

## REVIEWS

adrienne maree brown, *Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*

Chico, CA: AK Press, 2017; 280pp; ISBN 9781849352604

Helen LaKelly Hunt, *And the Spirit Moved Them: The Lost Radical History of America's First Feminists*

New York: Feminist Press, 2017; 248pp; ISBN 9781558614291

At first glance, *And the Spirit Moved Them* (Helen LaKelly Hunt) and *Emergent Strategy* (adrienne maree brown) could not be more different. Hunt's book is a chronological account of the intertwined – indeed, inseparable – histories of abolitionism and feminism in the nineteenth-century United States; brown's book is a contemporary collection of her writings on social change, taking the form of poetry, interviews, guidelines, and blog posts, to name a few. Yet one thing connects them: Hunt's and brown's books are both texts of liberatory, feminist hope and, in their best moments, both show ways of organising, in the past and present, that makes this hope concrete.

In the introduction to her book, brown presents a preferred mode of critique, one that speaks to a spirit of 'calling in' rather than 'calling out.' She writes:

I am open to critiques of course, if they are offered in the spirit of collective liberation. Staying focused on our foundational miraculous nature is actually very hard work in our modern culture of deconstruction. We are socialized to see what is wrong, missing, off, to tear down the ideas of others and uplift our own. To a certain degree, our entire future may depend on learning to listen, listen without assumptions or defenses. So I am open to hearing what doesn't work about this book, as long as you promise to stay open to what does work (p5).

I want to write this review in that spirit, with an assumption that readers and writers can learn from each other, and that a generous reading is not naïve or uncritical.

Helen LaKelly Hunt, in *And the Spirit Moved Them*, sets out to, as the subtitle of the book puts it, tell '*The Lost Radical History of America's First Feminists*'. The

history of feminism in the United States, Hunt argues, goes back further than usually acknowledged, and interracial anti-slavery work was central to the development of a feminist movement. She points to the Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women, held in 1837, as ‘the first national women’s conference in the United States’ (p50), and considers the efforts leading up to the organising of this convention as decidedly feminist. In chronicling the early women’s abolitionist movement, Hunt pinpoints three principles ‘that could be relevant for our global women’s movement today’ (p4). The first two would surely speak to many anarchist organisers and thinkers: ‘The abolitionist feminist movement [...] was inclusive – across race, class, and socioeconomic status’ (p4), and ‘The movement was ‘relational’ [...] As a sisterhood, they broke through the silence of social conventions by emphasising the importance of solidarity’ (p5). The third, however might be harder to accept: ‘Their movement building was in large part a faith-fueled activism’ (p6). Faith-based institutions played a central, though often conflicted, role in abolitionism and early feminism; for example, the 1837 Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women that Hunt builds her book around was held in a church (p53). This focus on spirituality and faith is one of the places where anarchists have the most to learn from both Hunt and Brown.

One of Hunt’s more innovative and bold moves is to elevate the words of the women activists she writes about to – in my reading – the status of prophecy. She does this by putting their words in red, a practice that is used in some Bible editions to mark the words of Jesus. Christian readers of *And the Spirit Moved Them* are likely to notice this practice. The words, with their distinct colour, will stand out to other readers, too, even if the Biblical reference is lost. I read Hunt’s use of red text as a statement that prophesying – speaking uncomfortable truths about the world around us – is a practice accessible to everyone, and that we should listen to prophetic voices in unexpected places.

Overall, I found Hunt’s book compelling, especially her thoughtful analysis of the role of religion in early feminist organising. There was one topic, however, where I wish she would have pushed herself further, and where an anarchist perspective has much to offer: money. In the introductory chapter, Hunt tells her own story of growing up in a wealthy oil-business family in Texas, but, due to her gender, having exceedingly little information about the family’s financial status. For Hunt, learning about money and getting involved in philanthropy was a core aspect of her development as a feminist. Yet even in her understanding of the importance of shifting monetary relations in order to achieve social justice, Hunt does not critique the capitalist system itself. The book continues in a vein of complicated – though not necessarily complex – views on money. Hunt states, for example, when

discussing the Industrial Revolution: 'There was an upheaval growing beneath the surface of this new economy, for while many prospered, the gap between wealthy industrialists and working people grew cavernous. Street violence was not just aimed at the wealthy but also at free black people, who were seen as taking jobs from white workers. Racial tensions were exacerbated by economic strife, and women were in the middle, struggling for a foothold' (p35). And, yet, she does not question the institution of money itself, nor the capitalist structure. In the current political climate, a feminist awakening that grew out of access to petrodollars is surely deserving of a critical analysis.

