Contemporary British Anarchism

Benjamin Franks and Ruth Kinna

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The popular confusion of anarchy with disorder, evident most recently in commentaries on the August 2011 "riots", might suggest that anarchism has a limited and exclusively negative bearing on contemporary British politics.[1] Yet whilst the British anarchist movement undoubtedly sits on the margins of the parliamentary mainstream, it occupies a significant place in the revolutionary and radical left, offering an approach to politics which is innovative and provocative, though not unproblematic. This article outlines the history of the movement, examines its ideology and the groups and practices that compose it. It reflects on the divisions within the movement, its presence in contemporary British politics and its achievements.

Historical Overview

British anarchism has been shaped by particular national and local histories, but it is best seen as part of an international movement which has a complex, plural and diverse politics and which is composed of a large number of networks, associations, groups and individuals. Such variety is a result of differences between groups and tendencies about the identity of political subjects, forms of organisation, the identification of tactical and social goals and priorities attached to them. Disagreements within the movement have sometimes been the cause of division but are often debated constructively and collegially. Anarchism operates in different spheres – social, political and cultural – and many of its methods involve uncovering areas of mutual support or affinity between groups and practices operating in initially distinctive terrains. In the current era, electronic communications have enhanced this characteristic,[2] but co-ordination and activism still takes place in more standard, physical environments.

As well as organising in specifically anarchist associations, anarchists are also involved in a variety of not specifically anarchist campaigns, movements and community actions. These range from radical ecological to anti-border and anti-racist protest groups, animal rights organisations, musical subcultures (principally, but not exclusively punk), vegetarian, labour, feminist, gay, lesbian and trans-gender movements. In addition, core anarchist principles and methods are utilised by groupings and individuals that do not formally identify as "anarchists".

The origins of British anarchism are sometimes traced to eighteenth-century radicalism and notably to the influence of William Godwin and William Blake. However this history is disputed. The twentieth-century activist Guy Aldred identified Tom Paine and the early nineteenth-century freethinker Richard Carlile as the key inspirational sources, arguing that anarchism is not merely political theory and that it necessarily describes an active commitment to social transformation,

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[1] See the BBC interview with Darcus Howe about the designation of the term to describe events in Tottenham : <www.youtube.com>, last accessed in May 2012. See also Kit Malthouse, the Conservative Party chair of the Metropolitan Police Authority, who made explicit the link between anarchists and rioters, quoted in a number of news sources: "Obviously there are people in this city, sadly, who are intent on violence, who are looking for the opportunity to steal and set fire to buildings and create a sense of mayhem, whether they're anarchists or part of organised gangs or just feral youth, frankly, who fancy a new pair of trainers.", see for instance BBC News : "London riots : Looting and violence continues", *BBC News*, 8 August 2011 (<www.bbc.co.uk>) and Andrew Sparrow, "Nick Clegg defends government response to London riots", *The Guardian*, Monday 8 August 2011 (<www.guardian.co.uk>).

[2] Electronic communication has also spawned its own forms of activism (hacktivism). See Tim Jordan, *Activism !: Direct action, Hacktivism and the Future of Society*, London : Reaktion, 2002, 119–134 ; see also Andrew Flood, "Using social media for political activity & individual security", *Anarchist Writers*, 22 June 2010, <anarchism.pageabode.com>, last accessed 15 February 2012.

articulated through active protest.[3] The close links that militants like Aldred forged with popular grass-roots protest movements made it possible for anarchists to trace the roots of the doctrine to early religious dissenting traditions such as the revolutionary Ranters and communalist Diggers of the English Civil War and their theological precursors, the European Anabaptists.[4]

The self-identifying anarchist movement appeared towards the end of the nineteenth century, during the so-called socialist revival of the early 1880s and after the division of European socialism in 1871 into "authoritarian" and "anti-authoritarian" currents. Growing from the latter and undoubtedly stimulated by a body of European *émigrés* and refugees, British anarchists established a presence in a number of cities including London, Liverpool, Glasgow, Newcastle and Sheffield. Leading exponents included Charlotte Wilson, Louisa Bevington, Henry Seymour, David Nicoll and the Rossetti sisters, Helen and Olivia.[5]

The influence of anarchism on both intellectuals and grass roots movements continued in the interwar period. As Alfred Orage and the egoist anarchist Dora Marsden[6] helped introduce anarchism to *avant-garde* artists including Herbert Read,[7] revolutionary syndicalism exercised a powerful influence on the British movement: Aldred, Tom Brown, Ethel MacDonald and Jenny Patrick were associated with various strands in this movement.[8] Galvanised by the revolution

[3] Guy Aldred, "Socialism and Parliament", part 1, in *Essays in Revolt*, 2 vols., Glasgow : Strickland Press, 1940, 47.

[4] Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible : A History of Anarchism*, London : HarperCollins, 1992, 93, 96–107 ; Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces : A Secret History of the Twentieth Century*, London : Secker and Warburg, 1989, 299; see also Peter Pick, "A Theology of Revolution : Abiezer Coope and the Uses of Tradition", in Alexandre Christoyannopoulos (ed.), *Religious Anarchisms : New Perspectives*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne : Cambridge Scholars, 2011.

[5] For the history of the movement, see John Quail, *The Slow Burning Fuse : The Lost History of British Anarchists*, London : Granada Publishing, 1978 ; Hermia Oliver, *The International Anarchist Movement in Late Victorian London*, London : Croom Helm, 1983 ; William Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1874–1914*, London : Duckworth, 1975 ; Benjamin Franks, *Rebel Alliances : The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchisms*, Edinburgh & Oakland Ca. : AK Press, 2006. Isabel Meredith's *A Girl Among the Anarchists* (online at : <www.gutenberg.org>) is the Rossetti sisters' fictionalised first-hand account of the movement. See also Rudolf Rocker, *The London Years*, Edinburgh & Oakland Ca. : AK Press, 2005 ; George Cores, *Personal Recollections of the Anarchist Past*, London : Kate Sharpley Library, 1992 [1947] ; Alan O'Toole, *With the Poor People of the Earth : A Biography of Doctor John Creaghe of Sheffield & Buenos Aires*, London : Kate Sharpley Library, 2005. For the Anglo-French interactions, see Constance Bantman, "Internationalism without an International ? : Cross-Channel Anarchist Networks, 1880–1914", in M. Rodríguez García (ed.), "Labour Internationalism : Different Times, Different Faces", *Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis/Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, tome 84, fasc. 4, 2006, 961–981.

[6] On Orage, see Philip Mairet, *A. R. Orage: A Memoir*, London : J.M. Dent & Sons, 1936 ; Tom Steele, *Alfred Orage and the Leeds Arts Club 1893–1923*, Aldershot : Scholar Press, 1990, repr. Orage Press, 2009. Stirnerites like Marsden and anarcho-syndicalists like Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt share doubts about the compatibility of egoist individualism with social anarchism, (Dora Marsden, "Views and comments", *The Egoist*, vol. 1, n°16, 15 August 1914, 303–306, and Dora Marsden, "The Illusions of Anarchism", *The Egoist*, vol. 1, n°18, 15 September 1914, 341–344) ; Michael Schmidt & Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame : The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism*, Edinburgh : AK Press, 2009, 47–48 and 64. For an assessment of egoism, see Ruth Kinna, "The Mirror of Anarchy : The Egoism of John Henry Mackay and Dora Marsden", in Saul Newman (ed.), *Max Stirner*, London : Palgrave, 2011, 42–63.

[7] For Read, see *The Philosophy of Anarchism*, London : Freedom Press, 1941 ; *The Politics of the Unpolitical*, London : Routledge, 1943, and *A One-Man Manifesto* (ed. by David Goodway), London : Freedom Press, 1994. Read's relationship to Kropotkin is discussed in Matthew Adams, *"The Truth of a Few Simple Ideas": Peter Kropotkin, Herbert Read and the Tradition of Anarchist-Communism in Britain, 1886–1968*, PhD thesis, Manchester University 2011. Abstract at : <www.anarchist-developments.org>.

