limited responsibilities, the committees often ceased functioning soon after they were commissioned and had to be reorganized repeatedly.<sup>130</sup>

Bookchin claims that on the basis of these proposals, the decentralists built a caucus of approximately 250 people at the 1969 SDS convention and convinced a number of genuine students to run as a hastily comprised slate of candidates for national officer positions.<sup>131</sup> Despite this significant presence, the decentralists were outnumbered by the Progressive Labor Party faction, estimated at about 500 delegates, and the combined Revolutionary Youth Movement I (Weatherman) and Revolutionary Youth Movement II (new communist movement) faction that, combined, seated another 500 or so delegates, out of a total of 1,500 to 2,000 participants. As has been well documented, the convention became a chaotic contest between RYM and PLP, with RYM eventually abandoning the convention en masse, only to reconstitute themselves the next day as the true SDS convention. The Radical Decentralist Project

---

<sup>130</sup> Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 76-77; Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, trans. Paul Sharkey (San Francisco: AK Press, 2002), 32-41.

<sup>131</sup> Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism*, 101. Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 387. One member of the caucus was James Miller, who later authored a widely read book on SDS that contributed to the historical invisibility of anarchists in the New Left by mentioning his faction only in a personal introductory remark. Miller, *Democracy is in the Streets*, 17.

was unprepared for the level of organizing and political maneuvering required to prevail in this situation and so it withdrew to regroup and reconsider its strategy.

After returning to New York, the Anarchos Group, anarchists from Madison, Wisconsin, and others quickly organized an independent conference to be held in Black River, Wisconsin, in September, with hopes of creating a new student organization. Libertarian-minded activists looked to the Black River meeting to forge a viable alternative to SDS, which was rapidly disintegrating in the wake of the fractious June Convention. Bookchin estimates that 200 people participated in the meeting. Proceedings quickly bogged down, however, amidst ideological disputes and a cumbersome group process. Much later, Bookchin recalled, “we were obliged to sit in a ‘non-hierarchical’ circle, which meant that instead of a coherent discussion we had a drifting stream of consciousness.” Ironically, the RDP organizational proposal had called for the abandonment of parliamentary procedure in favor of free-flowing conversations of this sort. The assembled activists also had trouble agreeing on a statement of principles. They refused to adopt modified versions of the statements the Anarchos Group had prepared ahead of time, citing the need for a collective writing process. Finally, an ideological split developed between those grouped around Bookchin and a contingent that was inspired by French Situationism, though the exact nature of this dispute is unclear. The conference broke up without having established a libertarian-oriented radical student organization, without issuing a statement of

principles, and without a plan to continue the process.<sup>132</sup> The Black River meeting represents a logical terminus for the analysis of the organizing tendency within the broader array of anarchist contributions to the movements of the 1960s. The counter-culture provided a provocative endpoint of its own a few months later.

### **Diplomatic Recognition for the Woodstock Nation**

In May of 1970, while the U.S. Air Force carpet-bombed Cambodia and anti-war activists set fire to ROTC buildings on dozens of college campuses, Genie Plamondon, Minister of Communication for the White Panther Party, travelled to Hanoi, North Vietnam, with two leading female Yippies, Judy Gumbo and Nancy Rubin. Their mission was as inspired as it was absurd: to establish diplomatic recognition of the Woodstock Nation. The women were invited to visit Vietnam while attending the Stockholm International Anti-War Conference two months earlier. But the manner in which they framed the trip had its origins in the developing political analysis of White Panther Chairman John Sinclair.

Early in 1970, the White Panthers took their emulation of black and Puerto Rican nationalist organizations to another level. Sinclair began arguing, in interviews and writings from prison, that hippies constituted a nation unto themselves, and that they too needed to organize for national liberation and self-determination. In a long essay printed in the Party's newspaper, Sinclair declared:

---

<sup>132</sup> Very little documentation of the Black River conference exists. This account is derived from Bookchin, *Anarchism, Marxism*, 103-105.

We are not a bunch of isolated protesters, or one side of a “generation gap,” or a collection of weirdos and misfits, or anything like that. We are a people and we have been a colonized people, an oppressed people, we have been a people with no control over our own national destiny, we have never enjoyed the ownership or control of the means of production of the goods and services necessary to our survival, we have been subjected to the classical type of colonialism in which the mother-country “owners” have come down into our communities and ripped us off not only for our labor but for our national resources as well...<sup>133</sup>

Sinclair acknowledged that certain conditions distinguished the “colonial” situation of hippies from those of those in other “internal colonies,” but argued these distinctions made their liberation all the more urgent: “Our colonial status is supposed to be merely a temporary stage of our development, since we are supposed to graduate from colonialism into the mainstream of the mother country social order.” However, he told his young peers, “if we refuse to step into the roles we are expected to play in the mother country system, then that system must collapse.” In an attempt to orient the group away from the militarism it had been stumbling towards, Sinclair argued, “Right now our revolutionary culture is our most powerful tool...Our culture helps us see that we really are a people, that we are a new people, the we really do have a vision which can light up the earth and take everybody into the future.”<sup>134</sup>

Accordingly, Ken Kelley, the Minister of Information for the White Panthers, explained to a reporter for the Michigan Daily newspaper, the trip to Vietnam was “a real important thing because we’re setting up international recognition of Woodstock

---

<sup>133</sup> John Sinclair, “We Are a People!” in Sinclair, *Guitar Army*, 183.

<sup>134</sup> John Sinclair, “We Are a People!” in Sinclair, *Guitar Army*, 185-187.

Nation.” Interviewed during the envoy’s layover in Moscow, Nancy Rubin elaborated: “We have been invited by the North Vietnamese government. We are a new nation, not the nation of President Nixon. We hope to establish our own diplomatic relations and gain recognition.” When pressed, however, another White Panther spokesperson explained, the trip was “not a mission to urge communist support for the Youth International Party—it is a mission of solidarity for the goals of the Vietnamese people.”<sup>135</sup>

Though Hanoi seem to have politely declined the request, the Yippie/White Panther envoy to Vietnam illuminates a bevy of interrelated developments in radical politics central to the development of anarchist thought during the 1960s. It indicates the rapid transformation of communities of artists into political activists and organizers of international stature in the span of four years. Caught up in the excitement of the time, the WPP seems to have taken their analysis of hippies as a nation seriously. The use of the category of “nation” to describe an artistic youth counter-culture indicates the extent to which white activists were enamoured with domestic and international struggles against colonialism and white supremacy. It also indicates the profound confusion they displayed in attempting to determine their structural position vis-à-vis historically colonized people and structures of political

---

<sup>135</sup> Debbie Thal, “Envoy sent to Hanoi by Yippies,” *Michigan Daily*, May 19, 1970. See also “Ann Arborite on Mission to Hanoi,” *Ann Arbor News*, May 14, 1970, and Lindsay Chaney, “Yippie describes Hanoi trip,” *Michigan Daily*, June 12, 1970. Newspaper clippings, Subject Vertical File: Youth & Student Protest—Michigan—White Panthers, Labadie Collection.

and cultural authority. Their misanalysis lead them to prioritize playing abrasive rock music and dressing provocatively as a means of liberating not only themselves, but also other oppressed peoples throughout the world. In this sense, the White Panther's purported request for diplomatic recognition of the Woodstock Nation might be seen as a defining moment in the emergence of identity politics, as well as a key site for understanding the ways in which identity politics have overlapped with the even more maligned category of lifestyle politics.

At the same time, the WPP appears to have recognized their framing of the Yippie/White Panther trip to be more useful as a meme for communicating their ideas in the domestic media than as means of relating to the Vietnamese communists. In this sense it functioned as both a pointed joke and a deep conceptual move that highlights the place of the White Panthers (and broader counter-culture) in the history of anarchism in the United States. In asking for political recognition for a collection of young people with counter-hegemonic values, the White Panthers were implicitly decoupling the nation from the state. They requested a political entity to recognize the sovereignty of a social collectivity that was geographically dispersed and that had no authorized political representatives. This is interesting for the extent to which it coalesces with the historicization of the concept of "identity" suggested by theorist Leerom Medovoi. As Medovoi argues, "At the level of collectivity, identity may be thought of as a psychologized conception of sovereignty detached from territory and

the state.”<sup>136</sup> In this sense, the WPP used the language of “nation,” which held considerable currency at the time, to articulate the bohemian practice of disaffiliation associated most consistently with anarchism during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The Woodstock Nation, one could argue, was not constituted on a mud-slide during Janis Joplin’s set at the musical festival in 1969. Rather it began setting down roots with the establishment of the Byrdcliff and Maverick artist “colonies” in 1905. As we have seen, its citizenry began to coalesce as an imagined community when anarchists and socialists began summering in Woodstock in the 1910s and seeking shelter there during the years of the WWI-era Red Scare. The nation’s distinguishing characteristics and traditions continued to developed in the years that anarchists Holley Cantine and Dachine Rainer played host in their tiny cabin to the likes of Robert Duncan, Phillip Lamantia, and Norman Mailer. The Woodstock Nation may have only acquired a critical mass of residents during the generation-defining music festival. But that critical mass occurred, to a significant extent, because a gang of anarchists from New York City decided to cut holes in the fences surrounding the site with bolt-cutters and make the event “free.”

Though it would violently disown any associations with Woodstock or the thoroughly compromised hippie counter-culture, punk would extend the tradition of a self-alienating, artistic counter-culture as a form of anarchist politics into the 1970s and 1980s. What poetry was to anarchism in the 1940s—an expression of disgust

---

<sup>136</sup> Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), 8.

with contemporary society, a search for better values, and a means of drawing close a community of the like-minded—punk rock was to anarchism in the century’s final decades. For better and worse, the MC5 would serve as the prototype of rock band as political organization emulated perhaps most successfully by the British band/commune/ propaganda machine called Crass, and credited with drawing a new generation to anarchism in the early 1980s.<sup>137</sup>

### **Conclusion**

Beginning in the late 1950s, the beat subculture inured many young white Americans to black hip culture and European avant-garde traditions. Taken together, these influences convinced them of the desirability and possibility of cultural revolution and prompted some to embrace anarchism. As African American anger in response to the slow pace of change and white reactionary violence lead to urban “race riots,” and the rise of the black power movement, some anarchists grew to identify people of color willing to engage in property destruction and political violence as a radical vanguard worthy of emulation. This lead to an ideologically messy, heterodox politics that sought to combine anti-authoritarian cultural revolution with third world marxist-inspired armed struggle. Simultaneously, a different current of anarchism, focused on organizing those without economic or decision-making power, grew up within SDS and other New Left organizations. Looking back at the movement from the vantage point of 1991, Gregory Calvert asserted,

---

<sup>137</sup> George Berger, *The Story of Crass* (Oakland: PM Press, 2009).

The New Left was closest in Spirit and practice to the decentralist political traditions: grassroots democracy of the type associated with the American Populist movement and the libertarian socialism of the syndicalist and anarchist-communist varieties. These traditions differ from centralist political movements (whether Marxist or liberal) in that they do not aim at the conquest of state power but at the development of decentralized democratic alternatives to the centralized bureaucratic forms of the modern state. In short, they aim to replace the hierarchical, top-down power structures of the state with new democratic forms that maintain power at the grassroots.<sup>138</sup>

This was to be the vision that Murray Bookchin, Noam Chomsky, and others would pursue over the following decades.

Although pacifism predominated amongst anarchists in the United States between 1940 and 1965, that commitment was challenged and abandoned over the next five years. While the nonviolence of Gandhi and black southerners inspired the anarchist-pacifism of the early period, the rioting and turn to armed self-defense by African Americans (and, later, groups such as the Puerto Rican Young Lords and the American Indian Movement) in the northern and western United States revived the insurrectionist current in U.S. anarchism by the end of the 1960s.

As the New Left splintered in the early 1970s, anarchism was in a contradictory position. While anarchist ideas had deeply informed both the counter-culture and the organized student and anti-war movements, they were rarely named as such until 1968. It is likely that the number people in the United States sympathetic to, and interested in, anarchism grew by thousands during the course of the decade. However, by the time anarchists found one another and rallied publicly under the

---

<sup>138</sup> Calvert, *Democracy from the Heart*, 2.

black flag, repression was reaching heights comparable to that of the Red Scare of 1917-1920 and the movements of the period were beginning to retreat. The 1960s inspired young radicals to plumb history in search of libertarian traditions of radicalism; in the first years of the new decade publishing houses rushed anarchist classics back into print and scholars issued paperback compendiums and canned histories of the classical movement. It's likely, however, that anarchism had never meant more things to more people. What emerged in the early 1970s wasn't a unified anarchist movement as such, but rather an array of small groups and individuals excited by anti-authoritarianism, syndicalism, Situationism, libertarian socialism, ultra-leftism, revolutionary non-violence, anarcho-feminism, and what would soon be termed social ecology.