While Hunt is writing about a feminist history long before her time, adrienne maree brown has written a book firmly grounded in her own experience as an activist. *Emergent Strategy* is a guidebook of sorts, presenting brown's concept of 'emergent strategy' in organising. This strategy seeks to 'apply natural order and our love of life to the ways we create the next world' (p4), drawing on models from the more-than-human world as well as from interpersonal relationships. It is a beautiful book, full of evocative phrases: 'My dream is a movement with such deep trust that we move as a murmuration, the way groups of starlings billow, dive, spin, dance collectively through the air – to avoid predators, and, it also seems, to pass time in the most beautiful way possible' (p71). Yet for the most part, I could not imagine what the forms brown suggests would look like in practice. How do we apply emergent strategy? brown's book evoked in me a *feeling* that we can do things differently – more lovingly, less hierarchical – but with no real clarity as to *how*.

That said, there are moments in the book that I found useful, such as brown's discussion of how groups can go about thinking about their vision in creative ways. I found brown's discussion useful for thinking about when alignment is needed, and when group members are on paths that are too different (pp238-40). brown uses a 'migration metaphor: if everyone else is set on migrating to Mexico, and you really want to end up in Chile, you may need to find a different flock eventually, and it's good to know that' (p239). And I appreciated the tip for 'DARCI', an accountability method (pp250-1). And I imagine that other moments stand out to other readers. Perhaps this is how brown's text works: it is a bit disjointed, but there are moments where each of us can find something we need.

In the 'Outro,' brown poses a series of thought-provoking questions: 'I am still sitting with so many questions, questions at the scale of our species: Do we have enough time to do anything that matters? Can we do something that matters for enough people? How do we relinquish victory and loss? Can we evolve beyond a construct of constant enemies, constant crisis? Does emergence mean eventually leaving Earth – or never leaving Earth? How are we resilient during apocalypse?'

(pp272-3). I wish the book had been about these questions, even providing answers to some of them. I leave both books, then, with significant questions. The questions that Brown poses at the end of her work, and also questions about subjects only touched upon in Hunt's book. For example, Hunt writes about several pairs of sisters involved in abolitionist work. What did sisterhood mean to them? What strength and encouragement did they find in the familial bond? This is not a criticism, but rather an endorsement: the books made me want to know more, and think deeper, and perhaps try out the strategies the authors document.

In the end, I found that *And the Spirit Moved Them* – describing organising that took place well over a century ago – provided more concrete guidance for activists today than did Brown's book, written for and about the current moment. But I have also witnessed *Emergent Strategy* used to guide the structure of a meeting of non-hierarchical activists. These two books, then, while taking radically different approaches, both have the potential to provide inspiration to feminist and anarchist activists.

*Stina Soderling, Metropolitan State University of Denver*

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Lewis H. Mates, *The Great Labour Unrest. Rank-and-file Movements and Political Change in the Durham Coalfield*

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016, 311pp.

The 'Great Labour Unrest' of 1910-1914 is one of those rare instances in British history when anarchism stepped out of the shadows to become a political force to be reckoned with. In the shape of the syndicalist current, it was then able, for a brief but remarkable moment, to influence significant minorities inside the working class, causing unease if not fear in high places, and destabilising the reformists leading the trade-union movement and the nascent Labour Party.

Lewis Mates' fascinating study revisits that tumultuous and exhilarating period from a local perspective, with a focus on the Durham coalfield and the Durham Miners' Association (DMA) – an association whose yearly gala has remained immensely popular to this day. Going back to the 1890s, Mates tracks the way the Liberal Party's control over the DMA was contested first by the socialist Independent Labour Party (ILP), later by syndicalists of various breeds. The author shows how those rivalries, and years of mass mobilisation – against the Liberal government's eight-hour day legislation on the one hand, in favour of a miners' minimum wage on the other – came to transform the local and regional political

culture, paving the way for a rise of the Labour Party that was anything but a foregone conclusion.

The opening of the book is particularly admirable, and should be compulsory reading for any student of British labour history. Revisiting half a century of research on British labour in general and the 'Great Unrest' in particular, it offers a fitting summary of many crucial debates, such as the McKibbin-Tanner controversy over the impact of labourism prior to the First World War, and the 'rank-and-filism' quarrel ignited by Jonathan Zeitlin in 1989.