[8] For Aldred, see J. Taylor Caldwell, *The Life, Times and Death of Guy A. Aldred*, Renfrewshire : Laplace Publications and Art Bank, 2010. On Tom Brown, see *Tom Brown's Syndicalism*, London : Phoenix Press, 1990; for MacDonald, Rhona M. Hodgart, *Ethel MacDonald: Glasgow Woman Anarchist*, London : Kate Sharpley Library, 2nd ed., 2003. For the

in Spain in 1936, Vernon Richards and Albert Meltzer also spearheaded a number of anarchist campaigns.[9] In the post-war, British anarchism attracted a new generation of writers organised around the journal *Anarchy*. Inspired by the nineteenth-century movement, writers like Alex Comfort and Colin Ward applied anarchist ideas to a range of sociological and political issues – from education, to urban planning, housing and transport – borrowing insights from psychology, art and history.[10] In the same period, activists working within the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND), notably Nicholas Walter, Maurice Brinton and Stuart Christie (who joined forces with Meltzer), were involved in the organisation of a number of anarchist and libertarian groups, variously promoting principles of self-management and direct action.[11] In the last thirty years, different forms of militant activism have been associated with the Solidarity Federation (SolFed), the Anarchist Federation (AFed), Ian Bone and Class War, Dave Douglass and Dave Morris and, within punk and post-punk cultures, around the groups Crass and Chumbawumba.[12] The organisational and campaigning activities of Christie remain enormously influential in anarchist circles,[13] although rise of the alter-globalisation and anti-capitalist movement – in networks like

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inter-war context, see Mark Shipway, *Anti-Parliamentary Communism*, Basingstoke : MacMillan, 1988 ; Lewis Mates, *The Spanish Civil War and the British Left : Political Activism and the Popular Front*, London : Tauris, 2007.

[9] Relations between Meltzer and Richards soured, however, in 1944, helping to create a division within the movement. In Meltzer's words : "[…] there was by now a major difference as to what Anarchism was all about. Either it was a marble effigy of utopian ideals, to be admired and defined and even lived up to by some chosen individuals within the framework of a repressive society, or it was a fighting creed with a programme for breaking down repression." Albert Meltzer, *I Couldn't Paint Golden Angels*, Edinburgh : AK Press, 1996, ch. IV : <www.spunk.org>. See also Albert Meltzer, *Anarchism: Arguments For and Against* at : <www.spunk.org>.

[10] Ward's best known work is *Anarchy in Action*, London : Freedom Press, 1982. See also Colin Ward & David Goodway, *Talking Anarchy*, Nottingham : Five Leaves, 2003 ; Chris Wilbert & Damian F. White, *Autonomy, Solidarity, Possibility : The Colin Ward Reader*, Oakland Ca. & Edinburgh : AK Press, 2011. For essays on Ward, see Carl Levy (ed.), *Anarchist Studies*, vol. 19, n°2, 2011. Comfort's writings are collected in David Goodway (ed.), *Against Power and Death : The Anarchist Articles and Pamphlets of Alex Comfort*, London : Freedom Press, 1994. Carissa Honeywell's *A British Anarchist Tradition* (London: Continuum, 2011) analyses the work of Comfort, Ward and Read.

[11] Some of Walter's essays are collected in David Goodway (ed.), *The Anarchist : Past and Other Essays*, Nottingham : Five Leaves, 2007. Maurice Brinton's work, including "The Irrational in Politics" is collected in David Goodway (ed.), *For Workers' Power : The Selected Writings of Maurice Brinton*, Oakland Ca. & Edinburgh : AK Press, 2004.

[12] Dave Douglass's writings are online at : <libcom.org>. Dave Morris came to public attention with Helen Steele as a result of campaigning against MacDonald's. See John Vidal, McLibel : Burger Culture on Trial, London : Pan Books, 1997, and the material online at : <www.mcspotlight.org>. Morris's short account of his involvement with the Haringey Solidarity Group is at : <www.katesharpleylibrary.net>. Ian Bone founded Class War in the 1980s. For his activities, see *Class War : A Decade of Disorder*, London : Verso, 1991, and *Bash the Rich : True Confessions of an Anarchist in the UK*, London : Naked Guides, 2006. For details on Crass, see penny Rimbaud's *Shibboleth : My Revolting Life*, Oakland Ca. & Edinburgh : AK Press, 1999. Chumbawamba's website is found at : <chumba.com>. See also Chumbawamba's Boff Whallet, "In defence of anarchism", *The Independent*, 12 August 2011, at : <www.independent.co.uk>. For contemporary anarcho-punk, see the anarcho-punk portal at: <www.anarcho-punk.net> and for details on the intersection of post-punk subcultures and political activism, see Alistair Livingstone's archive of the anarcho-punk fanzine *Kill Your Pet Puppy* and the contemporary commentary that has grown up around it at : <killyourpetpuppy.co.uk>; George McKay, *Senseless Acts of Beauty: Cultures of Resistance*, London : Verso, 1996 and his edited collection *DiY Cultures: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain*, London : Verso, 1998.

[13] Stuart Christie was involved in the Glasgow Committee of 100 and Spies for Peace and with Albert Meltzer played an instrumental role in reviving the Anarchist Black Cross, a prisoner support network, and publishing its magazine Black Flag. He has been associated with a number of anarchist groups and publishing projects—Refract Publications, Cienfuegos Press, Meltzer Press and now Christie Books. The three volumes of his rich and highly entertaining autobiography, The Christie File, are at : <issuu.com>, <issuu.com> and <issuu.com>. The Christie Books site is at : <www.christiebooks.com>.

Reclaim the Streets and Dissent ![14]– has also seen the appearance of currents within anarchism which have tended to represent themselves as exponents of new anarchist traditions, less overtly focussed on "class" than anarchists like Christie, AFed, SolFed, Class War and others.[15]

Ideology

Anarchists usually avoid the adoption of single universal descriptors to define their ideology and instead associate the ideological distinctiveness of anarchism with a combination of ideas and practices.[16] For example, although anarchism is sometimes identified with anti-statism (a kind of anarchist *minimum*), many anarchists reject this designation as an adequate starting point for analysis either because analysts have assumed a relationship with right-libertarianism and un-regulated market relations (which the main body of anarcho-communist and class-struggle anar-chists reject)[17] or because it points to a narrow concern with political institutions and their "abo-lition": an account of anarchism which significant voices in the modern movement find wanting. Rejecting the *minimalist* approach (the identification of anti-statism with anarchism) makes find-ing an approach to the analysis of anarchist ideology quite challenging and there has been some debate in recent years about the adequacy of different methodologies. Traditional approaches which abstract ideas from the selected texts of canonical figures have been criticised by some anarchists, because they appear to privilege theory over practice and thus ignore the voices of militants involved in struggles and the role that movement media play in the construction of ideology.[18] To give a historical example : in the British context, greater attention is paid to the work of international figures like Peter Kropotkin and Rudolf Rocker than to, say, Bevington or Wilson, and the rich debates conducted in papers like *Freedom*, *Liberty*, *The Commonweal* or *The Torch* tend to be sidelined by the preference given to the analysis of "key texts".[19]

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[14] The archives are at : <rts.gn.apc.org> and <dissent-archive.ucrony.net>.

[15] See Jonathan Purkis & James Bowen (eds.), *Twenty-First Century Anarchism : Unorthodox Ideas for a New Millen-nium*, London: Continuum, 1997, and *Changing Anarchism : Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

[16] Nicholas Walter includes attitudes to state and class, individual and society, democracy and representation, god and church, war and violence, property and organisation and bureaucracy as key markers of anarchist belief. See "About Anarchism", in Howard J. Ehrlich, Carol Ehrlich, David De Leon & Glenda Morris (eds.), *Reinventing Anarchy. What Anarchists are Thinking These Days ?*, London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, 42–63.

[17] The association of anarchism with right libertarianism is made in a number of standard introductions to ideol-ogy including Ian Adams, *Political Ideology Today*, Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1993 ; Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies : An Introduction*, London : Macmillan Press, 1992 ; Andrew Vincent, Modern Political Ideologies, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995. For a discussion, see Süreyya Turkeli, *What is Anarchism ? : A Reflection on the Canon and the Constructive Potential of its Destruction*, PhD Thesis, Loughborough University, 2012.