## CONCLUSION

At the outset I posed the question, “How did U.S. anarchism develop from a movement that was once the preserve of working class immigrants and focused on economic issues to one that today primarily appeals to young, native-born, middle-class people and emphasizes opposition to cultural alienation and ecological destruction?” By way of conclusion, I will summarize the provisional answer that I have developed in the previous six chapters. Doing so also allows me to reiterate conclusions regarding the changing nature of the anarchist critique of the state and social domination, and to emphasize the diversity of strategies anarchists have employed to achieve their social visions.

Anarchism has always been both a cultural movement and a political movement. From the 1880s to the 1910s, anarchism was most influential amongst working-class immigrants from Germany, Russia, Italy, and other parts of southern and eastern Europe, though it also attracted a small number of white workers born in the United States. Throughout these years anarchists organized a lively subculture, consisting of singing societies, theatre troupes, “education and self-defense” clubs, picnics, and more, coordinated through a network of periodicals and meeting halls that doubled as pubs. The anarchist social world often comprised a sub-culture within communities of immigrants already marginalized by their inability to speak English and by nativist discrimination. In the 1910s, anarchist political strategy was loosely

divided between a syndicalist approach and an insurrectionary approach. Syndicalists believed in organizing workers by the millions into revolutionary unions that would fight for reforms in the present while building the strength needed to overthrow capitalism with a general strike. Syndicalists intended to organize their unions on egalitarian lines, so that their basic structures could immediately replace the oppressive institutions of the state and capitalist business after the general strike. Insurrectionists opposed fighting for reforms as well as unions or mass political organizations of any kind, arguing that they would prolong the current social order. They operated in small, informal groups, that encouraged workers to violently attack oppressive institutions independent of an larger set of movement institutions. Insurrectionists deeply believed that a harmonious social order would arise naturally after oppressive institutions had been violently cleared away. The majority of syndicalists and insurrectionists were working-class and spoke to working people, though only syndicalists sought to build permanent working-class institutions.

Many U.S. anarchists, including Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman, took a position between these two poles in the years before World War I. Berkman, Goldman, and their associates, built ties between the immigrant anarchist movement and the predominantly middle-class and native-born bohemian left of the pre-war period by addressing feminist, artistic, literary, and educational issues in their writings and the institutions, such as the Ferrer Center, which they helped to found. Their ability to speak English greatly was an essential precondition of such interactions. In

earlier years anarchism had served as the basis of a radical folk culture that was given little attention as “art.” The support anarchists lent to avant-garde art and the friendships they built with artists in Greenwich Village and elsewhere in the 1910s (earlier in Europe) established anarchism as a key reference point for “high art” in later years. This development led to the establishment of a middle-class or *déclassé* anarchist base that saw cultural innovation (both in terms of cultural objects and ways of life) as a strategy of social transformation alongside the traditional working-class base strategically wed to workplace organizing and political violence. In the 1910s the U.S. anarchist movement reached a peak of influence and was extremely intellectually fertile.

World War I provided the opportunity for a coalition of conservative forces to attack the anarchist movement, the labor movement, feminist organizations, the nascent pacifist movement, and the rest of the left. The federal government passed laws making it a crime to oppose the war and used laws that limited immigrants political associations to minimize the work of upholding these laws. Between 1917 and 1920 it became difficult for radicals to differentiate between law enforcement agencies and vigilante groups, as both raided offices, destroyed property, and beat suspected radicals with legal impunity. The main institutional vehicles of anarcho-syndicalism in the United States, the Union of Russian Workers and the Industrial Workers of the World, were banned and nearly destroyed during these years. Insurrectionists responded to efforts to jail and deport immigrant radicals with political

violence. Despite their confident rhetoric, they turned out to be fairly incompetent bomb-makers, though they were responsible for the deaths of two to three dozen people in these years.

More than an attack on radical political organizations, the Red Scare should be seen as an attack on the power of the organized working-class, which had been challenging ruling class prerogatives with increasing effectiveness and ideological clarity in the years before the war. This attack was carried out through a recourse to racist and patriarchal fear-mongering. The violations of civil liberties and the extreme violence enacted against radicals during the Red Scare were at largely justified by journalists' and politicians' portrayal of radicals as immigrants from eastern and southern Europe whose sexual immorality and proclivity towards political violence marked them as racially distinct, and inferior, from white Americans. The war disrupted the stream of European immigrants that had filled low-paid factory positions for the previous three decades, necessitating their replacement with African Americans who were encouraged to migrate North in the tens of thousands. Newly proletarianized black laborers were immediately shown their place in the racially segmented working-class by white rioters who attacked them at work and set fire to their neighborhoods they had moved into. Instead of protecting them, U.S. Congressmen and other officials accused African Americans of consorting with political radicals and blamed them for the violence. Anti-radical racism cut both ways. With a racially-policed black working-class now at their disposal, employers

supported the Johnson-Reed immigration laws of 1924, which nativist organizations promoted as a means of combating radicalism. The government's outlawing of revolutionary unions and its jailing and deportation of leading propagandists was immediately and profoundly damaging to the U.S. anarchist movement. However, the changes to immigration policy and the subsequent reshuffling of the U.S. working-class also presented enormous difficulties over the long term. Immigrants had served as the movement's primary pool of recruits. The new policies not only dried up the pool of recruits but began the process of assimilating existing European immigrant communities away from old world radical cultures and into the privileges of "whiteness," over and against the new black working class.

In the 1920s and 1930s, U.S. anarchists left unscathed by the Red Scare experimented with a new strategy while attempting to defend their movement, domestically and internationally, from political attacks by fascists and communists. Many concluded that the premises of the insurrectionist strategy were false: the Red Scare had shown that acts of violence against authority figures would not inspire mass uprisings, but would rain unbearable repression down on the movement. Instead, they tried less confrontational, gradualist methods of transformation, such as establishing co-operative communities with elementary schools that inculcated the values of cooperation and self-direction, and launching a cooperatively owned farm meant to free members from wage labor and to provide a model of non-capitalist economics. Both ventures marked the expanding anarchist interest in prefigurative projects.

Syndicalists had urged participants to organize their unions to model the institutional structures and social relations they wanted to establish in the world at large.

Anarchists who built “colonies” around libertarian school and co-operative farming also tried to establish new institutions and social relations, but they did so amongst themselves rather than in institutions, such as labor unions, that intended to eventually incorporate the working-class as a whole. The farming co-op, undercapitalized and its residents underprepared, modeled the difficulty of cooperation rather than its rewards. The residential colonies focused around libertarian schools brought adults out of the cities and helped them establish themselves as property-owners. The schools prepared children of anarchists to enter college and professional careers but did not prepare many of them to reproduce the movement in their own generation.

Jewish anarchists retained a significant presence in garment unions, and they urged other anarchists to help them reestablish an anarchist presence in the broader labor movement. Some anarchists, especially those of Italian descent, retained their insurrectionist opposition to unions. Many syndicalists were too purist to involve themselves in unions that were not avowedly revolutionary. With the IWW still banned in many states and operating as a shadow of its former self, these anarchists chose not to organize workers at all rather than try to set the direction of AFL and CIO unions or to establish new revolutionary unions of their own. Confronted with attempts by the Communist Party to takeover the garment unions, Jewish anarchists made common cause with social democrats and, isolated from other anarchists,

abandoned revolutionary unionism in practice, if not in theory. Therefore, anarchists developed no systematic program for organizing or influencing the social group that had comprised their primary base before the war. Moreover, they abandoned the U.S. working class at a moment when it was witnessing significant demographic and ideological shifts. Anarchists elaborated a prescient critique of the incorporation of unions into the New Deal/Keynesian social order, but they either refused or were incapable of charting a different course for the labor movement.

One under-acknowledged hindrance to anarchists organizing workers in the United States was their commitment to their fellow anarchists—and working class movements—in other countries. Anarchists and other dissident radicals were violently repressed in the Soviet Union, Italy, Germany, and Spain during the inter-war years. Because anarchism remained a thoroughly transnational movement, U.S. anarchists recognized the need to protect and send aid to their beleaguered comrades, as well as to assist the organized opposition to authoritarian communism and fascism. It is easy to criticize immigrant anarchists for stubbornly continuing to publish their newspapers in Italian, Yiddish, and Russian at a time when the U.S. movement's only possibility of growth was amongst English speakers. However, it is important to remember that these newspapers (especially the Italian ones) served not only U.S. immigrant communities, but also the movements in the publishers' countries of origin where anarchist publishing had become impossible. Anarchists devoted their energies to relief efforts out of loyalty to those in their movement who could not count on aid

from anyone else. However, they may also have evaluated the prospects of the U.S. labor movement in comparison to that of other countries and chosen where to dedicate their meager resources strategically. In particular, the Spanish CNT proved vastly more attractive to U.S. anarchists than the American Federation of Labor, so it is not surprising that they put more much effort into supporting it during the Civil War than in organizing workers at home. Only after the Spanish anarchists defeat could U.S. anarchists see this was a gamble (and perhaps a moral necessity) that did not pay off.

Finally, the anarchists' estrangement from the working-class also resulted from their lack of resources. Although anarchists' own ambivalences regarding unions and reform struggles seriously undermined their ability to ideologically lead the labor movement and left during the 1920s and 1930s, even the shrewdest of organizers would have found it difficult to compete with a Communist Party funded by a foreign state and directed by a battalion of full-time strategists. For all these reasons, the U.S. anarchist movement retained virtually no following amongst working-people by the end of the 1930s, and many anarchists, though industrial or clerical workers themselves, felt a sense of disdain for American workers who appeared alternately fully complacent or duped by Communists. Anarchist theory retained its traditional focus on economic exploitation and class struggle, but anarchists found it hard to retain their faith in workers as an agent of change.

Table 1: Prominent Anarchists' Dates of Birth and Death

<u>Name</u>	<u>Born</u>	<u>Deceased</u>
Luigi Galleani	August 12, 1861	November 4, 1931
Emma Goldman	June 27, 1869	May 14, 1940
Alexander Berkman	November 21, 1870	June 28, 1936
Harry Kelly	1871	1953
Hippolyte Havel	1871	1950
Rudolf Rocker	March 25, 1873	September 19, 1953
W.S. Van Valkenburgh	October 25, 1884	May 22, 1938
G.P. Maximoff	1893	1950
Marcus Graham	1893	1985
Ammon Hennacy	July 24, 1893	January 14, 1970
Rose Pesotta	November 20, 1896	December 6, 1965
Dorothy Day	November 8, 1897	November 29, 1980
Mollie Steimer	November 21, 1897	July 23, 1980
Sam Dolgoff	October 10, 1902	October 24, 1990
Kenneth Rexroth	December 22, 1905	June 6, 1982
Abe Bluestein	November 1, 1909	December 3, 1997
Paul Goodman	September 9, 1911	August 2, 1972
Ralph DiGia	1914	February 1, 2008
David Dellinger	August 22, 1915	May 25, 2004
Holley Cantine	February 14, 1916	January 2, 1977
David Koven	1918	--
Audrey Goodfriend	1920	--
Murray Bookchin	January, 1921	July 30, 2006
Dachine Rainer	January 13, 1921	August 19, 2000
David Thoreau Wieck	1921	1997
Diva Agostinelli	1921	2007 (?)
Colin Ward	August 14, 1924	2010
Judith Malina	June 4, 1926	--
Fredy Perlman	August 20, 1934	July 25, 1985
Ben Morea	1941	--
Peter Werbe	1942 (?)	--
Penelope Rosemont	1942	--
Franklin Rosemont	October 2, 1943	April 12, 2009

In the early 1940s, the anarchist movement was carried forward by young people who had grown up in radical working-class families, but became the first in their families to attend college. Their college education familiarized them with recent ideas from disciplines of anthropology, psychology, and philosophy, which they used to revise and revitalize anarchist social theory. Anarchist draft resisters met Gandhian and religiously motivated pacifists from middle- and upper-class backgrounds in prison and civilian public service camps. Upon release, they collaborated as “non-violent revolutionaries” who hoped to spark a radical mass movement organized around opposition to violence rather than opposition to capitalism. Though they remained opposed to capitalism (perhaps the starkest form of social violence), the working-class, as a class, was no longer seen as the primary agent of change. Strategically, the non-violent revolutionaries proposed what amounted to a non-violent insurrectionism: they hoped individual acts of self-sacrifice would spark massive acts of civil disobedience. War resisters from various class backgrounds also gravitated towards the San Francisco community of *déclassé* artists and writers who combined anarchism with Surrealism, mysticism, and other influences.