Another major quality of the book is its attention to the variety of anarchist strategies and tactics that coexisted and competed with each other at the time. Should syndicalists work inside the existing unions ('boring from within') or launch their own revolutionary union from scratch? Should they aim at forming 'One Big Union' (OBU) uniting every person employed in the mines, or one embracing the whole of the proletariat? Should industrial organisation go hand in hand with the formation of a workers' party, or should politics be rejected altogether? The arguments that opposed the disciples of Tom Mann to those of Daniel De Leon appear here as anything but dry, the local anchorage of the study giving flesh and blood to those ideological tensions.

In other words, we are presented here with 'history from below' at its best. Mates is interested in the grassroots, and rank-and-file initiatives are firmly placed in the foreground, but the emphasis on worker agency never obliterates the weight of established structures, and the taste for local colour is always informed by due attention to the wider, national picture. Writing with empathy for the exploited and the oppressed, the author produces a narrative that avoids naivety, and ticks all the boxes of scientific rigour, with maps, endnotes and bibliographical references galore.

In his enquiry, Mates has turned every stone, reconstructed every strike, resuscitated every activist. He has put his impressive archival work to good use, so that one does not need to be familiar with mining communities, the North-East or Edwardian England to take pleasure in this book which, at times, reads almost like a novel – with its unforgettable personalities (John 'topple me if you can' Wilson and his opponents Jack Lawson, Will Lawther and George Harvey) and its nerve-wrecking, 'cliff-hanging' episodes (the March 1912 strike in particular).

Going down the pit of Lewis Mates' *Great Labour Unrest* and exploring its nooks and crannies is a demanding but stimulating experience you will not regret.

*Yann Beliard, Université Sorbonne Nouvelle – Paris 3*

Charles Forsdick & Christian Høgsbjerg, *Toussaint Louverture: A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions*

London: Pluto Press, 2017; 224pp; ISBN 9780745335148

The Haitian Revolution broke with history. When the revolution took place, a plantation system fuelled by the blood and sweat of African slaves spread through the Caribbean. As Cuban litterateur, Antonio Benítez Rojo argued several decades ago, that regional plantation system made the Caribbean an island that kept repeating itself. Thus, it was unthinkable for those at the bottom of the social hierarchy, those not considered humans, and those whose backs were cracked by whips, to revolt and eventually create an independent nation, abolish slavery, and draft their constitution. It was perhaps because of that same reason that for decades ‘the first Negro epic of the New World’, as the Martinican activist and poet Aimé Césaire called the Haitian Revolution, was silenced from official historical narratives.

But silence does not equal absence. As C.L.R. James argued, ‘the only place where Negroes did not revolt is in the pages of capitalist historians’ (p150). It was precisely James who published the first comprehensive modern history of the Haitian Revolution, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint Loverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, in 1938. Since then, his work has inspired a rich scholarship filled with admirers and critics that include names like Aimé Césaire, David Geggus, Philipp Girard, Édouard Glissant, Michel Rolph Trouillot, and Laurent Dubois. Their work has yielded light on the complicated and often contradictory processes that took place from 1791 to 1894 in what is now known as the Haitian Revolution. Attentive to such complexities, and deeply influenced by C.L.R. James’ work, Charles Forsdick and Christian Høgsbjerg’s *Toussaint Loverture: A Black Jacobin in the Age of Revolutions* provides an accessible biography of one of the revolution’s most important characters. While the book is presented as a popular biography, the authors use Toussaint Loverture as a lens to explore the broader historical contexts that made the revolution possible.

The introduction situates the book historiographically, summarising the most significant contributions to the topic from the early twentieth century to the present day. Chapter 1 gives a biographical sketch of Toussaint Loverture and explores the historical events that led to the revolution. Chapter 2 explains the beginnings of the 1791 insurrection and the multiple historical interpretations of Loverture’s relation to it. Forsdick and Høgsbjerg present different perspectives from authors that believe Loverture was crucial in the insurrection’s organisation to

scholars that argue that his involvement was minimal, if any. Chapter 3 documents how the revolutionary events taking place in France influenced Lovverture to lead insurgents against the French and British governments from 1804 to 1808. The following chapter explores how Lovverture sought to consolidate power through a capitalist programme and by drafting Haiti's first constitution. While some scholars have heavily criticised Lovverture's constitution, Forsdick and Høbsbjerg believe that it 'struck a direct blow at the ontological foundations of white supremacy and, by its very existence, at the colonial foundations of the Atlantic colonial order' (p102). Chapter 5 documents Lovverture's last years in Haiti before he was deported to France in 1802, which culminated in his death the following year. The last chapter, perhaps the most appealing to non-academic audiences, demonstrates the impact and influence of the Haitian Revolution in popular culture until the present day.