[18] The best known works in this category are George Woodcock's *Anarchism : A History of Libertarian Ideas and Movements*, Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1963 and Peter Marshall's *Demanding the Impossible*, London : HarperCollins, 1992. Anarchist movements are discussed in both works, but the construction of the canon is the central feature of both analyses. For a critique, see Stuart Christie and Albert Meltzer, *The Floodgates of Anarchy*, Southampton : Kahn and Averill, 1984.

[19] Freedom is Britain's oldest and longest running anarchist paper, established in 1886. *For a history, see Freedom : A Hundred Years*, London : Freedom Press, 1986. Liberty, the paper edited by James Tochatti ran from 1894–96. The Commonweal (1885–95) was founded by William Morris. Morris did not identify as an anarchist, but both the paper and the Socialist League, the political group he established, attracted anarchist elements. *The Torch (1891–96)* was the paper of the Rossetti sisters.

Attempts to define anarchism using the analytical tools developed in mainstream philosophy or political science have attracted similar criticisms. Moreover, recent work has shown how the imposition of analytical frameworks elaborated within liberalism have distorted anarchist understandings of key concepts and fostered a misleading impression of anarchism's theoretical incoherence.[20]

Yet there is a long tradition of exposition within the anarchist movement and it is possible to identify a number of core concepts in anarchist ideology. The history of the movement offers one route to understanding their relationship. Notwithstanding the significant disagreements between individuals within the historical movement, nineteenth-century anarchists articulated a number of common principles which continue to resonate in contemporary anarchist politics. First was a commitment to a particular idea of transformation which extended beyond the concern with economic injustice (though this often remained a central issue) to other forms of oppression: religious, racial, social and sexual. Anarchism was understood to involve a challenge to structures of authority as well as to systems of exploitation. Second, and following from this, was a commitment to anti-parliamentary struggle and against constitutional political action. Third, because anarchists were not only keen to avoid electoral politics, but all forms of elitism or vanguardism, they also argued that meaningful change could only result from grass-roots, bottom-up organising and they advocated the construction of self-managed and self-regulated decentralised, federal networks as alternatives to the increasingly centralised and bureaucratic structures characteristic of the state.

The languages of contemporary anarchism have undoubtedly altered the terms of debate. Today, anarchist discussions are more likely to be peppered by references to the rejection of hierarchy and horizontalism than they are to anti-authoritarianism.[21] Oppression tends to be conceptualised as domination and the rejection of exploitation is popularly conceived as anti-capitalism. Similarly, anarchists now prefer to talk in terms of direct action rather than anti-parliamentarianism and of prefiguration and DiY (do-it-yourself) politics instead of the rejection of revolutionary elitism. New Left politics, itself influenced by libertarian thinkers, played an important role in this change and helped sharpen awareness of a number of particular issues – concerned with racism, gender politics and ecology, for example. The introduction of theoretical approaches and insights from a range of other developing disciplines – psychoanalysis, cultural studies, environmental science – similarly explains the general shift in the treatment of late capitalism, which gives weight to complex psychological, cultural and creative constraints, as well as to the material and physical.[22] For some anarchists, these changes in the languages of anarchist debate indicate important conceptual shifts in anarchist thinking and the conscious embrace of political commitments which were not fully articulated in the past. Others argue that these concerns were encompassed by past anarchist theory and that the changes in terminology merely signal a shift in emphasis or re-contextualising core anarchist principles in new circumstances.

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[20] See Benjamin Franks, "Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy", in Ruth Kinna (ed.), *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, London : Continuum, 2012 ; Carissa Honeywell, "Bridging the Gaps : Twentieth Century Anglo-American Anarchist Thought", in Ruth Kinna (ed.), *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism*, op. cit.

[21] Though underlying the apparent difference is a similarity of conceptual concerns, as Bakunin indicates, it was only hierarchical authority he rejected, that which is limited contestable, flexible and generates social goods, was acceptable. Michael Bakunin, *God and the State*, New York : Dover, 1970, 32.

[22] Issues of sexual repression, conformity and conditioning were central to 1960s activism and were importantly explored by Comfort and Brinton.

Of all the concepts used in contemporary anarchism, prefiguration probably best captures the nature of the shift in thinking.[23] Whilst the idea of prefiguration is still associated with the rejection of parliamentary politics and the seizure of the control of the instruments of repression as a means of liberation, it has a number of aspects: an objection to the version of socialism that vanguard strategies imply (a classless society in which authoritarian managerialism and/or industrial technocracy remain unchallenged) ; a rejection of the Machiavellian and dictatorial politics that it might sanction ; scepticism about the theoretical certainties that support the adoption of vanguard strategies.[24] In current discourse, moreover, prefiguration might also describe the building of a new world in the heart of the old, either in the ordinary sense of the word, as a foreshadowing,[25] or in a less familiar way, to describe ways in which revolutionary desires are expressed and/or the intimate relationship between social transformation and action in the present.[26] In this context, prefiguration is linked to the development of alternative relationships, ways of living and behaving. Whilst echoing the historical rejection of strategies that prioritise means at the expense of ends or which justify utilitarian calculations, prefigurative discourses articulate a commitment to direct action in everyday life.[27] And in all these senses, prefiguration contests the frequent and unthinking association of anarchism with destruction and the commitment to the abolition of formal political structures, and instead stresses the experimental, productive and imaginative characteristics of anarchist practices that challenge and replace hierarchical and oppressive social forms. Similarly, prefiguration fosters an idea of revolutionary transformation as a continuous process rather than a single moment of change.[28]

Anarchist Groups and Practices

Anarchist groups often label themselves in distinctive ways, identifying with particular principles (for example : class-struggle, eco-anarchist, anarchafeminist), means of engagement (community action, syndicalist, culture jamming) or theoretical positions (autonomist, anarcho-communist).

The oldest surviving British anarchist group is the Freedom Group, which was originally established in October 1886.[29] The Anarchist Federation, an affiliate of the International of Anarchist Federations, and SolFed, the British section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers'

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[23] Prefiguration is a familiar term in English-language anarchism but it does not feature in Daniel Colson's *Petit Lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme de Proudhon à Deleuze*, Paris : Librairie Générale Française, 2001.

[24] See for example Carl Boggs, "Marxism, prefigurative communism, and the problem of workers' control", at : <libcom.org>.

[25] The Anarchist FAQ talks about "the future in the present", see the discussion of blueprints at : <anarchism.pageabode.com>.

[26] Uri Gordon defines prefigurative politics as a practice: the "actual implementation and display of anarchist social relations", Anarchism and Political Theory: Contemporary Problems, PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2007, ch. 3, accessible at: <theanarchistlibrary.org>.

[27] David Graeber, "The New Anarchists", *New Left Review*, n°13, Jan-Feb 2002, 62.

[28] See Monkey's tag line at Eco-action.org : <www.eco-action.org>.

[29] See *Freedom: A Hundred Years*, London : Freedom Press, 1986, for a history of the group. This history is contested by, amongst others, the anarcho-syndicalist Black Flag (Supplement n 3, 1986, 3) who point to the hiatus in production of Freedom for more than a decade (1933–44) and the move away, in the 1960s to the late 1980s from Kropotkin's explicit revolutionary anarchism, to a more liberal conception of anarchism. However, as Freedom has returned to a more consistent anti-capitalist, class conscious perspective, objections to Freedom's claims to an established continuous history have largely evaporated.