Throughout the 1940s and 1950s, anarchist theorists confronted three major questions. First, what did it mean that, in Russia, overthrowing capitalism didn’t lead quickly to egalitarian social relations? Second, with reference to Russia and Spain, how could one make revolutionary change without reintroducing oppressive aspects of the old social order? Finally, what should anarchists do when it appeared revolution

would not occur in the foreseeable future? Anthropology, psychology, and the study of sexuality provided some insight. State-enforced wage labor was not the only obstacle preventing human well-being. Rather, many forms of domination—racial, sexual, psychological—were also at play. All needed to be challenged; they needed to be challenged in non-authoritarian and non-violent ways; and very few people seemed interested in challenging them. Together, this led to a further expansion of prefigurative strategies. Anarchists would live their own lives in strict accordance with their values and try to weed out the manifestations of domination that effected their own thinking and behavior. On the east coast, anarchists created prefigurative communities of pacifists who engaged in non-violent direct action. On the west coast, anarchists created a loose community that was sexually open, anti-consumerist, and devoted to creating powerful art and literature meant to inspire a transmutation of values in the broader society. This, however, represented a further diminution of the concept of prefiguration from one meant to educate and transform an entire class, to one that existed at the level of the household.

In the civil rights movement of the 1950s and early 1960s, the anarchist-pacifists' suspicions that sacrificial non-violent action and prefigurative organizational forms could provoke fundamental social change were confirmed. However, in that movement, they took forms more similar to syndicalism than to insurrectionism. SNCC began by taking direct action, but quickly shifted into organizing a delineated base of people. They used organizational forms (“group-centered leadership”,

empowerment of ordinary people) that enacted in microcosm the world they hoped to create. And they lead reform struggles while promoting a vision of more thoroughgoing social transformation. Instead of organizing solely around class-identity, SNCC organized poor black people around both their race and class identities. Civil rights victories reinforced the growing critique of class-centric thinking. They also added weight to the thesis that fighting for anarchism didn't require a cataclysmic break with the old system, but could entail a process of deepening democracy and extending egalitarian social relationships until they were the dominant feature of social life. While anarchist ideas shaped and were shaped by the black freedom movement, the struggle in the south did not serve to recruit many young activists, black or white, to anarchism at the time. However, anarchist impulses that were submerged when nationalism and Marxism became dominant in the black movement, were preserved by black feminists in the 1970s and 1980s and have resurfaced in contemporary organizations such as Critical Resistance and Incite! Women of Color Against Violence.

The tiny community of anarchist writers of the 1940s grew into a much larger social force in the 1950s, but in doing so lost its prefigurative component all together. The Beat Generation, comprised primarily of middle-class young people, created art and lived in a fashion oppositional to the dominant society, but intentionally alienated itself from both the middle- and working-class. In the early 1960s, the overwhelmingly middle-class Students for a Democratic Society attempted to expand

SNCC's vision of mobilizing the disempowered through non-violent confrontation and prefigurative organizational forms in pursuit of a deepened democracy. Its ERAP programs represented a return to organizing poor and working people, but now in their communities rather than in workplaces. As the decade progressed, however, black ghetto rebellions and organizations seeking national liberation for African Americans, Puerto Ricans, American Indians, and others, convinced some anarchists that revolution through insurrectionary (or "foco-ist") means might be possible. Combined, these tendencies served to turn the beat sub-culture into a proactive counter-culture. The most sophisticated counter-culturalists, some self-identified as anarchists, primarily encouraged middle-class youth to practice confrontational lifestyle changes and establish counter-institutions, but also embraced armed struggle for a brief period.

When the New Left imploded under the pressure of severe state repression and internal clashes over revolutionary vision and strategy, the anarchists left in the ashes were overwhelmingly middle-class students, former-students, and counter-culturalists. Some turned to workplace organizing, others to feminism, environmentalism, and anti-nuclear work. Over the next two decades, they crystallized the rethinking of anarchism begun in the 1940s into a new paradigm that recognizes intersecting and co-constitutive social hierarchies and institutionalized forms of social domination as the object of anarchist critique and the target of anarchist political action. Between 1940 and 1970, prefiguration emerged as a strategy in its own right. The many varieties of

anarchist activism since that time can broadly be seen as employing the organizing (syndicalist), insurrectionary, and prefigurative poles of anarchist strategy in different combinations, with varying emphases and varying degrees of success. Anarchism remains an internally variegated, trans-national, cultural and political movement that deploys a variety of strategies—predominantly, but not wholly non-violent—in opposition to social domination and in pursuit of human dignity.

## APPENDIX

### **U.S. Anarchism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Historical Summary**

To understand the state of the anarchist movement in the era of the First World War, as well as the changes it was to soon undergo, it is helpful to briefly review the development of U.S. anarchism prior to that time period. This historical note sketches the emergence of *individualist anarchism* in the U.S. beginning in the 1840s and then explains the growth of *social anarchism*, primarily amongst the immigrant working-class, in the years after 1877.

#### **Individualist Anarchism**

The United States was home to a tradition of anti-statist radicalism for at least forty years before European immigrants introduced the thinking of Michael Bakunin and his followers into the country's nascent socialist movement. This tradition is sometimes referred to as *native American anarchism*, but this is a misnomer for the philosophy did not emerge from the indigenous peoples of the North American continent but rather developed in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century New England amongst the offspring of early settlers from Northern and Western Europe, and sometimes evinced colonialist assumptions common to that community. Still the *individualist anarchist* tradition, as it has also been called, injected important intellectual concepts, political

concerns, and modes of struggle into the stream of social anarchism in the United States before petering out around 1910.

Colonial authorities of the 17<sup>th</sup> century repressed antinomian Christians and Quakers who declared that God was within individual human beings and therefore individuals were sovereign.<sup>1</sup> This perspective was first developed into a mass social movement by William Lloyd Garrison and other radical abolitionists beginning in the 1840s. Garrison kept company with Henry David Thoreau who also denied that the authority of the state could override the individual conscience. Thoreau enunciated his famous theory of civil disobedience while resisting the Mexican-American war of 1846-1848, one of the largest colonial conquests in the nation's history. The writings and speeches of Thoreau, Garrison, and other transcendentalists, such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, deeply influenced the Russian count and novelist Leo Tolstoy in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They provided an important foundation for the development of the tradition of anarchist-pacifism which, as we see in Chapter 4, marked an important return to the United States in the 1940s.

Parallel to the transcendentalists, a uniquely U.S. American tradition of individualist anarchism developed out of the utopian socialist impulse. This tradition

---

<sup>1</sup> On antinomianism as an important radical tradition in medieval Europe see Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004), 21-61. In 17<sup>th</sup> century England, Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon, 2000), 71-103. In colonial New England, Eunice Minette Schuster, *Native American Anarchism: A Study of Left-Wing American Individualism* (Port Townsend, WA: Breakout Productions, 1999 [1932]), 13-39.

has been traced to the writings and social experiments of Josiah Warren, a resident of Robert Owen's New Harmony community from 1825 to 1827. Warren supported Owen's strategy of promoting social change by creating voluntary communities operating on egalitarian principles meant to inspire widespread imitation through their own success—a strategy later referred to as “propaganda by example.” However, Warren found Owen's personal control over the life of the community and the social ownership of goods practiced at New Harmony untenable. From this experience he developed an alternate vision centered on the promotion of individual sovereignty and the economic principle “Cost the Limit of Price,” which he put into practice in a “Time Store” and a series of utopian communities. “Cost the Limit of Price” was a crude version of the labor theory of value that argued a product should be sold only for the cost of the labor time and materials that went into it. At his Time Store, Warren offered purveyors of products and services script good for an equal amount of the labor time of any other customer that would accept it. Warren's system, and the thinking that lay behind it, are difficult to categorize within contemporary economic models. He believed strongly in the individual's right to privately own the products of his or her labor. However, Warren absolutely opposed both interest and profits earned by pricing goods according to the market logic of supply and demand. In this sense, Warren's economic vision shared much in common with that of Michael Bakunin, who also argued that goods should be distributed based on the hours of work each

laborer engaged in. However, Warren saw no need for mass collective action to take over the economy, as Marx and Bakunin would later call for.

In this respect, as William O. Reichert has argued, “Warren’s individualism was peculiar to America, for only in a land in which potential wealth lay everywhere underfoot could such a social philosophy make sense.”<sup>2</sup> Warren’s economic vision derived from the context of an expansionary United States, where the ideal was not social ownership of land or productive facilities long monopolized by an elite, but individual ownership of a piece of productive land, imagined as unclaimed and in virtually endless supply. It both ignored the rights of indigenous people to the wealth underfoot and ignored the complications of social production of goods, since it was centered on the ideal of the individual producer. In the political sphere, Warren asserted that “The man of virtuous soul commands not nor obeys.”<sup>3</sup> He denounced the political state abstractly as an institution of compulsion that violates the sovereignty of the individual, as well as in concrete terms for its role in protecting the beneficiaries of the capitalist economic system based on profit and interest. Like other enlightenment social reformers, he reasoned that individuals not subject to political authority, but following the principles of natural law, would create a society that was both free and equal.

---

<sup>2</sup> William O. Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom: A Study in American Anarchism* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1976), 71.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom*, 68.

Warren's ideas were developed and promulgated over the next thirty years in a series of books, pamphlets, and newspapers produced by educated reformers from professional or upper class families such as Lysander Spooner, Stephen Pearl Andrews, and Ezra Heywood.<sup>4</sup> From the 1870s until 1908, individualist anarchism's most prolific, exacting, and respected proponent was Benjamin Tucker. Tucker, born of a wealthy Massachusetts Quaker family, encountered Warren and his leading disciples at a meeting of the New England Labor Reform League while a student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1872. In 1881 he launched the journal *Liberty* which he published for the next twenty-seven years. Tucker saw considerable overlap between the ideas of Josiah Warren and those of Pierre Joseph Proudhon, whose writings he translated and published in English. Though contributors to *Liberty* debated a wide array of issues, including the rights of women and children, religion, and intellectual property, Tucker saw the economic exploitation of laborers as the primary social evil—one which underpinned other violations of liberty.

Tucker adorned the masthead of his newspaper with Proudhon's famous aphorism, "Liberty the mother, not the daughter, of order." The editor took this concept as his faith and derived his politics from it. To his mind, the injustice of the capitalist economy was the primary cause of social conflict. Inequality of wealth did not stem from competition itself, he insisted, but only from unfair competition. "The

---

<sup>4</sup> See Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom*; James Martin, *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908* (New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1957).

contention of Individualist Socialism,” he explained, “ is that competition when left free, is possible throughout nearly the whole of industry and commerce, and that, whenever thus possible, it abolishes usury and secures labor in the ownership of its entire product.”<sup>5</sup> At present, however, Tucker saw free competition everywhere stifled by monopoly. Though individualist anarchists decried the corporate monopolies, such as the railroad trust, coming to fruition in the 1880s, they objected to a deeper set of monopolies which they saw skewing the entirety of the economic system. Tucker famously separated these into four categories: the control of money, which fixed unfair interest rates; the monopoly of land ownership by speculators rather than those who wanted to live on it or produce with it; tariffs in international trade; and patent monopolies.<sup>6</sup> Each of these forms of monopoly prevented working people from maintaining the full value of their labor, and each was maintained by the state and its further monopoly on violence. Without such monopolies in place, he believed, wealth would naturally distribute itself equitably.

Since the state was in essence a means of organizing violence and monopoly, Tucker asserted that it should be the primary target of anarchists. In the early years of *Liberty*, Tucker, like Warren, asserted that man-made laws were unnecessary and unjust since they went beyond the principle that humans are entitled to “the greatest

---

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Reichert, *Partisans of Freedom*, 158.