Forsdick and Høbsbjerg are also the editors of *The Black Jacobin Reader* (2017). Thus, their expertise allows the authors to engage with the existing historiography and advance their interpretations, offering a balance between a broad summary and rigorous scholarship. For example, contrary to what other scholars have argued, the book presents the Haitian Revolution as profoundly democratic in its anti-colonial stance in the struggle for national self-determination. While any academic would surely appreciate such equilibrium, *Toussaint Lovverture* often reads as inaccessible for those who are not familiar with the region's history. That, of course, is not the authors' fault. The Haitian Revolution is a vastly complicated event that involved thousands of anonymous revolutionaries, many leaders of different ideologies and political factions, and has produced many different historical interpretations. Since Forsdick and Høbsbjerg seek to present a comprehensive analysis of such events, this entails sacrificing readability for wider audiences. Nonetheless, the book is an excellent introduction for students and anyone interested in the histories of Latin America, the Caribbean, and the Age of Revolutions, more broadly.

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Ra Page (ed), *Protest: Stories of Resistance*

Manchester: Comma Press, 2017; 464pp; ISBN 9781905583737

*Protest: Stories of Resistance* serves as a fictionalised people's history of protest, side-lining leaders of revolts to focus on the individuals who were necessary for the protests to work. Rather than celebrating, as is often done, particular heroes

or leaders, the book seeks to construct a rich celebration of public protest, typically along the lines of non-violent protest or civil disobedience ranging from the Chartists to the Tolpuddle Martyrs. Each chapter is written in a style approximately in keeping with the style of the time of its subject matter. The text explicitly fails to comply with Thomas Carlyle's 'Great Man' theory that history is simply a biography of notable individuals (suspiciously all men) to be contrasted with mere bystanders.

Twenty chapters provide fictional accounts of notable protests throughout British history, from the 1381 Peasant's Revolt to the 2003 Iraq War protests. These accounts are immediately succeeded by afterwords from major historians and sociologists, who provide careful and illuminating factual overviews of the street-level events portrayed. Most of the chapters are rooted in the twentieth century, with the majority of these being situated in the golden age of left-wing political activism; the 1960s-1980s. Contributors include Alexei Sayle, Kit de Waal, Kate Clanchy, Maggie Gee and Jacob Ross. One particularly remarkable chapter written by Sandra Alland (afterword by Francis Salt) centres on the National Blind March of 1920, an event largely ignored by contemporary historians, likely due to an unacknowledged ableism.

The book's chapters share much in common, providing a useful, illuminating taxonomy of some core features of protests, including the following: the moral outrage of the dispossessed; symbolic violence directed not against persons but property; the priority of reminding authorities of their legal role; police heavy-handedness (demonstrated by chapters on the Poll Tax riot and the Battle of Orgreave); and government infiltration into progressive movements. The Midland Rising of 1607 involved acts of violence against hawthorn hedges (often digging them up and setting them ablaze) which were just as symbolic as the contemporary trend of smashing the windows of major banks after the 2008 financial crisis.

What is perhaps most interesting about the book is the way it exposes how a considerably large number of major demonstrations were organised by protestors not demanding radical change or revolution, but simply reminding the government (or crown) of its legal duties, which it so often deviated from (as with the Iraq War). Contrary to myth, popular uprisings and demonstrations are often the result of fundamentally *conservative* motivations, with the leading authorities being the ones acting with reckless, radical, unaccountable tyranny. Each chapter's afterword also presents a range of interesting historical background, discussing, for instance, the international influence of British protests, with Martin Luther King being heavily influenced by the Aldermaston marches via one of the organisers, Bayard Rustin.

Additional, overriding principles exposed by the book include the typical conditions when protests are ripe: economic decline, unwanted military escalation,

the threat of new industrial technologies, and the introduction of laws or practices marginalising a particular group. Indeed, there also appears to be a particularly opportune season for protests, with the overwhelming majority occurring between March and June.