Federation, are the two other long-standing groups which identify with class-struggle anarcho-communism. Both have local associations across the country. Other class-struggle groups include ALARM, (the intermittent) Black Flag, Class War, and the North East Anarchist Group. Although the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) is not formally anarchist, as it has an explicit apolitical, revolutionary syndicalist stance, which allows members to individually participate in parliamentary politics, it contains many anarchists, operates on largely anarchist principles and maintains close relationships with formal anarcho-syndicalist groups.[30] Similarly the group Liberty and Solidarity have attempted, unsuccessfully, to broaden their appeal and range of activities, by avoiding identification as anarchists, although they utilise anarchist principles and recognise that the label can apply to themselves.[31]

Anarchist community groups are distinguished by the practices and policies they pursue – notably consensus decision making, non-hierarchical or horizontal organisation, direct action – often shaped by resistance to official (central and local) government initiatives.[32] Similar practices are adopted by the plethora of anti-capitalist and eco-anarchist groups that have appeared in recent years, including the Occupy movement (although Occupy does not explicitly identify with anarchism).[33] Insofar as different anarchist groups are distinguished from one another, they are so by the particular campaigns they choose to support – for example, animal liberation, the development of alternative pedagogies, alternative media, co-operative production, cycling, brewing and so forth, and the spheres in which they operate. Whereas class-struggle anarchists have traditionally focused on workplace activism, anarchists who place themselves outside this tradition tend instead to organise through the creation of (often temporary) autonomous spaces – squats, camps, social centres – as well as in mobilisations.

Anarchist principles of inclusivity, sharing, co-operation and mutual aid have deep history in anarchist thought. Recent practice, honed through engagement with anarchafeminist critique, gender politics and anti-colonialism, is facilitated through practical experimentation and skill-sharing, supported both on the web and in actions.[34] Culture jamming, which has been driven by a particular concern with consumerism, uses subversion to challenge mainstream media messages, drawing on a different set of artistic *avant-garde* traditions, notably Dada and Surrealism, mediated by Situationism.

Differences between groups are often reflected in the aesthetics that individual members adopt. However, there are considerable overlaps of principle and in group memberships : it is possible to be an eco-anarchist committed to anarcho-communism and community action, for instance, or an anarchafeminist autonomist culture jammer ; a member of SolFed and a community activist. Moreover, there is significant co-operation between groups – evidenced in protest actions, book fairs, conferences and blogrolls. Thus the gap separating overtly "class struggle" an-

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[30] See, for instance, IWW, Industrial Worker, vol. 108, n°6, July-August 2011, at : <www.iww.org>. Commentators tend to classify it as libertarian communist.

[31] Liberty and Solidarity critique their self-identity as "anarchists", and indeed political labels in general, though they do not dispute that this is a possible description for their organisation. "Frequently Asked Questions : Is L&S an Anarchist group ?", at : <www.libertyandsolidarity.org>.

[32] See, for example, the Haringey Solidarity Group at : <www.haringey.org.uk>.

[33] Many of the original Occupy movement did have anarchist origins. See David Graeber, "Occupy and anarchism's gift of democracy", The Guardian, 15 November 2011, at : <www.guardian.co.uk>; Occupy London site is at : <occupylsx.org>.

[34] See, for example, the work of Jamie Heckert at the Anarchist Library (<theanarchistlibrary.org>) and Sara Motta's column, "Beautiful Transgressions" in Ceasefire (<ceasefiremagazine.co.uk>).

archists who have traditionally focused on workplace organisation, from radical libertarians who do not identify in this way, can be pushed too far. More than one libertarian theorist has identified the contestation of class hierarchies in environmental and community campaigns,[35] whilst patriarchy and other non-economically reductive oppressions are contested by "class struggle" activists inside and outside the workplace.[36] The differences are less a matter of a strict or sectarian division than of emphasis.

Divisions within the movement

In common with other ideologies, anarchism is an umbrella movement but because there is no anarchist party or central dominant organisation to discipline dissent or decontest ambiguities, diversity is an acknowledged feature. Anarchists disagree on all sorts of issues : attitudes to censorship, sex and pornography,[37] crime and punishment,[38] responses to multiculturalism,[39] ecology and technology.[40] The diversity that anarchists accept as a good in principle results in considerable diversity of practice. One perennial issue is about the priority attached to behavioural revolution and the application of anarchist ideas to social, political and economic issues in relation to structural change and the resistance to government policy. A second is about violence.

Deciding whether anarchism is about behavioural or structural change raises questions about the ways in which the concepts of "struggle", "resistance" and "revolution" are understood.[41] For AFed, struggle and resistance are linked to an understanding of revolution defined as a conflictual process. One of the principles of AFed is that :

> It is not possible to abolish Capitalism without a revolution, which will arise out of class conflict. The ruling class must be completely overthrown to achieve anarchist

[35] See, for instance, Aufheben, "The Politics of Anti-Road Struggle and the Struggle of Anti-Road Politics", in George McKay (ed.), *DiY Culture: Party and Protest in Nineties Britain*, London: Verso, 1998, 100–127 ; p.m., "Strange Victories", in Midnight Notes Collective (ed.), *Midnight Oil : Work, Energy, War,* 1973–1992, Brooklyn : Autonomedia, 1992, 193–214.

[36] See, for instance, Colin Wright, "Anarchism – Feminism – Anarcha-feminism", *Zabalaza Books*, 22 August 2011 at <zabalazabooks.net> ; "Anarchist communists reject the view that women's oppression will end with the overthrow of the bosses and recognise it cannot be explained simply in terms of an economic system", Anarchist Federation, *Aspects of Anarchism*, 26, available at : <afed.org.uk>.

[37] See Class War Federation, "Let's Talk About Sex", online at the Anarchist Library (<theanarchistlibrary.org>); "Anarchism and Sex", *Organise !*, n°59, 2002; Phil Dickens, "Exploring Anarcha-Feminism : Liberty, Morality and Economics in the Sex Industry", at Property is Theft! (<propertyistheft.wordpress.com>); Derek Cohen: Interview (interviewed by T. Wilson), *Now or Never !*, 2008, 14.

[38] See "Anarchism and Crime", *Direct Action*, n°46, 2009, at : <www.direct-action.org.uk>; "Anarchist Responses to Sexual Violence", 2010, at : <www.freedompress.org.uk>.

[39] See Thurrock Alternative Media, "Identity in an age of austerity and slump"; Paul Stott, "British Islamism: Towards an Anarchist Response", both online at : <thuraltmedia.wordpress.com>; Steven Johns, "Anarchism and British Islamism : putting things in perspective", 2011, at : <libcom.org>.

[40] See E.1 in the Anarchist FAQ, "What are the root causes of our ecological problems ?", online at : anarchism.pageabode.com ; John Moore, *A Primitivist Primer*, at : <www.eco-action.org>.

[41] For a discussion, see Lauren Wroe and Josie Hooker, "Give up Lifestylism!", *Shift Magazine*, n 13, 2012, at : <shiftmag.co.uk>.

communism. Because the ruling class will not relinquish power without their use of armed force, this revolution will be a time of violence as well as liberation.[42]

For the Bristol Space Invaders, on the other hand, resistance has a different character. Whereas AFed link resistance explicitly to a revolutionary *telos*, the Space Invaders emphasise the generation of exhilarating emancipatory social relationships in the here and now :

> [...] we believe in the confrontational reclaiming of social space – taking spaces back with our hands [...] we are creative and work as a collective be it making art, taking housing, holding workshops, discussions, talks, films, food/swap-shops, music, info-stalls, performances & open mic nights to name but the tips of icebergs.[43]

Theoretical disagreement about the degree to which power extends from ordinary social interactions as well as (or even rather than) a-symmetrical economic relations is felt in practical approaches organisation. Anarchists differ about the acceptability of formal structure[44] and about the forms that anarchist organisations should take—the choice between decentralised, fluid structures and more centralised and formal democratic forms.[45] Contrast Meltzer's treatment of organisation to the statement on disorganisation by Reclaim the Streets. Meltzer argued :

> But organisation is strength. We advocate mass action because it is effective and because the proletariat has in its hands the means to destroy the old economy and build anew. The Free Society will come about through workers' control councils taking over the places of work and by conscious destruction of the authoritarian structure. They can be built within unionisation of the work-forces of the present time.[46]

Reclaim the Streets described their position as follows :

> London [RTS] would like to emphasise that it is a non-hierarchical, leaderless, openly organised, public group. No individual "plans" or "masterminds" its actions and events. RTS activities are the result of voluntary, unpaid, co-operative efforts from numerous self-directed people attempting to work equally together.[47]

Nonetheless, the question of how to organise remains contentious in the movement.
One of the most well-trodden debates in anarchist literature is between The division between those promoting formal economic organisation in order to bring about structural change over those prioritising fluid organisation producing mutual benefits in the here and now has been described as a conflict between social anarchists and individualists (or "lifestylists", as Murray

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[42] <www.afed.org.uk>.