<sup>6</sup> Charles H. Hamilton, “Introduction: The Evolution of Subversive Tradition” in Michael E. Coughlin, Charles H. Hamilton, and Mark A. Sullivan, eds., *Benjamin R. Tucker & the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology* (St. Paul, MN and New York: self published, no date), 7.

amount of liberty compatible with equality of liberty; or, in other words, the belief in every liberty except the liberty to invade.”<sup>7</sup> In this sense he based his anti-statism on his belief in the sufficiency of natural law to create an orderly and just society—a belief shared by the classical social anarchists as well.<sup>8</sup> However, beginning in 1886, contributors to *Liberty* began to challenge the legitimacy of natural law philosophy and to promote philosophical egoism in its place. Egoism, derived from the thought of the German Max Stirner, claimed that the morality derived from the idea of natural rights was as oppressive and mythological as that derived from the belief in God. In its place, egoists asserted the right of each individual to act strictly according to self-interest—to maximize his or her own pleasure and gain—no matter what the consequences for others. By 1887 this became the dominant position expressed in *Liberty*, with Tucker serving as one of its staunchest proponents.<sup>9</sup>

The tradition of U.S. American individualist anarchism is today often derided or ignored by proponents of social anarchism. This owes in large measure to the fact that in the 1960s the writings of Warren, Tucker, and their collaborators were taken up by thinkers, such as Murray Rothbard, who created the modern libertarian movement

---

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Riechert, *Partisans of Freedom*, 152.

<sup>8</sup> See George Crowder, *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Todd May, *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Wendy McElroy, “The Non-Economic Debates in *Liberty*” in *Benjamin R. Tucker & the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology*, ed. Michael E. Coughlin, Charles H. Hamilton, and Mark A. Sullivan (St. Paul, MN and New York: self published, no date), 131-135; Wendy McElroy, *The Debates of Liberty: An Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881-1908* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003), 51-68.

based on the principles of anti-statism and free market capitalism. While the stunning advances of “right libertarianism” and its ideological offspring, neoliberalism, show serious anti-social outcomes lurking in the application of individualist anarchist thought, complete dismissal of the tradition is problematic for at least two reasons. First, a highly significant point of economic theory separates the 19<sup>th</sup> century individualists from 20<sup>th</sup> century right libertarians. Contemporary libertarians reject the labor theory of value (“Cost the Limit of Price”) that formed the basis of the individualists’ critique of profit and usury. In its place they assert the “subjective theory of value” developed by Austrian School economists including Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek. Since the subjective theory of value states that value can only be determined by the individuals willing to purchase a good, rather than by the labor expended in creating the good, this departure fundamentally undercuts the individualists’ critique of capitalist exploitation. In this sense, it is a significantly different social theory that promotes different values and outcomes than the individualist anarchists did.

Secondly, while some of their ideas clashed in irresolvable ways, the historical movements of individualist and social anarchism were never completely distinct in the United States after 1880. Most significantly, the concerns and activities of individualist anarchists regarding avant-garde culture and the rights of women and homosexuals had a profound impact on the social anarchist movement from the 1890s forward. In the final three decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, individualist anarchist

newspapers, such as Ezra Heywood's *The Word* and Moses Harmon's *Lucifer, the Light Bearer*, served as the foremost proponents of anarchist-feminist ideas. Female and male contributors attacked the institution of marriage, describing it as a legalized form of prostitution. They called for the economic independence of women, the redefinition of sex roles, the right to birth control, and the right to abortion. As Terrence Kissack has shown, anarchists—including many from the individualist camp—were the first defenders of homosexuality in the United States.<sup>10</sup>

The individualists' promotion of "free love" dovetailed with their defense of freedom of speech and the press. As the most outspoken promoters of open and positive attitudes towards sex, they were frequently charged with violating obscenity laws. Fighting these charges in court and in public opinion became one of the most concrete forms of struggle undertaken by the individualists. Ezra Heywood was arrested on five separate occasions for mailing birth control information, a letter from a physician discussing oral sex, and two erotic poems composed by Walt Whitman, amongst other materials. Tucker publicly denounced the British government for jailing Oscar Wilde on account of his sexual activities with another man, and printed and distributed Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* when other publishers refused for fear of an obscenity suit.

Benjamin Tucker was also a consistent supporter of modern literature and the avant-garde of the art world. As Charles Hamilton has noted, Tucker "added cultural

---

<sup>10</sup> Terrence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland: AK Press, 2008).

sophistication to the political interests of anarchism.”<sup>11</sup> He printed translations of novelists and playwrights such as Emile Zola and Henrik Ibsen, as well as philosophers such as Stirner and Friedrich Nietzsche. The many facets of individualist thought were brought together in a bookstore and mail-order service that Tucker established in New York’s Greenwich Village in 1908. He promoted the mail-order as *Benj. R. Tucker’s Unique Catalogue of Advanced Literature: The Literature that makes for Egoism in Philosophy, Anarchism in Politics, and Iconoclasm in Art*. While it remained open the store was frequented by key figures of bohemian New York, including Emma Goldman and Eugene O’Neill. However, in 1908 the store and warehouse caught fire, ruining Tucker’s entire stock, including the many titles he had published himself. Tucker decided to retire to France and to end his active involvement in the movement. The individualist anarchist current in the United States dried up quickly in his absence, though European anarchists such as Emile Armand, continued to promote it.

### **Social Anarchism**

Social Anarchism first became a political force in the United States when it was introduced by a large influx of radical working-class Germans fleeing from the repressive “Antisocialist Law” instituted by Otto von Bismark in 1878. Germans predominated in the Socialist Labor Party (SLP), which served as the primary radical workers organization in the United States after its founding in 1877. The SLP soon

---

<sup>11</sup> Hamilton, “Introduction,” *Benjamin R. Tucker*, 12.

became divided in a debate over strategy between those that believed the party should prioritize organizing trade-unions and those who demanded it focus on electoral politics. The supporters of the electoral strategy, who dominated the party's National Executive Committee, also rejected the move by members of the trade union faction to organize a network of "Lehr-und-Wehr Verein"—workers militias organized to defend strikers and their allies after a series of mass strikes in 1877 were violently put down by police and state militias.<sup>12</sup> In 1880 radical members of the SLP broke away from the party, declaring themselves "social revolutionaries" as opposed to social democrats. Though the radicals all rejected participation in electoral politics and emphasized the eventual need for armed struggle, those hailing from Chicago tended to favor a strategy of building militant trade unions, while those in New York City criticized the hierarchy of trade unions and believed they could incite workers to insurrection by themselves committing acts of violence against bankers, bosses, and representatives of the state.

The New York City social revolutionaries, numbering approximately 200, were represented at the London Congress of July 1881 in which prominent anarchists, including Peter Kropotkin and Errico Malatesta, reconstituted the International Working People's Association (IWPA) and endorsed the strategy of propaganda of the

---

<sup>12</sup> James Green, *Death in the Haymarket: A Story of Chicago, the First Labor Movement, and the Bombing that Divided Gilded Age America* (New York: Pantheon, 2006), 90-91; Bruce Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs: A Social History of Chicago's Anarchists, 1870-1900* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988), 33-34; Tom Goyens, *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 60-63.

deed.<sup>13</sup> In October of the same year, former SLP members from Chicago organized a congress of social revolutionaries in which New Yorkers took part. The Chicago Congress, dominated by local participants, called for the formation of a Revolutionary Socialist Party that would eschew electoral politics and would build militant trade unions and defensive militias. However, the New York delegates returned from the congress unconvinced of the desirability of trade union organization, and continued to build clubs to promote insurrection, taking as their guide the newspaper *Freiheit* published in London by the exiled German social revolutionary Johann Most.<sup>14</sup>

The Social Revolutionary Clubs arranged a speaking tour of the United States for Most and convinced him to permanently relocate to New York City. When, upon arrival in December 1882, Most declared himself an anarchist, his East Coast supporters adopted the term also.<sup>15</sup> Most's lecture tour drew crowds of thousands of workers and garnered significant attention in the mainstream press, resulting in the

---

<sup>13</sup> Goyens, *Beer and Revolution*, 75-80, Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 92-93. The London Congress sought to reestablish the "Anti-Authoritarian International," which had been established by Bakunin's and his followers in St. Imier, France in 1872. The Anti-Authoritarian International was founded to continue the work of the International Workingmen's Association (the First International) which dissolved shortly after Marx's faction moved its headquarters to New York, after it appeared likely that the Bakuninist faction was likely to become the leading influence of the organization. See Alexandre Skirda, *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*, trans. Paul Sharkey (Oakland: AK Press, 2002); 23-41; Mark Leier, *Bakunin: A Biography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 269.

<sup>14</sup> Goyens notes that New York's function as the port of entry for most radicals fleeing Europe was an important factor in this emphasis. Newly arrived German, Russian, and Irish radicals tended to emphasize the assassinations and other attacks carried out by radicals against the authoritarian and colonial regimes in the countries they were fleeing.

<sup>15</sup> Goyens, *Beer and Revolution*, 96-97.

growth of anarchist clubs in cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest. Most and August Spies of Chicago organized a congress of anarchists and social revolutionaries held in Pittsburgh in October 1883. Those in attendance agreed to formally reconstitute the Revolutionary Socialist Party as a decentralized national federation affiliated with the IWPA. They issued a manifesto that called for a social revolution to institute anarchist-collectivism, using language vague enough to accommodate both the trade union and insurrectionary strategies. The assembled delegates agreed to constitute themselves in small local groups or “clubs” (of 9 to 100 or more members), which would coordinate their activities on the city level through a central coordinating committee that held no executive power. The Pittsburgh Congress had a salutatory effect on the movement, with the number of groups in the United States expanding from 30 to 80, and estimated overall membership reaching approximately 3,000 by the spring of 1885.<sup>16</sup>

Even before leaving the Socialist Labor Party, the social revolutionaries of Chicago had played active roles in organizing unions in a variety of trades. In June of 1884, their resolve strengthened by the Pittsburgh Congress, radical cigar rollers broke with their union’s tepid leadership to form a separate “progressive” local. They were summarily expelled from the city-wide union federation. Refusing to back down, the cigar makers encouraged radicals in other industries to break away and soon they constituted an alternative municipal federation of radical unions, the Central Labor

---

<sup>16</sup> Goyens, *Beer and Revolution*, 104-109

Union, led by members of the IWPA.<sup>17</sup> This strategy paid off. At the end of 1885, the IWPA had organized approximately 1,000 members into 15 neighborhood and language-based groups. These core members set the political direction of the 20,000 member strong Central Labor Union. Simultaneously, leading IWPA agitators, including August Spies and Lucy and Albert Parsons, served as editors of five local newspapers that extolled the anarchist cause in German, English, Czech, and Danish with a combined circulation approaching 30,000.<sup>18</sup> Between 1884 and 1886 the IWPA regularly mobilized tens of thousands of working people to participate in street demonstrations, picnics and pageant-like commemorations of historic revolutionary events. This strategy of building militant trade unions as a means of building workers' will and capabilities to enact revolutionary change came to be known as the "Chicago Idea."

Although the Chicago social revolutionaries began to self-identify as anarchists in 1884, the Chicago Idea represented an ideological hybrid of Marxism and anarchism. From Marx, its proponents drew their critique of capitalism and their belief that it would be abolished by a well organized mass movement of class-conscious workers. Inspired by the anarchists, they devised a strategy that rejected winning or seizing state power. Instead they developed a prefigurative perspective that promoted their union federations as the "embryonic groups of the future 'free

---

<sup>17</sup> Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 109-110.

<sup>18</sup> Chicago was also home to at least two additional anarchist newspapers in the mid 1880s that were not officially affiliated with the IWPA. Nelson, *Beyond the Martyrs*, 115-126.

society.”<sup>19</sup> The Chicago Idea closely paralleled a strategy that some members of the Bakuninist wing of the First International had embarked upon during the 1870s in Italy and France, and it foreshadowed the practice of revolutionary industrial unionism and anarcho-syndicalism that would emerge at the turn of the century.<sup>20</sup>

Following the Pittsburgh Congress of 1883, the anarchists of New York and surrounding areas built a movement that centered on weekly club meetings, lectures to immigrant working class audiences, the distribution of newspapers and pamphlets in the U.S. and abroad, and a full calendar of social events, including performances from anarchist theatre troupes and singing societies. There, Johann Most and his collaborators built a “cult of dynamite” that represented the recently invented explosive as a leveling force in the class war and which extolled the wave of assassinations against political figures sweeping Europe during the 1880s.<sup>21</sup> By 1886, the rhetoric of total commitment, heroic masculinity, and immediate change that fueled the cult of dynamite was becoming increasingly persuasive to anarchists throughout the country, including the editors of the IWPA newspapers in Chicago. As Tom Goyens has documented, East Coast German anarchists called constantly for a violent uprising of the masses during the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but succeeded primarily in establishing a vibrant but insular subculture amongst a

---

<sup>19</sup> Albert Parsons quoted in Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 73.