While the book constitutes a unique appreciation of the evolution of British democracy, it also brings with it a suitable reminder of the decreasing number of causes to protest about in contemporary Britain, with only a single chapter being based in the current century. This is not an argument for apathy – far from it, especially given that this list makes up for its shortness with its intensity and urgency (e.g. nuclear proliferation and climate change). On the contrary, it is proof that protest and bottom-up organisation clearly work, and the present volume is an excellent source of inspiration in this respect.

There is an old Latin phrase from Medieval alchemical thought discussed by Carl Jung, ‘In sterquiliniis invenitur’, translated as ‘In filth it will be found’; or, as Jordan Peterson has interpreted it, ‘What you most want to find will be found where you least want to look’. Reading these twenty chapters can involve familiarising oneself with some of the most gruesome and unjust moments in British political history (involving Venner’s Rising, the Pentrich Rising, the 1820 Radical War, and the Grosvenor Square anti-Vietnam War demonstration), and while this hardly constitutes looking ‘where you least want to look’, doing so will likely provide the politically informed reader with a sense of direction for what it is they most want to find.

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### Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Assembly*

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017; 346 pp; ISBN 9780190677961

*Assembly* is the third book in a series by Hardt and Negri. Each of the volumes centres on a master concept, the first two of which announce the concept in the book’s title. *Empire* analyses the global network formed among corporations, states, and other entities in what the authors’ see as a largely post-nationalist environment. *Multitude* turns toward the resistance to Empire, seeing it in what might be called a counter-network of cooperating groups whose resistance stems from creating alternatives within Empire. The master concept in *Assembly* is the common, which might be thought of as the ether in which the multitude operates.

The common, broadly defined by the authors, may be different in different

eras, but ‘In capitalist society today, *the common names both the means of production and the forms of life*’ (p149, authors’ italics). It is the entirety of productions, reproductions, resources, and relationships that are created, sustained by, and sustaining for the multitude. Although the authors quote Marx extensively, we should not confuse the multitude with Marx’s proletariat. Instead, the authors insist, the multitude requires a ‘plural ontology. A pluralism of subjectivities, multiple models of temporality, and a wide variety of modes of struggle, which emerge from different traditions and express different objectives, together form a power swarm held together by cooperative logics’ (p69).

We may see the common created by (and in turn creating) the multitude as a product of a variety of struggles, struggles that both resist capitalism and at the same time envision and to one extent or another construct alternatives to it. Scattered throughout the book are references to Occupy, Black Lives Matter, the Zapatistas, and other contemporary movements that have often been labelled post-Marxist, a term the authors would likely reject since they take on board a number of Marx’s own analyses.

At this point the book may seem to focus solely on resistance. This would be misleading. There are extensive analyses of neoliberalism, analyses that hark back to *Empire*. However, there is a crucial methodological switch characterising *Assembly*. The authors insist that to understand the current network of power relationships we must begin from below, from the common itself. Looking from above, from the perspective of *Empire*, we will miss the creative aspect of the multitude, that is, the common. As the authors insist throughout the book, ‘*the common comes first*,’ (p236, authors’ italics). Capitalism, to use their words, is primarily ‘extractive’. It extracts from the common. Therefore, in order to understand both neoliberal capitalism and the resistance that can challenge it, we need to start from below, from the common that is the ground of both. This, unsurprisingly, leads to a view in which the multitude is neither victim nor reactive, but an active creator; it is capital, instead, that is reactive.

This position requires a trust in the multitude and a reversal of the traditional position that leadership must envision strategy and the multitude engage in tactics. Hardt and Negri claim that the strategy can arise from the multitude itself, and that leaders are necessary (contrary to a purely horizontal view of politics) for the tactics carried out within that strategy. One model for this, according to the authors, is the Black Lives Matter movement.

The task for moving forward, then, is to re-appropriate the common, invent new institutions that are adequate to it – institutions that are post-property – and create strategies of struggle that rely on the multitude rather than any appeal to

sovereignty – an appeal that would assume a position above rather than within the multitude and its common.

*Assembly* is in many ways a large book. It is filled with theoretical engagements, historical and contemporary references, overarching analyses, and broad recommendations. This is both the book's strength and the weakness. It brings together a number of thinkers in a generally edifying way, thinkers of whom the authors display a deep understanding. The broad perspective they construct, moreover, does not, as happens in many cases, require distorting the views they take on board.