[43] <bristolspaceinvaders.wordpress.com>.

[44] See the oft-quoted debate between Jo Freeman ("The Tyranny of Structurelessness") and Cathy Levine ("The Tyranny of Tyranny") in *Untying the Knot : Feminism, Anarchism and Organisation*, London : Dark Star and Rebel Press, 1984.

[45] Karl Klein, *Contemporary Platformism : A Contemporary Study*, Sheffield : Outages Press, 2010, available at : <libcom.org> ; see too Nick Durie (Liberty and Solidarity), "We must win; we can't win; how we will win", LibCom.org, at : <libcom.org >.

[46] Albert Meltzer, Anarchism : Arguments For and Against at : <www.spunk.org>.

[47] RTS London, "On Disorganisation", 2000, at : <rts.gn.apc.org>.

Bookchin referred to them).[48] However, this characterisation conceals an underlying agreement about the problem that anarchists confront : how to assist in generating and sustaining anti-hierarchical social relations. There is general consensus about the scope and extent of anarchism's revolutionary ambitions and the conflictual character of anarchist resistance in all manner of struggles. Typically, both AFed and the Bristol Space Invaders describe themselves as non-hierarchical, anti-racist, direct activists. Moreover, recognising the value of individual rebellion and the essential commitment to autonomy and voluntarism, contemporary anarchists attempt to work in solidarity.[49]

Such co-ordination between workplace and community struggles is not new. Late nineteenth century anarchists, supported by Rudolph Rocker – celebrated as an exponent of anarcho-syndicalism – built both radical trade unions and social clubs which fostered community and cultural activities.[50] Today, contemporary anarcho-syndicalists also adopt dual organisational strategies that call for the construction of community groups alongside the industrial networks more usually associated with workplace activism. These community "locals" :

> [...] put solidarity into practice in the local community. They [...] get involved in local campaigns across a wide range of issues – both in the community and in workplaces. Issues are wide-ranging: defending our natural and local environment and health ; opposing racism, sexism and homophobia ; in fact, anything which defends or contributes to our mutual quality of life.[51]

These locals have helped support autonomous "social spaces",[52] autonomous hubs for networks of activists engaged in social activities consistent with anarchist principle.

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Similarly m community-based activists similarly recognise that localised oppressions are (partly) the result of capitalist social relations, and actively seek out links of solidarity with workers groups. For instance, in the late 1990s, Reclaim the Streets joined forces with striking Underground workers and striking dockers.[53] SchNEWS and Occupy activists supported – and were supported by – striking electricians, creating links of solidarity that are consistent with autonomous mutual aid and which threaten bureaucratic and state control.[54]

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[48] The division is significant when non-class struggle anarchism drifts into propertarianism, because then goals, methods and agency are radically at odds with socialist currents. The division was part of the reason why Kropotkin split from Seymour's publication, The Anarchist, to found the anarchist communist Freedom. A similar division was the dominant feature of Murray Bookchin's polemic *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism : An Unbridgeable Chasm* (Edinburgh : AK Press, 1995), and has generated a set of critical responses from those who approve of "lifestyle anarchism" (Bob Black, *Anarchism After Leftism*, Columbia : Columbia Alternative Library, 1997) and those who see it as a flawed binary division (Laurence Davis, "Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism : An Unhelpful Dichotomy", *Anarchist Studies*, vol. 18, n°1, 2010, 62–82.

[49] The "collective statement from some individuals affected by the infiltration of the UK environmental movement" (March 2011) at Dysophia (<dysophia.wordpress.com>) makes this point very well.

[50] William Fishman, *East End Jewish Radicals, 1875–1914*, London : Duckworth, 1975.

[51] In February 2012, SolFed listed 10 locals and four more in formation across the United Kingdom "Locals", Solidarity Federation : <solfed.org.uk>.

[52] SolFed have been actively involved in supporting and defending social centres in Manchester (The Basement) and Deptford (Social Centre Plus), see too North London Solidarity Federation, "Solidarity Federation : Police social centre raids are 'simple intimidation tactics'", *Solidarity Federation*, 2011, at : <solfed.org.uk>.

[53] "Down with Empire! Up with Spring !", *Do or Die !*, n°10, 2003.

[54] "Turned up to 11", *SchNEWS*, n°802, 6 January 2012 ; Deb Harris, "Strikes and Solidarity", *The Commune*, 3 Feb 2012 (<thecommune.co.uk>).

A similar negotiation is apparent in anarchist responses to violence and illegalism, a second and equally deep division within the movement. In the post-war period, the influence of Tolstoyan ideas (which had a powerful influence in British radical circles)[55] and the successful use of apparently non-violent methods by Gandhi and Martin Luther King[56] encouraged some anarchists to theorise violence as a characteristic of statist politics, suggesting that non-violent resistance was the only means consistent with anarchist ends. For anarchists like Meltzer, the principled rejection of violence was a mistake. There are times, he argued, when the only effective alternative to oppression is forcible resistance. In such circumstances, passivity is tantamount to collusion.[57] The difficulty of finding agreement on issues like violence and illegalism is exacerbated by conceptual confusions over what is meant by "violent action" and "pacifism". "Violence" is frequently conceived by pacifists in largely liberal terms, so that structural restraints that discipline workers through deprivation and fears of redundancy tend not to be viewed as problematic, whilst attempts to resist privileged control of vital economic resources is deemed unacceptable.[58] By the same token, non-violence is often misconstrued by its opponents as inaction, rather than a selected form of defiance.[59] In recent years, the debate has tended to turn on tactics rather than principle. With the emergence of a mass anti-capitalist protest movement, critics have tended to focus on the ineffectiveness of spectacular violence as a means of change, on poor targeting and the ease of police infiltration into non-pacifist groups rather than the inconsistency of violence with anarchist values. Anarcho-pacifism remains a significant current within the movement, particularly within Christian anarchism.[60] The idea of tactical diversity developed by groups involved in alter-globalisation mobilisations is not unproblematic as it suggests a lack of principle or theoretical incoherence.[61] However, at its best, it highlights the accommodation that different groups have found by working in solidarity with those who place different stresses on certain anti-hierarchical principles, rather than advancing co-operation with those who have stable set of antipathetic values.

Anarchist Presence in Contemporary British Politics

The membership of anarchist groups remains tiny, with none having formal membership in four figures and only a few in three figures. Yet anarchism punches above its weight in mainstream politics both because anarchists engage in grass-roots activism and because of the anarchistic nature of protest cultures. In addition, a number of scholars have argued that anarchist ideas have seeped into British consciousness through the work of friends and fellow-travellers

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[55] See for instance the *Peace Pledge Union and Peace News* ; see also Carissa Honeywell, *A British Anarchist tradition*, op. cit., 102–04.

[56] As Neibuhr argues, whilst largely agreeing with Gandhi's goals and methods, it is a mistake to consider these tactics to be "non-violent"—they did, after all, intend (or at least foresee) harm to others, and sometimes innocent others (like Lancashire textile workers). Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, London : Charles Scribener's Sons, 1941.

[57] Albert Meltzer, *Anarchism : Arguments For and Against*, op. cit., 21–22.

[58] See Ted Honderich, *Violence for Equality : Inquiries in Political Philosophy*, Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1980, 26–35 ; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, op. cit.

[59] See Gene Sharp, *From Dictatorship to Democracy*, Boston : Albert Einstein Institute, 4th ed., 2010.

[60] Information and resources at Alexandre Christoyannopoulos' website, at : <sites.google.com>.