<sup>20</sup> Saku Pinta, “Anarchism, Marxism, and the Ideological Composition of the Chicago Idea,” *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12 (Sept. 2009), 421-450.

<sup>21</sup> The term “cult of dynamite” is Paul Avrich’s. See Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 160-177.

minority of working class immigrants. Although Chicago and New York claimed the largest numbers of members and represented strategic poles within the organization, IPWA groups were active in industrial cities throughout the Northeast and Midwest, including Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, and St. Louis.

The movement's growth was put in check in each of these locations following the infamous Haymarket Affair. On May 4<sup>th</sup> 1886 a battalion of police moved to disperse a rally organized by the Chicago branch of the IWPA in support of an eight-hour work day. An unidentified member of the crowd threw a bomb into the police regiment, igniting a melee of violence in which officers opened fire on the crowd. Seven officers and at least that many civilians were killed, with dozens more seriously wounded. In response to the incident, police launched a massive campaign of repression against the IWPA apparatus in Chicago, eventually sentencing eight leading anarchists to death despite any evidence indicating that any of them threw the bomb. The Haymarket affair also launched the country's first nationwide "red scare," in which radicals and unionists of all stripes were depicted as monsters, degenerates, and agents of the devil, paving the way for all manner of extra-legal suppression of the movement by police forces throughout the country.<sup>22</sup>

The disintegrating pressures placed upon the IWPA by post-Haymarket repression were compounded by ideological disputes internal to the movement. Through a series of polemical exchanges over the course of the 1880s, U.S. anarchists

---

<sup>22</sup> Green, *Death in the Haymarket*; Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*.

gradually shifted from advocating anarchist-collectivism, which advocated the distribution of goods in the future anarchist society based on the number of hours of labor contributed by each individual, to the theory of anarchist-communism, which supported distribution according to need. This somewhat arcane distinction was tied to a programmatic concern that had more immediate implications. When Peter Kropotkin, the founding theorist of anarchist-communism, critiqued the anarchist-collectivism promoted by his predecessor Michael Bakunin, he also sharply criticized the latter's theory of organization, which called for a secret cadre of revolutionaries to direct the movement. This point led Kropotkin's acolytes in the United States to denounce the structure of the IWPA as too rigid, and call for anarchist groups to operate independently of one another. Simultaneously, the movement was forced to adjust to demographic shifts in its base. By the 1890s, German immigrants were being eclipsed in the movement by Russians, East European Jews, and Italians owing largely to broader shifts in immigration patterns. Between 1890 and 1905 the movement went through a cycle of growth (though never as meteoric as in Chicago) followed by severe repression and outraged popular opposition in the wake of two additional acts of violence: the attempted assassination in 1892 of steel magnate Henry Clay Frick by Alexander Berkman and the successful assassination of U.S. President William McKinley in 1902 by Leon Czolgoz, a man only loosely affiliated with the anarchist movement.

Although social anarchists in the United States had a difficult time attracting a mass following in the 1890s and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, they began developing, during these years, a broader set of political commitments than many of their contemporaries in other parts of the world. As we have seen, the individualist anarchists' promotion of freedom of expression, gender and sexual equality, and cultural modernism in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century greatly exceeded that of the social anarchists, who were more focused on economic issues. That these issues would be associated with anarchism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century owes considerably to the influence Tucker and other individualists had on agitators and writers such as Voltairine de Cleyre and Emma Goldman.<sup>23</sup> In fact, throughout the 1880s, the individualist and social strains of anarchism overlapped considerably in the United States.<sup>24</sup> During this period they shared considerable common ground—including a belief in natural rights philosophy and advocacy of distribution of wealth according to the number of hours worked by each individual. In late 1880s and early 1890s, though, the tendencies grew apart philosophically. At the same time social anarchists moved from advocating distribution according to labor hours (anarchist-collectivism) to distribution by need (anarchist-communism), the individualists began rejecting natural rights theory in favor of philosophical egoism.

---

<sup>23</sup> See Paul Avrich, *An American Anarchist: The Life of Voltairine de Cleyre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>24</sup> In 1881, for example, *Liberty* was declared an official periodical of the Revolutionary Socialist Party. Tucker and other individualists, such as Joseph Labadie, were also staunch supporters of the Haymarket martyrs later in the decade. See Carlotta Anderson, *All-American Anarchist: Joseph A. Labadie and the Labor Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998).

These philosophical developments considerably widened the gulf between the two tendencies. Debates between individualists and social anarchists became most acrimonious, moreover, regarding the question of making revolutionary change through violent means. Although most were not absolute pacifists, in the period after the Haymarket affair, individualist anarchists became more vocally and stridently critical of propaganda by deed, while many social anarchists continued to promote it. The period which followed, from approximately 1890 to 1920, is the one most extensively covered in historical studies of U.S. anarchism, such as the many biographies of Emma Goldman.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Interviews

Audrey Goodfriend, Berkeley, California, November 10, 2008  
Julie Herrada, Ann Arbor, Michigan, April 22, 2008  
George Lakey, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 28, 2008  
Ben Morea, New York, New York, March 9, 2009  
Osha Neumann, New York, New York, January 31, 2009  
Bill Sutherland, New York, New York, June 27, 2008  
Peter Werbe, Detroit, Michigan, April 25, 2008

### Archival Newspapers, Magazines, and Journals

*Anarchist Soviet Bulletin*  
*The Ark*  
*Black Mask*  
*Direct Action*  
*Ellis Island Anarchist Weekly*  
*Fifth Estate*  
*Free Society*  
*Liberation*  
*Man!*  
*The Needle*  
*Rebel Worker*  
*Resistance*  
*Retort*  
*Survival Manual-1*  
*The Road to Freedom*  
*Vanguard: A Libertarian Communist Journal*  
*Views and Comments*  
*Why?*

### Archival Collections

Labadie Collection, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan  
Abe Bluestein Papers  
Fifth Estate Collection  
Marcus Graham Papers  
Agnes Inglis Papers  
Miscellaneous Manuscripts

Subject Vertical File  
Warren Star Van Valkenburgh Papers

Tamiment Library, New York University, New York, New York  
American Labor Unions' Constitutions, Proceedings, Officers' Reports and  
Supplementary Documents John Nicholas Beffel Papers  
Sam Dolgoff Papers  
Pacific Street Films Photograph Collection  
David Thoreau Wieck Papers  
David Wieck Photograph Collection

Peace Collection, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania  
David Wieck Papers  
Movement for a New Society Collection

Beinecke Rare Book Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut  
Dachine Rainer Papers

### **Electronic Sources**

"The Maverick Festival, Woodstock, 1915-1931, On-line Exhibit," Samuel Dosky  
Museum of Art, State University of New York-New Paltz,  
<http://www.newpaltz.edu/museum/exhibitions/maverick2007/index.htm>.  
(accessed June 28, 2009).

Castells, Manuel. "Neo-Anarchism." *La Vanguardia*, May 21, 2005. trans. Chuck  
Morse, Negations, <http://www.negations.net/neo-anarchism-by-manuel-castells>  
(accessed August 9, 2010).

Ferguson, Kathy E. "A Present Absence: Emma Goldman on Race." *All Academic*,  
[http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p\\_mla\\_apa\\_research\\_citation/0/8/8/3/9/p88396\\_index.html](http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/0/8/8/3/9/p88396_index.html) (accessed February 3, 2010).

Garrett Caples, "Phillp Lamantia: Last Interview,"  
<http://www.angelfire.com/poetry/thepixelplus/nhlamantia.html> (accessed June  
2, 2010).

Hamad, Omar. "Lessons from Defeat: Antonio Negri, Autonomist Marxism and  
Anarcho-syndicalism from Seventies Italy to Today." *LibCom.org*, July 10,  
2009, [http://libcom.org/library/lessons-defeat-antonio-negri-autonomist-  
Marxism-anarcho-syndicalism-seventies-italy-toda](http://libcom.org/library/lessons-defeat-antonio-negri-autonomist-Marxism-anarcho-syndicalism-seventies-italy-toda) (accessed August 10,  
2010).

Whiting, John. "The Lengthening Shadow: Lew Hill and the Origins of Listener-Sponsored Broadcasting in America" [www.whitings-writings.com/lengthening\\_shadow.htm](http://www.whitings-writings.com/lengthening_shadow.htm). (accessed, Feb. 21, 2010).

Zimmer, Kenyon. "Anarchist Periodical Circulation Figures, 1880-1940." Kate Sharpley Library. <http://katesharpleylibrary.pbworks.com/Anarchist+newspaper+circulation> (accessed February 9, 2010).

### **Books, Academic Journals, Dissertations, and Films**

Ackerman, Kenneth D. *The Young J. Edgar: Hoover, the Red Scare, and the Assault on Civil Liberties*. New York: Carrol and Graf, 2007.

Adamic, Louis. *Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America*. Oakland: AK Press, 2008 [1931].

Agostinelli, Diva. "A 79 Year Old Woman Who Bowls: An Interview with Diva Agostinelli, Anarchist." *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* 5, no.1 (Spring 2001).

Ahmad, Muhammad. *We Will Return in the Whirlwind: Black Radical Organizations, 1960-1975*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007.

Ahrens, Gale, ed. *Lucy Parsons: Freedom, Equality, and Solidarity*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2004

Al-Amin, Jalil (H. Rap Brown). *Die, Nigger, Die! A Political Autobiography*. New York: Dial Press, 1969].

Albert, Michael and Robin Hahnel, *Looking Forward: Participatory Economics for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Boston: South End Press, 1991.

Albert, Michael. *Parecon: Life After Capitalism*. New York: Verso, 2003.

Albert, Michael. *Remembering Tomorrow: From SDS to Life After Capitalism, A Memoir*. New York: Seven Stories, 2006.

Albro, Ward S. *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992.

- Alexander Berkman Social Club, ed. *The Tragic Procession: Alexander Berkman and Russian Prisoner Aid*. Berkeley, CA: Alexander Berkman Social Club and Kate Sharpley Library, 2010.
- Alexander, Doris M. "Hugo of the Iceman Cometh: Realism and O'Neill" *American Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1953): 357-366.
- Andersen, Mark. *All the Power: Revolution without Illusion*. New York, Akashic Books, 2004.
- Anderson, Carlotta. *All-American Anarchist: Joseph A. Labadie and the Labor Movement*. Detroit: Wayne State University, 1998.
- Antliff, Alan. *Art and Anarchy: From the Paris Commune to the Fall of the Berlin Wall*. Vancouver, Arsenal Pulp, 2007.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Anarchist Modernism: Art, Politics, and the First American Avant-Garde*. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Aronica, Michele Teresa. *Beyond Charismatic Leadership: The New York Catholic Worker Movement*. New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1987.
- Avrich, Paul. *Anarchist Portraits*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Anarchist Voices: An Oral History of Anarchism in America*. Oakland: AK Press, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Kronstadt 1921*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Anarchist Background*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Modern School Movement: Anarchism and Education in the United States*. Oakland, AK Press, 2006 [1980].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Russian Anarchists*. Oakland: AK Press, 2005 [1967].
- Baldwin, Roger, ed. *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*. New York: Dover, 1970 [1927].

- Barret, James and David Roediger. "Inbetween Peoples: Race, Nationality, and the 'New Immigrant' Working Class." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16 (Spring 1997): 3-34.
- Barsky, Robert. *Noam Chomsky: A Life of Dissent*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.
- Barsky, Robert. *The Chomsky Effect: A Radical Works Beyond the Ivory Tower*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007.
- Beck, Frank O. *Hobohemia: Emma Goldman, Lucy Parsons, Ben Reitman, and other Agitators/Outsiders in 1920s/30s Chicago*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2000.
- Bederman, Gail. *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).
- Bencivenni, Marcella. "Italian American Radical Culture in New York City: The Politics and Arts of the Sovversivi, 1890-1940." PhD Dissertation, City University of New York, 2003.
- Bennett, Scott H. *Radical Pacifism: The War Resisters League and Gandhian Nonviolence in America, 1915-1963*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003.
- Berger, Dan, Chesa Boudin, and Kenyon Farrow, eds. *Letters from Young Activists: Today's Rebels Speak Out*. (New York: Nation Books, 2005).
- Berger, Dan. *Outlaws of America: The Weather Underground and the Politics of Solidarity*. Oakland: AK Press, 2006.
- Berger, George. *The Story of Crass*. Oakland: PM Press, 2009.
- Berkman, Alexander. *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*. New York: NYRB Classics, 1999 [1912].
- Berkman, Alexander. *The Bolshevik Myth: Diary 1920-1922*. New York: Boni and Liverwright, 1925.
- Berlin, Ira. *The Making of African America: The Four Great Migrations*. New York: Viking, 2010.
- Berman, Paul, ed. *Quotations from the Anarchists*. New York: Praeger, 1972.