The weakness is that the result is, we might say, a bit high-flying. At the end of the day, it's not clear what we have gained in understanding our contemporary situation. This reviewer, at least, was left feeling theoretically enlightened but analytically a bit bereft. What I was able to see more clearly was the theory rather than the reality it was meant to describe.

*Todd May, Clemson University*

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Michael Loadenthal, *The Politics of Attack: Communiqués and Insurrectionary Violence*

Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017; 263pp; ISBN 9781526114440

This study pivots on the interface of contemporary insurrectionary currents, post-structuralist theory, and the internet. Its thesis is that communicative capacities have indelibly impacted on the 'politics of attack': hence communiques and their modes of dissemination are its focus. The 'internationally decentralized community of autonomous cells and networked groups' Loadenthal parses from the wider, 'anti-state, anti-capitalist, quasi-anarchist milieu' is dubbed 'post-millennial' to underline this distinction (p28). The internet's capacities as a means of fomenting insurrectionary actions are fully explored as are the ways in which these might be blunted or undermined by mediating social structures intent on marginalising non-state actors engaged in violent actions (bombings, assassinations, etc.) normally reserved for state authorities ('security' forces, police agencies and the military). Loadenthal consults an impressive swath of activist communiques, websites, and print media to mount his argument.

*The Politics of Attack* opens with a chapter on methodology addressing Loadenthal's ethical approach to the study of violence and the ways in which insurrectionary non-state actors have, for the most part, received scant attention among scholars concerned with the study of contemporary 'terrorists and extremists' (p26).

Throughout the following chapters he acknowledges the anarchist movement has a rich history of violent direct action while seeking to demarcate contemporary 'post-millennial' insurrectionists from their predecessors. Those advancing 'propaganda by the deed', in the late 1800s, the illegalist anarchists from the first half of the 1900s, the armed guerrillas of the latter half of the 1900s, and the populist anti-capitalist and anti-globalisation movement of the late 1900s may have influenced contemporary currents, but there is a qualitative difference between past and present (p29). Loadenthal decouples one from the other by positing an "insurrectionary turn" in contemporary revolutionary politics' thanks to a 'post-structuralist influence ... which allowed insurrectionary anarchism to become unlinked from the structural Marxism which birthed it' (p33). The implication, one presumes, is that prior to the twenty-first century, insurrectionary activism was shaped by a Marxist social analysis which deterministically understood the history of revolution as one of class struggle, with the rising proletariat and mass industrialism paving the way for socialism.

Here, however, Loadenthal overstates his case in a sweeping bid to transform post-structuralist theory into a formative force shaping contemporary insurrectionary politics, as opposed to a methodological tool of analysis (which he deploys brilliantly). Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century insurrectionism in Europe is better understood as emanating from class-inflected theories of spontaneity and voluntarism influenced by Max Stirner, Frederick Nietzsche and Henri Bergson, as opposed to Marxism. These currents were taken up and developed by Alfredo Bonanno and Jean Weir, arguably the most influential promoters of insurrectionist theory and practice from the 1970s through the 1990s. Were Loadenthal to fully develop the implications of this thread, which he acknowledges but paradoxically presents as Marxist, (pp149-150), his privileging of post-structuralism (and related claim regarding Marxism's pre-eminence leading up to the millennium) would prove chimeric.

Another lacuna is the importance of Indigenous peoples. In the last quarter of the twentieth century and into the millennium, insurrectionism in Canada, for example, has been shaped by ecological perspectives indebted to the lifeways of Indigenous peoples and examples of militant Indigenous resistance. The 1980s Direct Action urban guerrilla group (p150) are a case in point.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, during the years leading up to the Vancouver 2010 Olympics, insurrectionists targeted banks and other corporate institutions across Canada under an anti-colonial, pro-Indigenous sovereignty slogan – 'No Olympics on Stolen Native Land' – coined by Kwakwaka'wakw warrior Gord Hill. Loadenthal is apparently unaware of this tendency, which, in tandem with other streams of eco-insurgency, takes direct aim at our century's most pressing 'post-millennial' issue – planetary ecological collapse.