[61] Matthew Wilson, "Freedom Pressed : Anarchism, Liberty and Conflict", in Benjamin Franks & Matthew Wilson (eds.), *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, Basingstoke : Palgrave, 2010, 125–126.

including George Melly, John Mortimer, Colin McInnes, James Kelman and Alan Moore. The affinities that David Goodway has observed between anarchism and British literature and in traditions of British satire indicate an openness to anarchist ideas,[62] even if the result has been to recuperate and domesticate radical discourses.

Given the organisational characteristics of the recent anti-capitalist protests and the prominence of anarchist symbols within them, it is understandably tempting for commentators to tie anarchism's resurgence or renewal to the emergence of the alternative globalisation movement in 1999.[63] However the Stop the City demonstrations of the 1980s anticipated many of the ideas and tactics of the movements that emerged following the WTO protest in Seattle and convergent, international protests like J18's "Carnival Against Capitalism" which occupied the financial centre of London on June 18th, 1999. Anarchist presence in public life also predates the spectacular demonstrations outside intergovernmental meetings. The anti-Poll Tax campaigns, which played an important part in bringing Margaret Thatcher's premiership to an end, had a significant anarchist element.[64] And with the decline of Leninist organisations, which had been the main poll of "revolutionary" socialism during the short twentieth century (1917–89), anarchism was given the space to flourish in direct ecological resistance (anti-road building, anti-GM campaigns, etc.)[65] in groups like Reclaim the Streets and Earth First !

Today, anarchists are active in the campaigns against austerity, in which the social wage of the working class has been cut in order to revitalise profits for business, and to enhance opportunities and advantages for the social elite. Orthodox trade unions have been at the forefront of the demonstrations and strikes against cuts in public services and on public sector pay and conditions. However many anarchists are also members of these unions and active in workplace campaigns, seeking to support them and to encourage more autonomous, direct action to protect resources for the least socially-powerful. In a less spectacular fashion, the small, revolutionary syndicalist IWW has helped organise and assist workers where the standard trade unions have been weak or ineffectual.[66] And a consistent campaign of workplace and community activism from a range of groups have helped frustrate the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's workfare programme, of forcing the unemployed to work for benefits, and thereby provide major corporations with free labour. The wave of university and college occupations,[67]

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[62] See David Goodway, *Anarchist Seeds Beneath the Snow : Left Libertarian Thought and British Writers from William Morris to Colin Ward*, Liverpool : Liverpool University Press, 2006.

[63] Jonathan Purkis & James Bowen, "Introduction : Why Anarchism Still Matters", in *Changing Anarchism : Anarchist Theory and Practice in a Global Age*, *op. cit.* ; David Graeber, "The New Anarchists", *op. cit.* ; Süreyyya Evren, "Introduction : How New Anarchism Changed the World (of Opposition) after Seattle and Gave Birth to Post-anarchism", in Süreyyya Evren & Duane Rousselle, *Post-Anarchism : A Reader*, London : Pluto, 2011.

[64] The anarchist publisher Ramsey Kanaan, who was active in the Edinburgh anti-Poll Tax movement from its earliest days, convincingly argues that the anti-Poll Tax movement "originated with anarchists" and "informed it" : "When Fucking The System Isn't Enough", Indymedia, 30 March 2004, at : <www.indymedia.org.uk>.

[65] For an account, see the articles collected in the occasional magazine *Do or Die : Voices From the Ecological Resistance* (<www.eco-action.org>); material about the Bilston Glen camp (set up in 2002 to resist the construction of a bypass) is available at : <www.bilstonglen-abs.org.uk>.

[66] See, for instance, the campaign to protect workers' rights at Sheffield Showroom cinema, Steven, "You fire the worker—we fire the boss", LibCom.org, 6 April 2010 (<libcom.org>) ; IWW Cleaners and Allied Trades Branch and, in particular, the case of Alberto Durango, IWW organiser and sacked employee of Incentive cleaning company (<iww.org.uk>).

[67] The website National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts lists 21 higher education institutions that are or were occupied, in the last 18 months, but the list is by no means comprehensive.

whilst including people with a range of political identities, some fluid and some with none, also included a significant and often overt anarchist presence.[68]

Anarchist presence often takes the form of protest and resistance, rather than engagement with hierarchical institutions such as constitutional, representative parties. Anarchists prefer to disrupt unequal economic relations through selective property destruction and occupation, and by developing examples of alternative, experimental ways of living based on contesting social hierarchies and generating shared social goods. The goals and methods of anarchism are consequently identified by state and corporate managers as a threat to their organisations, professional roles and privileged identities. Because of this social and communicative fissure between activists on one side and the institutions of cultural, political and economic power, on the other, the purposes of libertarian actions are sometimes misunderstood and often wilfully distorted. Responses veer from ridicule and derision to exaggerated anxiety. Tony Blair's dismissal of the "anarchist travelling circus" at the 2001 EU Gothenburg Summit typifies the first response.[69] The derisive representation of anarchist activists was a regular trope for politicians and the mainstream media,[70] until it was replaced with the return of the older stereotype, that of violent (and irrational disorder).[71]

The representation of anarchists as a threat to civilised standards of behaviour was established in the nineteenth century and despite the best efforts of anarchists to contest it, it remains deeply rooted in public consciousness. In 2011, anarchists were widely blamed for the riots which followed a mass demonstration in London by college and university students. The media constructed a division between ordinary protestors and anarchists,[72] although the majority of anarchists did not participate in the disturbances and the majority of the militants had not (at least previously or subsequently) identified themselves as anarchists. On November 30th, 2011 (a day of a large-scale public sector strike), the massive demonstration in London contained a small (in percentage terms) but noticeable anarchist presence. As a result of the civil disruption, the media adopted the same approach and invented a division between militant workers and anarchists.[73]

One consequence of this negative representation of anarchism is that anarchist politics is delegitimized. When the former Conservative leader and cabinet minister Iain Duncan Smith claimed that protesters against the government's workfare scheme were anarchists, he was appealing to

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[68] See for instance, "Hannah's experience of the Free Hetherington... graduations !", *Free Hetherington*, 26 August 2011, at : <freehetherington.wordpress.com>.

[69] A BBC report of Blair's comments is at : <news.bbc.co.uk>. For a discussion of "carnival" anarchism, see Karen Goaman, "The Anarchist Travelling Circus : Reflections on Contemporary Anarchism, Anti-capitalism and the International Scene", in Jonathan Purkis & James Bowen (eds.), *Changing Anarchism*, *op. cit.*, 163–180. For a commentary on dismissive media portrayals, see the "Collective statement" at *Dysophia*, 2011 : <dysophia.wordpress.com>.

[70] See for instance, Labour Leader Neil Kinnock's dismissal of anti-Poll Tax campaigners as "Toy-town revolutionaries". S. Gunn, N. Williamson, S. Tendler, "Kinnock attacks 'Toytown' rebels", *The Times* [London, England], 10 March 1990, 18 ; or an undercover reporter's description of anarchists organising anti-G8 protests in 2005 which is described as "neo-hippy mumbo-jumbo met hardline, expert protest technique". Scott McCulloch, "Inside the weird world of the G8 anarchists", *The Scotsman*, 26 June 2005.

[71] See for instance, Peter Domniciczak, "Anarchists plot to wreck Prince William and Kate Middleton's wedding celebration", London Evening Standard, 8 April 2011 (<www.thisislondon.co.uk>) and the headlines following the London riots which featured the word "Anarchy" prominently, such as the front page of *The Daily Star*, *The Sun* and *The Daily Mail* on 9 August 2011.

[72] See for instance, the *Daily Mail*'s headline "Hijacking of a very middle class protest : Anarchists cause chaos as 50,000 students take to streets over fees" : <www.dailymail.co.uk>.