- Berry, Dave. *The History of the French Anarchist Movement, 1917-1945*. Oakland: AK Press, 2009.
- Bevington, Douglas and Chris Dixon. "Movement-relevant Theory: Rethinking Social Movement Scholarship and Activism." *Social Movement Studies* 4, no. 3 (December 2005): 185-208.
- Bey, Hakim. *T.A.Z. The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 1991.
- Biehl, Janet, ed. *The Murray Bookchin Reader*. London: Cassell, 1997.
- Bikini Kill. "White Boy." On *Yeah Yeah Yeah Yeah*. Vinyl LP. Olympia, WA: Kill Rock Stars, 1993.
- Biondi, Martha. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2003.
- Bisbort, Alan. *Beatniks: A Guide to an American Subculture*. New York: Greenwood Press, 2009.
- Black, Stephen A. *Eugene O'Neill: Beyond Mourning and Tragedy*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002.
- Bluestein, Abe, ed. *Fighters for Anarchism: Mollie Steimer and Senya Fleshin: A Memorial Volume*. Minneapolis: Libertarian Publications, 1983.
- Boggs, Grace Lee. *Living for Change: An Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998.
- Bone, Ian. *Bash the Rich: True Confessions of an Anarchist in the U.K.* Bristol: Tangent, 2007.
- Bone, Ian. *Bash the Rich: True Life Confessions of an Anarchist in the UK*. Bath, UK: Tangent Books, 2006.
- Bookchin, Murray. *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998*. San Francisco: AK Press, 1999.
- Bookchin, Murray. *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1997.

- Bookchin, Murray. *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998*. San Francisco: AK Press, 1999.
- Boykoff, Jules. *Beyond Bullets: The Suppression of Dissent in the United States*. Oakland: AK Press, 2007.
- Breines, Wini. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*. New Brunswick, NY: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- Breines, Wini. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1989.
- Brown, James. "The Zen of Anarchy: Japanese Exceptionalism and the Anarchist Roots of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 19, no. 2 (2009): 207-242.
- Brown, James. "The Zen of Anarchy: Japanese Exceptionalism and the Anarchist Roots of the San Francisco Poetry Renaissance." *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation* 19, no. 2 (2009): 207-242.
- Brundage, Slim. *From Bughouse Square to the Beat Generation: The Selected Ravings of Slim Brundage*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1997.
- Bufe, Chaz and Mitchel Cowen Verter, eds. *Dreams of Freedom: A Ricardo Flores Magon Reader*. Oakland: AK Press, 2005.
- Buhle, Paul, Mari Jo Buhle, and Dan Georgakas, eds. *Encyclopedia of the American Left*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Burner, Eric. *And Gently He Shall Lead Them: Robert Parris Moses and Civil Rights in Mississippi* (New York: New York University Press, 1994)
- Butterworth, Alex. *The World that Never Was: A True Story of Dreamers, Schemers, Anarchists, and Secret Agents*. New York Pantheon, 2010.
- Cahm, Caroline. *Kropotkin and the Rise of Revolutionary Anarchism, 1872-1886*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Calvert, Gregory Nevala. *Democracy from the Heart: Spiritual Values, Decentralism, and Democratic Idealism in the Movement of the 1960s*. Eugene, OR: Communitas Press, 1991.

- Cannistraro, Philip V. and Gerald Meyer, eds. *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.
- Cannistraro, Philip V. *Blackshirts in Little Italy: Italian Americans and Fascism, 1921-1929*. West Lafayette, IN: Bordighera Press, 1999.
- Capazolla, Christopher. "The Only Bedge Needed Is Your Patriotic Fervor: Vigilance, Coercion, and the Law in World War I America." *The Journal of American History* 88, no. 4 (March 2002): 1354-1382.
- Carmichael, Stokely with Michael Thelwell. *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Toure)*. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Chandler, Alfred. *The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977.
- Chomsky, Noam. *American Power and the New Mandarins*. New York: New Press, 2002 [1969].
- Class War Federation, eds. *Unfinished Business: The Politics of Class War*. San Francisco: AK Press, 2001.
- Cleaver, Harry. "The Inverstion of Class Perspective in Marxian Theory: From Valorization to Self-Valorization" in *Open Marxism, Volume II: Theory and Practice*. ed. Werner Bonefeld, Richard Gunn, and Kosmas Psychopedis. London: Pluto Press, 1992.
- Cleaver, Harry. *Reading Capital Politically*. Anti/Theses and AK Press, Leeds and San Francisco, 2000.
- Cleaver, Kathleen and George Katsiaficas, eds. *Liberation, Imagination, and the Black Panther Party: A New Look at the Panthers and their Legacy*. New York: Routledge, 2001.
- Cohen, Joseph and Alexis C. Ferm. *The Modern School of Stelton: A Sketch*. New York: Factory School, 2006 [1925].
- Cohen, Joseph. *In Quest of Heaven: The Story of the Sunrise Co-operative Farm Community*. New York: Factory School, 2008 [1957].

- Cohen, Lizabeth. *A Consumer Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America*. New York: Alfred A Knopf, 2003.
- Cohen, Robert. *When the Old Left was Young: Student Radicals and America's First Mass Student Movement, 1929-1941*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Cornell, Thomas and James Forest, eds. *A Penny a Copy: Readings from the Catholic Worker*. New York: MacMillan, 1968.
- Coughlin, Michael E., Charles H. Hamilton, and Mark A. Sullivan, eds. *Benjamin R. Tucker & the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology*. St. Paul, MN and New York: self published, no date.
- Coyote, Peter. *Sleeping Where I Fall: A Chronicle*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 1998.
- Crass, Chris. *Collective Liberation on My Mind*. Montreal: Kersplebedeb, 2001.
- Crowder, George. *Classical Anarchism: The Political Thought of Godwin, Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- D'Emilio, John. *Lost Prophet: The Life and Times of Bayard Rustin*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.
- Danvers, Dennis. *The Watch*. New York: EOS/HaperCollins, 2002.
- Davis, Angela. *Women, Race, and Class*. New York: Vintage, 1984).
- Davis, Mike. *Buda's Wagon: A Brief History of the Car Bomb*. London: Verso, 2007.
- Day, Dorothy. *Loaves and Fishes*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997[1963].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Long Loneliness: An Autobiography*. New York: Harper and Row, 1952.
- de Ligt, Bart. *The Conquest of Violence: An Essay on War and Revolution*. London: Pluto Press, 1989 [1937].
- Debord, Guy. *A Sick Planet*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oxford, UK and New York: Seagull Books, 2008.
- Debord, Guy. *The Society of the Spectacle*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. New York: Zone Books, 1995 [1967].

- Dellinger, David. *From Yale to Jail: The Life Story of a Moral Dissenter*. New York: Pantheon, 1993.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Revolutionary Nonviolence*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971.
- Dillard, Angela. *Faith in the City: Preaching Radical Social Change in Detroit*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007.
- Dolgoff, Sam. *Fragments: A Memoir*. Cambridge: Refract, 1986.
- Dowell, Elridge F. *A History of Criminal Syndicalism Legislation in the United States*. New York: Da Capo, 1969.
- Dowsey, Stuart, ed. *Zengakuren*. Berkeley: Ishi Press, 1970.
- Drinnon, Richard. *Rebel in Paradise: A Biography of Emma Goldman*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- Dubovsky, Melvin. *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*. Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969.
- Dubovsky, Melvyn and Foster Rhea Dulles. *Labor in American History*, 6th ed. Wheeling, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1999.
- Dussel, Enrique. *20 Theses on Politics*. Trans. George Ciccariello-Maher. Durham: Duke University Press, 2009.
- Dworkin, Dennis. *Cultural Marxism in Postwar Britain: History, the New Left, and the Origins of Cultural Studies*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Dyer-Witheford, Nick. *Cyber-Marx: Cycles and Circuits of Struggle in High-Technology Capitalism*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999.
- Edu-Factory Collective, eds. *Toward a Global Autonomous University: Cognitive Labor, The Production of Knowledge, and Exodus from the Education Factory*. New York: Autonomedia, 2009.
- Elbaum, Max. *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals turn to Lenin, Mao, and Che*. New York: Verso, 2002.
- Epstein, Melech. *Jewish Labor in U.S.A., 1882-1914, Vol. 1*. No city, KATV Publishing House, 1950.

- Evers, Alf. *Woodstock: History of an American Town*. Woodstock, NY: Overlook Press, 1987.
- Faas, Ekbert. *Young Robert Duncan: Portrait of the Poet as a Homosexual in Society*. Santa Barbara, CA: Black Sparrow Press, 1983.
- Falk, Candace. *Love, Anarchy, and Emma Goldman*. New York: Holt, Reinhart, and Winston, 1984.
- Farber, David. *Chicago '68*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.
- Farrell, James J. *The Spirit of the Sixties: The Making of Postwar Radicalism*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Federici, Silvia. *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation*. Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2004.
- Ferm, Elizabeth Byrne. *Freedom in Education*. New York: Factory School, 2005 [1949].
- Fernandez, Luis. *Policing Dissent: Social Control and the Anti-Globalization Movement*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2008.
- Feuerlicht, Roberta Strauss. *America's Reign of Terror: World War I, the Red Scare, and the Palmer Raids*. New York: Random House, 1971.
- Finan, Christopher M. *From the Palmer Raids to the Patriot Act: A History of the Fight for Free Speech in America*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.
- Fischler, Steven and Joel Sucher. *The Free Voice of Labor: The Jewish Anarchists*. DVD Oakland: AK Press Films, 2006.
- Ford, Simon. *The Situationist International: A User's Guide*. London: Black Dog, 2005.
- Foreman, James. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997 [1972].
- Frank, Herman. "Anarchism and the Jews." In *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People*. Edited by Basil J. Vlavianos and Feliks Gross. New York: Arts, Inc., no date [1953].

- Frank, Pat. "San Francisco 1952: Painters, Poets, Anarchism." *Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy* 2 (1994): 136-153.
- Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997.
- Frattali, Steven. *Hypodermic Light: The Poetry of Philip Lamantia and the Question of Surrealism*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005.
- Free Society Group, eds. *The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View*. Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951.
- Gage, Beverly. *The Day Wall Street Exploded: A Story of America in its First Age of Terror*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Galleani, Luigi. *The End of Anarchism?* Orkney, UK: Cienfuegos Press, 1982.
- Gautney, Heather. "Between Anarchism and Autonomist Marxism." *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12 (September 2009): 467-487.
- Gebhardt, Steve. *20 to Life: The Life and Times of John Sinclair*. DVD. Steve Gebhardt, 2007.
- Gelpi, Albert and Robert J. Bertholf, eds. *Robert Duncan and Denise Levertov: The Poetry of Politics, the Politics of Poetry*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006.
- Georgakas, Dan and Marvin Surkin. *Detroit I Do Mind Dying*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998.
- Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. New York: Norton, 2008.
- Gitlin, Todd. *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*. New York: Bantam Books, 1987.
- Glaberman, Martin. *Punching Out and Other Writings*. Edited by Staughton Lynd. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2002.

- Glassgold, Peter, ed. *Anarchy! An Anthology of Emma Goldman's Mother Earth*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2001.
- Goffman, Erving. *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and other Inmates*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961.
- Goldman, Emma. *Anarchism and Other Essays*. New York: Dover, 1969 [1917].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *My Disillusionment in Russia*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003 [1923].
- \_\_\_\_\_. *My Further Disillusionment in Russia*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Page, 1924.
- Goodman, Paul, *Decentralizing Power: Paul Goodman's Social Criticism*, ed. Taylor Stoehr. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *Seeds of Liberation*. New York: George Braziller, 1964.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Crazy Hope and Finite Experience: Final Essays of Paul Goodman*, Edited by Taylor Stoehr. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Creator Spirit Come! The Literary Essays of Paul Goodman*. Edited by Taylor Stoehr. New York: Free Life Editions, 1977).
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Drawing the Line Once Again: Paul Goodman's Anarchist Writings*. Edited by Taylor Stoehr. Oakland: PM Press, 2010.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Drawing the Line: The Politic Essays of Paul Goodman*. Edited by Taylor Stoehr. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nature Heals=Natura Sanat Non Medicus: The Psychological Essays of Paul Goodman*. Edited by Taylor Stoehr. New York: Free Life Editions, 1977.
- Goodway, David, ed. *For Anarchism: History, Theory, Practice*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- \_\_\_\_\_, ed. *For Workers' Power: The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton*. Oakland: AK Press, 2004.