As I have discussed, the book opens with a methodological chapter followed by a historical survey of ‘insurrection as history from Guy Fawkes to black blocs’. Loadenthal then turns to structural matters, namely the underground nature of insurrectionary organisations and the tactical style of ‘warfare’ that goes with it. ‘The fluidly-defined yet ever-present nature of the systems of domination creates a veritable smorgasbord of available targets for attackers’, he observes. As for actions, those are calibrated to be easily reproduced and range from vandalism to ‘the outright lethal targeting of individuals’, all unfolding within a tactical continuum rooted in clandestine modes of organising/communicating that encourage emulation (pp100-101). Chapter 5, ‘Insurrection as theory, text and strategy’ addresses the anti-ideological thrust of the tradition (pushing some to renounce being identified as anarchists). Tracing insurrectionist thought through the 1970s to recent manifestations in Queer theory (pp150-157) sets the stage for the final two chapters. Loadenthal probes the values that motivate insurrectionists and then makes his case for the ‘post-structural’ shift I have already addressed, centering on the ‘communiqué’ as a double-edged means of critiquing normalized oppression and inspiring others to emulate ‘the politics of attack’. This book is a unique historical-to-contemporary overview of insurrectionary currents and a welcome contribution to contemporary anarchist studies.

*Allan Antliff, University of Victoria*

1. See *Writings of the Vancouver 5* (Toronto: Toronto Anarchist Black Cross, 1989), Anarchist Archive, Special Collections and Archives, University of Victoria Libraries, University of Victoria: <http://contentdm.library.uvic.ca/cdm/compoundobject/collection/collection8/id/247/rec/225>

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Tom Goyens (eds), *Radical Gotham: Anarchism in New York City from Schwab's Saloon to Occupy Wall Street*

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017; 258pp; ISBN 9780252082542

As a global city and media centre, New York City has always attracted outsized attention, and its anarchist scene is no exception. But little scholarly attention has been paid to the latter. As someone who has lived in the city for almost two decades, and met or been involved with many of the authors, subjects, and groups in this book, *Radical Gotham* is a welcome corrective to this.

The first four essays are nice complements to each other. They document sequen-

tial waves of pre-war anarchists – Germans, Jews, Italians, and Spanish-speakers – as each established itself in the city’s immigrant enclaves, and the anarchists rose and fell in popularity. These essays (by Tom Goyens, Kenyon Zimmer, Marcella Bencivenni, and Christopher J. Castañeda, respectively) pay close attention to each group’s ideological differences. Many of the same debates can be heard in anarchist circles today, such as fights between advocates of structured, public organisations and anarchists who engage in clandestine, insurrectionist activity. Each essay adds little-known information that helps flesh out the poorly-documented early history of the U.S. anarchist movement, which was dominated by these largely non-English speaking groupings.

The rest of the book is less coherent. Three of the groups covered have received scholarly attention: the Living Theater, Catholic Worker, and Black Mask/Up Against the Wall Motherfucker (UATWMF). Allan Antliff’s Living Theater piece explores founders Judith Malina and Julian Beck much-overlooked anarchist beliefs on a detailed theoretical level. The Dorothy Day piece is adequate, but I was a bit perplexed by why Anne Klejment seemed to struggle to reconcile Day’s beliefs and anarchism, when her own autobiography *The Long Loneliness* does so with ease. UATWMF has been documented by scholars such as Gavin Grindon, and while Caitlin Casey’s essay unearths fascinating details I was unfamiliar with, it fails to cover some of the more important actions of the group. So while I suggest you read it, don’t make it the first thing you read about the group!

My favourite piece was Andrew Cornell’s explanation of the Why?/Resistance group, which was established in 1942 and originally included both Audrey Goodfriend and Sam Dolgoff. It split into anti- and pro-WWII factions, and Cornell illustrates how those who opposed the war moved from anti-imperialism to revolutionary pacifism to justify this stance. He also shows how the pacifist faction’s shift in focus to education, sexuality, and cultural prefiguration helped set the stage for the soon-to-emerge countercultural anarchism which revived the U.S. movement in the 1960s and ’70s.

Alan Moore documents the founding and history of the ABC No Rio radical community centre. He does a good job struggling with the question of whether this space is anarchist. It is commonly considered to be, but it was donated by the city to an artists collective, is run by a board of directors and a paid coordinator, and the city government has given \$4.5 million towards its new building. (Full disclosure: I was a volunteer in the center’s zine library for several years.)