[73] Rebecca Evans and Martin Smith, "Violence as anarchists hijack the big march, clash with police and storm offices of multi-national company", *The Daily Mail*, 1 December 2011 : <www.dailymail.co.uk strata-HQ-London.html>.

an idea of political irresponsibility that ordinary people should fear.[74] Another is that the public impact of anarchism is usually measured by the actions taken to control it: state surveillance, repression and attempts to promote aggressive public hostility.[75] An example is the advice issued in 2011 by the Metropolitan Police to treat anarchists – individuals who hold anarchist beliefs – as terrorists.[76] Similarly, the National Domestic Extremism Unit (NDEU) deals not just with "terrorism", broadly defined, but disruptive, non-constitutional political activity.[77] Corporate and state spies[78] have been deployed to infiltrate and sabotage anarchically-inclined environmental movements, manipulating and disordering activists' personal lives in the process.[79] As an alternative, the influence of anarchism might also be measured by the antagonistic public responses it provokes, particularly from the far right. The targeting of anarchists has been a consistent feature of far right organising for groups like Redwatch, Casuals United, the English Defence League and Scottish Defence League. These groups regard radical left activists in similar ways to much of the corporate media, but organise attacks on them including, recently, Occupy protestors.[80]

Achievements

With consequentialist politics, like traditional Leninism or social democracy, identifying achievements is a straightforward matter. Impacts can be measured, in the case of democratic parties, by increases in numbers of representatives in legislatures and councils, or by the degree to which they influence policy formation within the executive. For revolutionary parties, success is judged by the seizure of state power, and the progress towards it, usually viewed in terms of party membership and influence in the wider labour movement.[81] Anarchists, by contrast, do not seek to control the state, nor primarily to influence policy-making. Nor is success viewed

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[74] Chris Grayling denounced the campaigners as "Trotskyists". Patrick Wintour, "Ministers drop benefit sanctions threat from work experience scheme", *The Guardian*, 29 February 2012 (<www.guardian.co.uk>). See also "Workfare and the anarchists", *Freedom*, 2 March 2012 (<www.freedompress.org.uk>).

[75] This is an argument made by non-anarchist organisations like Statewatch, as well as anarchists. See the report at : <database.statewatch.org>.

[76] A *Guardian* report is at : <www.guardian.co.uk>. The response from Space Hijackers is at : <www.spacehijackers.org>.

[77] Rob Evans, "New police chief in charge of undercover operations against protesters", *The Guardian*, 1 March 2012 (<www.guardian.co.uk>) ; Association of Chief Police Officers, "About NDEU" (<www.acpo.police.uk>).

[78] Rob Evans, "Mark Kennedy and Operation Pegasus", *The Guardian*, 21 July 2011 (<www.guardian.co.uk>) ; Rob Evans, "Mark Kennedy in the twilight zone", *The Guardian*, 3 October 2011 (<www.guardian.co.uk>) ; John Binghamn, "Mark Kennedy : 15 other undercover police infiltrated green movement", *The Daily Telegraph*, 16 January 2012 (<www.telegraph.co.uk>). Earlier examples of corporate managers hiring private investigators to spy on radical groups includes McDonald's infiltration of London Greenpeace (a radical green movement unconnected to Greenpeace). See McSpotlight (<www.mcspotlight.org>) and John Vidal, *McLibel : Burger Culture on Trial*, London : Pan, 1997.

[79] Rob Evans & Paul Lewis, "Undercover police had children with activists", *The Guardian*, 20 January 2012 ; Simon Hattenstone, "Mark Kennedy : Confessions of an undercover cop", *The Guardian*, 26 March 2011 : <www.guardian.co.uk>.

[80] Phil Dickens, "Militant anti-fascism and the Occupy movement", LibCom.org, 24 December 2011 (<libcom.org>) ; see Casuals United and comments below, "Occupy London Commies spray 'baby killers' on RBL stall at St Pauls", *Casuals United*, 9 November 2011 (<casualsunited.wordpress.com>).

[81] See Vladimir Lenin, *What is to be Done ?*, Oxford : Clarendon, 1963 and *"Left-Wing" Communism : An Infantile Disorder*, Peking [Beijing], Progress 1975, who discusses the acceptability of various organisational forms and tactics on consequentialist grounds.

in terms of recruitment to a particular group. Turbulence, who also problematize the notions of "success" and "failure" in revolutionary politics,[82] suggest that there are ways to think about winning, through encouraging methods that contest or avoid domination and encourage the development of exciting, life-enhancing relationships that evade the control of hierarchical systems such as the state or capital. The development of social centres, which are hubs for cultural and cultural activity, as well as venues for more formal political organising, have been a stable (and growing) feature of Britain's radical political scene, often driven by anarchists.

In this sense anarchist achievements include the establishment of a vibrant alternative media and zine scene ; the running of voluntary, not-for-profit organisations – including publishing projects, art activism and a host of co-operative ventures. The creation of networks like Radical Routes, which support housing and worker co-ops and the Anarchist Black Cross, a prisoners' support network, are also notable achievements of the movement. Recent British anarchisms have made similar strides in developing movements and social networks that operate largely on anarchist principles and which challenge or remain autonomous from dominant powers: the anti-capitalist protests and, prior to that, the Stop the City mobilisations[83] against the G8, notably through the Dissent! network, resulted in an explosion of creativity. The extent to which anarchists can encourage anti-capitalist and socialist movements to adopt non-hierarchical principles of organisation remains a moot point. Yet in Occupy anarchists have also made a visible mark: the Guy Fawkes mask (based on Moore's design), which has captured public imagination, is a symbol of anarchist resistance and of an alternative politics which anarchists have long championed ; and its widespread adoption opens the door to a discussion about the possibility of radical social, political and economic transformation.[84]

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[82] See, for instance, Turbulence Collective, "What would it actually mean to win ?", *Turbulence* (<turbulence.org.uk>) ; Bini Adamczak & Anna Dost, "What would it mean to lose ? : On the history of actually-existing failure", *Turbulence* (<turbulence.org.uk>).

[83] A brief description is at : <libcom.org>.

[84] The mask was popularised by Alan Moore and David Lloyd's graphic novel V for Vendetta, London : Titan Books, 2005. For Alan Moore on anarchism, see <www.youtube.com> ; see also <www.bbc.co.uk>.

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Appendix

Though the remarks of former Conservative leader and cabinet minister Iain Duncan Smith were undoubtedly ill-informed, his claim that protesters against the government's workfare scheme were anarchists was a grudging acknowledgement of anarchism's growing influence.[85]

Networks and Groups

All London Anarchist Revolutionary Movement (ALARM): established in May 2011 (<www.facebook.com>) with links to groups around London including Haringey Solidarity Group, Hackney and Whitechapel Anarchist Group.

Anarchist Federation : affiliated to the International of Anarchist Federations (IAF-IFA) ; anarcho-communist, class struggle anarchists with local groups across the UK (<www.afed.org.uk >).

Anarchist Studies Network : co-ordinates and promotes the re-investigation of anarchism as a political ideology (<www.anarchist-studies-network.org.uk>).

Bicycology : a non-hierarchical cycling collective (<www.bicycology.org.uk>)

Bristol Space Invaders : DiY anti-corporate dreamers and schemers (<bristolspaceinvaders.wordpress.com>).

Class War : militant UK propaganda network (<classwar-uk.blogspot.com>).

Climate Camp : grass roots action to combat climate chaos (active 2006–2010).

Climate Justice Collective : formed in 2011 from the Climate Camp (<climatejusticecollective.org>).

Earth First ! : ecological activism linked to a global network (<earthfirst.org.uk>).

Edinburgh Anarcha Feminist Kollective : virtual space for anarchafeminist organising in the Edinburgh area (<edinburghanarchafeminist.noflag.org.uk>).

Free Association : Leeds-based affinity group/network (<freelyassociating.org>).

Hereford Heckler : independent web-publication and blog (<herefordheckler.co.uk>).

Industrial Workers of the World : a revolutionary syndicalist group that operates on largely anarchist principles, but contains other socialists and unaligned workers (<iww.org.uk>).

Liberty and Solidarity : supporting direct action community and workplace activism (active 2008–2012).

London Anarcha Feminist Kolektiv : women and transfolk only collective (<lafk.wordpress.com>).

New Anarchism Research Group : established at the London Anarchist Bookfair in 2012. Meets monthly at the Torriano Meeting House, Kentish Town, London, and organises through the Anarchist Studies Network list.

North East Anarchist Network : class struggle anarchism in and around Newcastle-on-Tyne (<www.neanarchist.net>).