- \_\_\_\_\_. *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow: Left-Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006.
- Gordon, Linda. *Woman's Body, Woman's Right: Birth Control in America*, 2d ed. New York: Penguin, 1990.
- Gordon, Uri. *Anarchy Alive! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*. London: Pluto Press, 2008.
- Goyens, Tom. *Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 2007.
- Graham, Marcus, ed. *Man! An Anthology of Anarchist Ideas Essays, Poetry, and Commentary*. London: Cienfuegos Press, 1974.
- Green, Archie et al., eds. *The Big Red Songbook*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2007.
- Green, Gil. *The New Radicalism: Anarchist or Marxist?* New York: International Publishers, 1971.
- Grogan, Emmett. *Ringolevio: A Life Played for Keeps*. New York: NYRB, 1972.
- Guérin, Daniel. *Anarchism: From Theory to Practice*. New York: Monthly Review, 1970.
- Guglielmo, Jennifer and Salvatore Salerno, eds. *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Guglielmo, Jennifer. "Donne Ribelli: Recovering the History of Italian Women's Radicalism in the United States." In *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, edited by Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, 113-141. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Living the Revolution: Italian Women's Resistance and Radicalism in New York City, 1880-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.
- Hahne, Ron and Ben Morea. *Black Mask and Up Against the Wall Motherfucker: The Incomplete Works of Ron Hahne, Ben Morea and the Black Mask Group*. London: Unpopular Books and Sabotage Editions, 1993.

- Hahnel, Robin. *Economic Justice and Democracy: From Competition to Cooperation*. New York: Routledge, 2005.
- Hall, Peter. *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2002.
- Hamalian, Linda. *A Life of Kenneth Rexroth*. New York: Norton, 1991.
- Hardt, Michael and Antonio Negri. *Commonwealth*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Empire*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*. New York: Penguin, 2004.
- Hennacy, Ammon. *The Autobiography of a Catholic Anarchist*. New York: Catholic Worker Books, 1954.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The One-Man Revolution in America*. Salt Lake City: Hennacy Publications, 1970.
- Higham, John. *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*. New York: Atheneum, 1970 [1955].
- Hill, Rebecca N. *Men, Mobs, and Law: Anti-Lynching and Labor Defense in U.S. Radical History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008.
- Hippler, Bob. "Fast Times in the Motor City." In *Voices from the Underground, Vol. 1: Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press*. Edited by Ken Wachsberger et al. Tempe, AZ: Mica Press, 1993.
- Hirsch, Arnold. *The French Left: A History and Overview*. Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1982.
- Hodgdon, Timothy. *Manhood in the Age of Aquarius: Masculinity in Two Counter-Cultural Communities, 1965-1983*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2008.
- Hoyt, Edwin Palmer. *The Palmer Raids, 1919-1920: An Attempt to Suppress Dissent*. New York: Seabury Press, 1969.

- Hunt, Andrew. *David Dellinger: The Life and Times of a Nonviolent Revolutionary*. New York: NYU Press, 2006.
- Isserman, Maurice and Michael Kazin. *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Jacker, Corinne. *The Black Flag of Anarchy: Antistatism in the United States*. New York, Scribners, 1968.
- Jacobson, Matthew Frye. *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- James, C.L.R., Grace C. Lee and Cornelius Castoriadis. *Facing Reality: The New Society, Where to Look for It and How to Bring it Closer*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2006 [1958].
- James, Joy et al. eds., *Warfare in the American Homeland: Policing and Prison in a Penal Democracy*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.
- Jensen, Joan. *The Price of Vigilance*. Chicago: Rand McNally, 1969.
- Joll, James. *The Anarchists*. New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1964.
- Jones, Jacqueline. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family, From Slavery to Present*. New York: Random House, 1985.
- Jones, Leroi/Amiri Baraka. "Black People!" In *The Leroi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*. Edited by W. J. Harris. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1991.
- Jordan, William G. *Black Newspapers and America's War for Democracy, 1914-1920*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2001.
- Joseph, Peniel. *Waiting 'til the Midnight Hour: A Narrative History of Black Power in America*. New York: Henry Holt, 2006.
- Katsiaficas, George. *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*. Boston: South End Press, 1987.
- Katsiaficas, George. *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life*. Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1997.

- Katz, Daniel. "A Union of Many Cultures: Yiddish Socialism and Interracial Organizing in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, 1913-1941." PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2003.
- Kedward, Roderick. *The Anarchists: The Men who Shocked an Era*. New York: American Heritage Press, 1971.
- Keller, Morton. *The Art and Politics of Thomas Nast*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- Kelley, Robin D.G. *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: Free Press, 1994.
- Kempton, Richard. *Provo: Amsterdam's Anarchist Revolt*. New York: Autonomedia, 2007.
- Kerouac, Jack. *The Dharma Bums*. New York: Viking, 1958.
- Knabb, Ken, trans. and ed. *Situationist International Anthology*. Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981.
- Knabb, Ken. *Public Secrets: Collected Skirmishes of Ken Knabb, 1970-1997*. Berkeley, CA: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1997.
- Kornblugh, Joyce, ed. *Rebel Voices: An IWW Anthology*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1964.
- Kosek, Joseph. *Acts of Conscience: Christian Nonviolence and Modern American Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Koven, David. "Live an Anarchist Life!" *Social Anarchism*, No. 42 (2008-2009): 72-77.
- Kropotkin, Peter. *Fields, Factories, and Workshops; or, Industry Combined with Agriculture and Brain Work with Mental Work*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968 [1901].
- Laclau, Ernesto and Chantal Mouffe. *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. New York: Verso, 1985.

- Lamantia, Philip. "Astromancy." In *Selected Poems, 1943-1966*. San Francisco: City Lights, 1967.
- Lee, Erika. *At America's Gates: Chinese Immigration During the Exclusion Era, 1882-1943*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007.
- Leeder, Elaine. *The Gentle General: Rose Pesotta, Anarchist and Labor Organizer*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1993.
- Leier, Mark. *Bakunin: A Biography*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006.
- Leighen, Patricia. "Reveil Anarchiste: Salon Painting, Political Satire, Modernist Art" in *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority*. Edited by Josh MacPhee and Erik Reuland. Oakland: AK Press, 2007, 26-41.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Re-Ordering the Universe: Picasso and Anarchism, 1897-1914*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989.
- Leland, John. *Hip: The History*. New York: Harper Collins, 2004.
- Lens, Sidney. *The Labor Wars: From the Molly McGuires to the Sit Downs*. Chicago: Haymarket, 2008 [1973].
- Levy, Carl. *Gramsci and the Anarchists*. Oxford: Berg, 1999.
- Linebaugh, Peter and Marcus Rediker. *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon, 2000.
- Lipton, Lawrence. *The Holy Barbarians*. New York: Julian Messner, 1959.
- Lothstein, Arthur, ed. "All We Are Saying..." *The Philosophy of the New Left*. New York: Capricorn Books, 1970.
- Lovarchy-Shalom. *A Peace of the Anarchy: Ammon Hennacy and other Angelic Troublemakers in the USA*. DVD. Lovarchy-Shalom, 2004.
- Lowe, Lisa. *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1996.
- Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial-Modern Gender System." *Hypatia* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 186-208.

- Lynd, Staughton and Andrej Grubacic. *Wobblies and Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism, and Radical History*. Oakland: PM Press, 2008.
- MacPhee, Josh and Erik Reuland, eds. *Realizing the Impossible: Art Against Authority*. Oakland: AK Press, 2007.
- Malet, Michael. *Nestor Makhno and the Russian Civil War*. New York: Macmillan, 1982.
- Malina, Judith. *The Diaries of Judith Malina, 1947-1957*. New York: Grove Press, 1984.
- Marshall, Peter. *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. (London: HarperCollins, 1992).
- Martin, James. *Men Against the State: The Expositors of Individualist Anarchism in America, 1827-1908*. New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1957.
- Martinez, Elizabeth (Betita). "Where was the Color in Seattle? Looking for Reasons why the Great Battle was so White." *Monthly Review* 52, no. 3 (July-August 2000): 141-149.
- Maurin, Peter. *Easy Essays*. London: Sheed and Ward, 1938.
- May, Todd. *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1994.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *The Political Thought of Jacques Rancière: Creating Equality*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- McCormick, Charles H. *Hopeless Cases: The Hunt for the Red Scare Terrorist Bombers*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2005.
- McCruer, Robert. *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*. New York: NYU Press, 2006.
- McElroy, Wendy. *The Debates of Liberty: An Overview of Individualist Anarchism, 1881-1908*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Non-Economic Debates in Liberty." In *Benjamin R. Tucker & the Champions of Liberty: A Centenary Anthology*. Edited by Michael E.

- Coughlin, Charles H. Hamilton, and Mark A. Sullivan. St. Paul, MN and New York: self published, no date.
- McKinley, Blaine. “‘Quagmires of Necessity’: American Anarchists and Dilemmas of Vocation,” *American Quarterly* 34, no. 5 (Winter, 1982): 503-523.
- McMillian, John and Paul Buhle, eds. *The New Left Revisted*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003.
- Medovoi, Leerom. *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.
- Meir August and Elliot Rudwick. *CORE: A Study in the Civil Rights Movement, 1942-1968*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973.
- Miller, James. *Democracy is in the Streets: From Port Huron to the Siege of Chicago*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994.
- Miller, Peter. *Sacco and Vanzetti*. DVD. First Run Features, 2007.
- Miller, William D. *A Harsh and Dreadful Love: Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement*. New York: Liveright, 1973.
- Millett, Steve. “Technology is Capital: *Fifth Estate*’s Critique of the Megamachine.” In *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*. Edited by Jonathon Purkis and James Bowen. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- Milstein, Cindy. *Anarchism and Its Aspirations*. AK Press, 2010.
- Mollin, Marian. *Radical Pacifism in Modern America: Egalitarianism and Protest*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006.
- Morgan, Bill. *Howl on Trial: The Battle for Free Expression*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2006.
- Morgan, Ted. *Reds: McCarthyism in 20th Century America*. New York: Random House, 2003.
- Morris, Aldon. *Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press, 1984.

- Murray, Robert K. *Red Scare: A Study in National Hysteria, 1919-1920*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1964.
- Nadel, Stanely. "Reds Versus Pinks: A Civil War in the International Ladies Garment Workers Union." *New York History* 66, no. 1 (January 1985): 49-72.
- Naumann, Francis M. "Man Ray and the Ferrer Center: Art and Anarchy in the Pre-Dada Period," *Drunken Boat* 2 (1994): 67-87.
- Nelson, Bruce. *Beyond the Martyrs: A Social History of Chicago's Anarchists, 1870-1900*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988.
- Neumann, Osha. *Up Against the Wall Motherf\*\*ker: A Memoir of the '60s, with Notes for Next Time*. New York: Seven Stories, 2008.
- Neumann, Saul. *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-Authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2001.
- Newfield, Jack. *A Prophetic Minority*. New York: New American Library, 1966.
- Ngai, Mae. *Impossible Subjects: Illegal Aliens and the Making of Modern America*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004.
- Nielsen, Kim E. *Un-American Womanhood: Antiradicalism, Antifeminism, and the First Red Scare*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2001.
- O'Dell, Jack and Nikhil Pal Singh. *Climbin' Jacob's Ladder: The Black Freedom Movement writings of Jack O'Dell*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010.
- Omi, Michael and Howard Winant. *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, 2d ed. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Pali, Michael. *The Anarchism of Nestor Mahkno, 1918-1921*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976.
- Parisi, Peter, ed. *Artist of the Actual: Essays on Paul Goodman*. Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1986.
- Parmet, Robert D. *The Master of Seventh Avenue: David Dubinsky and the American Labor Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.

- Payne, Charles. *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.
- Perlin, Terry, ed. *Contemporary Anarchism*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1979.
- Perlman, Lorraine. *Having Little, Being Much: A Chronicle of Fredy Perlman's Fifty Years*. Detroit: Black and Red, 1989.
- Pernicone, Nunzio. "Luigi Galleani and Italian Anarchist Terrorism in the United States." *Studi Emigrazione/Etudes Migrations* 30, no.111 (1993): 469-488.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "War among the Italian Anarchists: The Galleanisti's Campaign against Carlo Tresca," in *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*. Edited by Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Carlo Tresca: Life of a Rebel*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Italian Anarchism, 1864-1892*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Pesotta, Rose. *Bread Upon the Waters*. Ithaca: ILR Press, 1987 [1944].
- Pesotta, Rose. *The Days of Our Lives*. Boston: Excelsior, 1958.
- Pfannestiel, Todd J. *Rethinking the Red Scare: The Lusk Committee and New York's Crusade against Radicalism, 1919-1923*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Piehl, Mel. *Breaking Bread: The Catholic Worker and the Origins of Catholic Radicalism in America*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.
- Pinta, Saku. "Anarchism, Marxism, and the Ideological Composition of the Chicago Idea." *WorkingUSA: The Journal of Labor and Society* 12 (September 2009): 421-450.
- Plamondon, Pun. *Lost from the Ottawa: The Story of the Journey Back*. Self-published, 2004.
- Plant, Sadie. *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age*. London: Routledge, 1992.

- Polenberg, Richard. *Fighting Faiths: The Abrams Case, the Supreme Court, and Free Speech*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987.
- Polletta, Francesca. *Freedom is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Preston, William. *Aliens and Dissenters: Federal Suppression of Radicals, 1903-1933*. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.
- Pulido, Laura. *Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.
- Purkis, Jonathon and James Bowen, eds. *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.
- Radcliffe, Charles. "Two Fiery Flying Rolls—The *Heatwave* Story, 1966-1970" in *Dancin' in the Streets! Anarchists, IWWs, Surrealists, Situationists & Provos in the 1960s as recorded in the Pages of The Rebel Worker and Heatwave*. Edited by Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2005.
- Rainer, Dachine. "Holley Cantine, February 14, 1916-January 2, 1977." *Drunken Boat: Art, Rebellion, Anarchy 2* (1994): 177-185.
- Ransby, Barbara. *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003.
- Raskin, Jonah. *American Scream: Allen Ginsberg's Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004.
- Rauchway, Eric. *Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2003.
- Rawick, George. *Listening to Revolt: Selected Writings*. Edited by David Roediger and Martin Smith. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2010.
- Rexroth, Kenneth. "Disengagement: The Art of the Beat Generation." In *World Outside the Window: The Selected Essays of Kenneth Rexroth*. Edited by Bradford Morrow. New York: New Directions, 1987.
- Rexroth, Kenneth. *An Autobiographical Novel*, expanded ed. New York: New Directions, 1991.

- Rexroth, Kenneth. *Assays*. Norfolk, CT: New Directions, 1961.
- Roediger, Dave and Franklin Rosemont, eds. *Haymarket Scrapbook*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1986.
- Roediger, David R. *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White*. Boston: Basic, 2005.
- Rosemont, Franklin, ed. *The Rise and Fall of the Dil Pickle Club: Jazz-Age Chicago's Wildest and Most Outrageously Creative Hobohemian Nightspot*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "To Be Revolutionary in Everything: The *Rebel Worker* Story, 1964-1968." In *Dancin' in the Streets! Anarchists, IWWs, Surrealists, Situationists and Provos in the 1960s as Recorded in the Pages of The Rebel Worker and Heatwave*. Edited by Franklin Rosemont and Charles Radcliffe. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2005.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "A Bomb-Toting, Long-Haired, Wild-Eyed Fiend: The Image of the Anarchist in Popular Culture." in *Haymarket Scrapbook*, ed. Dave Roediger and Franklin Rosemont. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 1986.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Joe Hill and the Making of a Revolutionary Working-Class Counter Culture*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2003.
- Rosemont, Penelope. *Dreams and Everyday Life: André Breton, Surrealism, Rebel Worker, SDS & the Seven Cities of Cibola*. Chicago: Charles H. Kerr, 2008.
- Rosengarten, Frank. *Urbane Revolutionary: C.L.R. James and the Struggle for a New Society*. Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2008.
- Rosenzweig, Roy, et al. *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's History, Vol. 1*. Boston: St. Martins, 2008.
- Ross, Andrew. *Nice Work if You Can Get It: Life and Labor in Precarious Times*. New York: NYU Press, 2009.
- Rudd, Mark. *Underground: My Life with SDS and the Weathermen*. New York: William Morrow, 2009.
- Sale, Kirkpatrick. *SDS*. New York: Vintage, 1974.

- Salerno, Salvatore. "I Delliti Della Razza Bianca (Crimes of the White Race): Italian Anarchists' Racial Discourse as Crime." In *Are Italians White? How Race is Made in America*. Edited by Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "No God, No Master: Italian Anarchists and the Industrial Workers of the World." In *The Lost World of Italian American Radicalism: Politics, Labor, and Culture*, edited by Phillip V. Cannistraro and Gerald Meyer, 171-187. Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Red November, Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1989.
- Sandos, James A. *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992.
- Sanger, Margaret. *The Autobiography of Margaret Sanger*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004 [1938].
- Saul, Scott. *Freedom Is, Freedom Ain't: Jazz and the Making of the Sixties*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Schmidt, Michael and Lucien van der Walt. *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*. Oakland: AK Press, 2009.
- Schuster, Eunice Minette. *Native American Anarchism: A Study of Left-Wing American Individualism*. Port Townsend, WA: Breakout Productions, 1999 [1932].
- Segers, Mary C. "Equality and Christian Anarchism: The Political and Social Ideas of the Catholic Worker Movement." *The Review of Politics* 40, no. 2 (April 1978): 196-230.
- Shah, Nayan. *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown*. Berkeley: U. of California Press, 2001.
- Shecter, Darrow. *The History of the Left from Marx to Present: Theoretical Perspectives*. New York: Continuum, 2007.
- Sheehan, Arthur. *Peter Maurin, the Gay Believer*. Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1959.

- Shulman, Alix Kates. *Red Emma: An Emma Goldman Reader*. New York: Schocken, 1983.
- Singh, Nikhil Pal. *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.
- Skirda, Alexandre. *Facing the Enemy: A History of Anarchist Organization from Proudhon to May 1968*. San Francisco: AK Press, 2002.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Nestor Makhno, Anarchy's Cossack: The Struggle for Free Soviets in the Ukraine, 1917-1921*. Oakland: AK Press, 2004.
- Smith, Anna Marie. *Laclau and Mouffe: The Radical Democratic Imaginary*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Snyder, Gary. "Buddhist Anarchism," *Journal for the Protection of All Beings* 1 (1961). Available at Bureau of Public Secrets, <http://www.bopsecrets.org/CF/garysnyder.htm> (accessed August 2, 2010).
- Solnit, David and Rebecca Solnit. *The Battle of the Story of the "Battle of Seattle."* Oakland: AK Press, 2009.
- Sonn, Richard. *Anarchism and Cultural Politics in Fin de Siècle France*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.
- Spannos, Chris, ed. *Real Utopia: Participatory Society for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Oakland: AK Press, 2008.
- Stansell, Christine. *American Moderns: Bohemian New York City and the Creation of New Century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.
- Stephens, Julie. *Anti-Disciplinary Protest: Sixties Radicalism and Postmodernism*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998.
- Stoehr, Taylor. *Here Now Next: Paul Goodman and the Origins of Gestalt Therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1994.
- Stolberg, Benjamin. *Taylor's Progress: The Story of a Famous Union and the Men Who Made It*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Doran, and Co., 1944.
- Sugrue, Thomas. *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North*. New York: Random House, 2008.

- Sumner, Gregory. *Dwight MacDonald and the Politics Circle: The Challenge of Cosmopolitan Democracy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996.
- Sutherland, Bill and Matt Meyer. *Guns and Gandhi in Africa: Pan African Insights on Nonviolence, Armed Struggle and Liberation in Africa*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000.
- Thomas, Joan. *Years of Grief and Laughter: A "Biography" of Ammon Hennacy*. Salt Lake City: Hennacy Publications, 1974.
- Thompson, Edward P. *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1955.
- Thompson, Fred W. and Jon Bekken. *The Industrial Workers of the World: Its First 100 Years, 1905-2005*. Cincinnati: IWW, 2006.
- Thompson, Heather. *Whose Detroit? Politics, Labor, and Race in a Modern American City*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001.
- Topp, Michael Miller. *Those Without a Country: The Political Culture of Italian American Syndicalists*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.
- Townsend, Stuart. *The Battle in Seattle*. DVD. Los Angeles: Redwood Palms Pictures, 2008.
- Tracy, James. *Direct Action: Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Tuttle, Jr., William M. *Race Riot: Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1970.
- Tyson, Timothy. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999.
- van der Linden, Marcel. "The Prehistory of *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*: Joseph Weber and the Movement for a Democracy of Content (1947-1964)." *Anarchist Studies* 9 (2001).
- Van Ronk, Dave with Elijah Wald. *The Mayor of MacDougal Street: A Memoir*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo, 2005.

- Vecoli, Rudolf, ed. *Italian American Radicalism: Old World Origins and New World Developments*. New York: Italian American Historical Association, 1973.
- Veysey, Laurence. *The Communal Experience: Anarchist and Mystical Counter-Cultures in America*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973.
- Vlavianos, Basil J. and Feliks Gross, eds. *Struggle for Tomorrow: Modern Political Ideologies of the Jewish People*. New York: Arts, Incorporated, 1953.
- Voline. *Nineteen-Seventeen: The Russian Revolution Betrayed*. New York: Libertarian Book Club, 1954.
- von Eschen, Penny. *Race Against Empire: Black Americans and Anticolonialism, 1937-1957*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997.
- Voogd, Jan. *Race Riots and Resistance: The Red Summer of 1919*. New York: Peter Lang, 2008.
- Wald, Alan. *The New York Intellectuals: The Rise and Decline of the Anti-Stalinist Left from the 1930s to the 1980s*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987.
- War or Revolution? An Anarchist Statement*. New York: Why? Publications Committee, 1944.
- Ward, Colin. "The Anarchist as Citizen." *New Letters* 42, no. 2/3 (1978): 237-245.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Anarchy in Action*. London: Freedom Press, 1976.
- Watson, Bruce. *Sacco and Vanzetti: The Men, the Murders, and the Judgment of Mankind*. New York: Viking, 2007.
- Weinberg, Chaim Leib. *Forty Years in the Struggle: The Memoirs of a Jewish Anarchist*, ed. Robert P. Helms, trans. Naomi Cohen. Duluth, MN: Litwin Books, 2009.
- Weiss, Penny A. and Loretta Kensinger, eds. *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007.
- Werbe, Peter. "The History of the *Fifth Estate*." *Fifth Estate* 368-369 (2005): 8-19.
- Wexler, Alice. *Emma Goldman in America*. Boston: Beacon, 1984.

- Whitaker, Robert. *On the Lapse of Gods: The Red Summer of 1919 and the Struggle for Justice that Remade a Nation*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2008.
- White, Damian F. *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal*. London: Pluto, 2008.
- Widmer, Kingsley. *Paul Goodman*. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980.
- Wieck, David Thoreau. *Woman from Spillertown: A Memoir of Agnes Burns Wieck*. Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1992.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "Paul Goodman: Drawing the Line." *Telos* 35 (1978): 199-214. Williams, Robert F. *Negroes With Guns*. New York: Marzani and Munsell, 1962.
- Wittner, Lawrence. *Rebels Against War: The American Peace Movement, 1941-1960*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.
- Woodard, Komozi. *A Nation Within a Nation: Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) and Black Power Politics*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.
- Woodcock, George. *Anarchism: A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, 2d ed. Peterborough, ON: Broadview Encore Editions, 2004.
- Wreszin, Michael. *A Rebel in Defense of Tradition: The Life and Politics of Dwight MacDonal*d. New York: Basic Books, 1994.
- Yelensky, Boris. *In the Struggle for Equality: The Story of the Anarchist Red Cross*. Chicago: Anarchist Red Cross, 1958.
- Young, Robert. *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 2001.
- Yuen, Eddie, Daniel Burton-Rose and George Katsiaficas, eds. *Confronting Capitalism: Dispatches from a Global Movement*. Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2004.
- Zimmer, Kenyon. "A Slice of Pittsburgh Anarchist History: The Union of Russian Workers." *Steel City Revolt* (Spring 2009).
- Zimmer, Kenyon. "Premature Anti-Communists?: American Anarchism, the Russian Revolution, and Left-wing Libertarian Anti-Communism, 1917-1939." *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 6, no. 2 (2009): 45-71.