Northern Anarchist Network (NAN) : regional body of unaffiliated and organised anarchists founded in 1995 (<northernvoicesmag.blogspot.com>). Publishes *Northern Voices* (<northernvoicesmag.blogspot.com>).

Radical London : site for anarchist and libertarian community groups (<www.radicallondon.net>).

Solidarity Federation (SolFed) : British section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers' Federation, with locals across the UK and a number of industrial networks (<www.solfed.org.uk>).

South Wales Anarchists Network of Anti-capitalist Autonomous Collectives (<southwalesanarchists.wordpress.com>).

Space Hijackers : a group of anarchitects battling the incursions of urban planners, corporations and institutions in public spaces (<www.spacehijackers.org>).

Vacuum Cleaner : a cultural resistance collective for radical social and ecological change (<www.thevacuumcleaner.co.uk>). Co–founder of the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (<www.labofii.net>).

Projects

Advisory Service for Squatters : London campaigning service, providing practical advice and guides, located by Freedom Press Bookshop, Whitechapel (<www.squatter.org.uk>).

Anarchist Black Cross Brighton : prisoner support network. The site has links to groups worldwide (<www.brightonabc.org.uk>).

Anarchist Media Project : prepares eye-catching publicity and images for, and in support of radical campaigns (<anarchistmedia.wordpress.com>).

Anarchist Teapot : Brighton-based, not-for-profit mobile kitchen providing affordable, GM-free, (mostly) organic, vegan food (<www.eco-action.org>).

AntiFA : militant anti-fascist, anti-racist direct action network initiated by members of the Anarchist Federation, Class War Federation and No Platform (<www.antifa.org.uk>).

Anti-Fascist Network (<antifascistnetwork.wordpress.com>).

Bristol Radical History Group : established in 2006 to uncover the hidden revolutionary and colonial history of the West Country. The BRH Group in an independent, grass-roots, history-from-below movement, publishing pamphlets and organising events (<www.brh.org.uk>).

Fitwatch : a counter-surveillance activist group, concentrating mostly on the state's Forward Intelligence Team (FIT). Fitwatch's website is subject to state intrusion, though their Facebook page remains intact (<www.fitwatch.org.uk>).

Green & Black Cross : grass roots project to support autonomous social struggles, set up in 2010, providing legal support for protesters (<greenandblackcross.org>).

Indymedia : independent, activist and grass roots, non-corporate, alternative media network (<www.indymedia.org.uk>).

Libcom.org : primary resource for UK anarchists : lively forums, news, blogs, information and support and an extensive library (<libcom.org>).

No Borders Network : campaign for free movement and the end of migration controls (<noborders.org.uk>).

Radical Routes : a network of radical co–operatives (<www.radicalroutes.org.uk>).

Really Open University : transformative higher education project started in Leeds (<really-openuniversity.wordpress.com>).

Seeds for Change: network for grass roots activism (<www.seedsforchange.org.uk>).

Trapese : a popular education collective. The archive site provides information about the group and a wealth of resources about do-it-yourself and consensus decision-making (<trapese.clearerchannel.org>).

Veggies : vegan catering since 1984 – volunteer led, community based – information exchange and campaign networking for humans, animals and the environment (<www.veggies.org.uk>).

Infoshops & social spaces

1 in 12 Club : long running social centre in Bradford (<1in12.com>).

56a infoshop @n @archive : South East London social centre housing a library and archive about anarchism and related left projects (<www.56a.org.uk >).

Cowley Club, Brighton : libertarian social centre, cafe, bookstore and library (<cowley-club.org.uk>).

Kebele Community Co-operative, Bristol : social space and activist hub (<www.kebelecoop.org>).

London Action Resource Centre : meeting place, library and hub for direct action movements (<www.londonarc.org>). It hosts the Red and Black club, the monthly social meeting of ALARM.

Sparrows Nest : anarchist library and cultural centre established by Anarchist Federation and class-struggle activists in Nottingham, UK. It holds an archive and provides online access to scanned documents, with international and local significance (<thesparrowsnest.org.uk>).

OK Café (Okasional café) : a squatted social centre based in Manchester, provides vegan food, and a free hub for radical groups (<okcafe.wordpress.com>).

Journals & publishing

Anarchist Studies : an international peer-review journal publishing (<www.lwbooks.co.uk>).

Arena : successor to the Cienfuegos Press Anarchist Review, *Arena* provides a forum for debate and discussion of libertarian culture, arts and politics. Published by Christie Books (<www.christiebooks.com>).

Aufheben : autonomist, libertarian communist journal, founded in 1992 (<libcom.org>).

Black Flag : UK-based magazine, re-launched in 2007 (<blackflagmagazine.blogspot.co.uk>). Archived material (to 2000) is available at : <flag.blackened.net>.

Christie Books : information about publications and film archive, with links to a range of other anarchist sites (<www.christiebooks.com>).

Commune : communist, internationalist – for workers' self-management and communism from below (<thecommune.co.uk>).

Direct Action : magazine of the Solidarity Federation (SolFed), the British section of the International Workers' Association (IWA) (<www.solfed.org.uk>).

Dysophia : green anarchist imprint for pamphlets and zines (<dysophia.wordpress.com>).

Endnotes : irregular communist theoretical journal, established in 2005 by former members of *Aufheben* (<endnotes.org.uk>).

Freedom Press : London-based publisher established in 1886, produces a range of books and the newspaper *Freedom* (<www.freedompress.org.uk>).

May Day : anarchist/libertarian magazine for discussion of ideas with an organisational focus/interest in praxis (<mayday-magazine.vpweb.co.uk>).

New Escapologist : anti-work magazine which uses poetry, philosophy and humour to promote anarchy through the discovery of escape routes from the boredom of everyday life (<newescapologist.co.uk>).

Notes from the Borderland : left/green anti-fascist magazine with a particular interest in security/secret state (<www.borderland.co.uk>).

Organise ! : magazine of the Anarchist Federation (<www.afed.org.uk>).

SchNEWS : a free weekly direct action news sheet produced in Brighton, UK. The site also has links, information about events and guides (<www.schnews.org.uk>).

Shift Magazine : now defunct academic/activist magazine produced in Manchester UK, discussing ideas, tactics and strategies (2007–2012).

STRIKE ! : quarterly magazine dealing in philosophy, politics, art, subversion and sedition (<www.strikemag.org>).

Turbulence Magazine : run by an international collective to think about and discuss the political, social, economic and cultural theories of direct action movements, as well as the networks of diverse practices and alternatives that surround them (<turbulence.org.uk>).

Variant : a free, diverse left-leaning cultural magazine, with a significant libertarian socialist element (<www.variant.org.uk>). Publication currently suspended, but website still active.

Voices of Resistance from Occupied London : twice yearly journal of theory and action against authority and power: international with a focus on urban issues/culture/politics/life. Online at : <www.occupiedlondon.org>.

Individual sites & Blogs

Agraphia : the website for the artist Clifford Harper (<www.agraphia.co.uk>).

Booksurfer : Martyn Everett's blog, with links to library and publishing resources, book reviews, news about anarchism and alternative politics as well as to his own work (<booksurfer.blogspot.com>).

Ian Bone : class warrior blog (<ianbone.wordpress.com>).

Phil Dickens : blogs at Truth, Reason and Liberty (<truth-reason-liberty.blogspot.com>) and Property is Theft! (<propertyistheft.wordpress.com>).

Judy Greenway : writings on anarchism, feminism, nineteenth-century anarchist and feminist movements and ideas, utopianism the politics of gender and sexuality (<judygreenway.org.uk>).

Gavin Grindon : writings, translations and links (<www.gavingrindon.net>).

Greg Hall : radical film-maker (<brokebutmakingfilms.wordpress.com>).

George McKay : commentary on cultural studies, music, disability, DiY information about current academic work and festival reports (<georgemckay.org>).

Ulla Schott : free-lance radical journalist (<blog.fempages.org>).

Johnnie Void : anti-authoritarian, anti-poverty blogger "narking off [annoying] the state since 2005" (<johnnyvoid.wordpress.com>).

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