Two pieces, however, disrupt this collection’s documentation of New York City’s self-identified anarchists. The first is Erin Wallace’s overview of visual artist Gordon Matta-Clark. Hardly a household name, Wallace only gives a passing description of his work, which forced me to look it up in other sources. Although

I found it fascinating, the problem here is not the quality of the art or the artists' understanding of his work as political, but rather that Matta-Clark didn't seem to have any self-conscious anarchist politics, or connection to the city's anarchist milieu. (The closest he came seems to be constructing the La Plaza Cultural Garden amphitheatre in the Lower East Side.)

The last piece, Heather Gautney's analysis of Occupy Wall Street, was the most problematic from a historical and political perspective. Gautney, the author of the incisive essay 'Between Anarchism and Autonomist Marxism', is not an anarchist but has written about the movement sympathetically. But Gautney follows David Graeber's problematic schematic in her look at Occupy. She does not document what self-identified anarchists in it – or the city at large – said and did, but rather justified large parts of Occupy as implicitly anarchist. And while this produces an interesting document about the decentralised characteristics of Occupy, it does the opposite of the majority of other pieces in this collection, which illustrate the concrete historical and political views of anarchists.

Even putting Occupy's Far Right and anti-anarchist factions aside, Gautney does not describe how the city's anarchist scene was split over participating in Occupy. And while she refers to Graeber several times in the essay, Gautney does not describe how at the 2012 May Day black bloc – the last hurrah of Occupy in the city – it was agreed that if Graeber attempted to join in, he would be expelled.

The problem is not with Gautney, who should be commended as one of the few non-anarchists to write sympathetically about the movement, but with the anarcho-Graeberist perspective that has been accepted as dogma by a whole generation of anarchist academics. It places an emphasis on a fuzzy kind of decentralised radicalism as 'anarchism', instead of engaging with the actual ideas and practices of anarchists – or even of the other radicals it purports to represent. If by 'anarchism' we don't mean self-identified anarchists but rather just some kind of decentralised radicals, why should any of these other essays in this collection be written as they were? Instead the anthology would focus on the decentralised elements in any of the hundreds of protest movements in New York City since the late nineteenth century and it could ignore self-identified anarchists altogether.

Personally, for a contemporary view I would have picked other New York City topics than Occupy to write on, such as the 2002 anti-World Economic Forum demonstration, the late '00s insurrectionist scene, or the current crop of anarchist centres. But no anthology covering almost a century-and-a-half can do all things, and *Radical Gotham* deserves a read, including the essays I had issues with.

*Spencer Sunshine*

Iwona Janicka, *Theorizing Contemporary Anarchism: Solidarity, Mimesis and Radical Social Change*

London: Bloomsbury, 2017; 192pp; ISBN 978-1-4742-7618-4

During the heyday of classical anarchism in the nineteenth century, the prevailing view among many radical thinkers – including some anarchists – was that history represented a gradual movement toward the actualisation of a universal end. In jettisoning views of this sort, poststructuralists and poststructuralist-inspired anarchists alike have had difficulty explaining what history itself *is* and, by extension, how radical change is possible within particular historical contexts. Seeking to clear this stumbling block, Iwona Janicka's *Theorizing Contemporary Anarchism* attempts to articulate 'a new idea of social transformation and a new set of concepts to accurately describe social change that is happening today' (p1). Her overarching strategy in so doing is to rethink the concept of universality and its relationship to 'radical left politics' in a way that 'tak[es] on board the poststructuralist heritage' while simultaneously 'overcom[ing] poststructuralist angst over concrete political action' (p1).

Drawing on the work of Judith Butler, René Girard, and Peter Sloterdijk, Janicka rejects the notion that history is 'a steady development towards a goal, a deep procedure that is occasionally ruptured by great events' and, in its place, proposes an alternative picture of 'social and historical change' as 'a dispersed and decentralized process' that unfolds gradually in accordance with 'the logic of mimesis ... and the spatiality of spheres' (p3). According to this view, historical universality is a function of mimesis – i.e., 'witting and unwitting imitations of behaviours in the bodily practice' which, when directed, become 'a form of training ... an exercise of repeating certain practices that lead to specific habits' (p4). Habit-based communities (or 'habitable spheres') result when specific habits are trained 'in a milieu where others do it as well and where at each point there is a possibility of mimetic contagion' (pp4-5). Because this repetition cannot be sustained indefinitely, however, the universality of directed mimesis will always be ... interrupted by singularity' – that is by the continuous (but not irruptive) appearance of 'entities that remain unintelligible from within a given status quo' (pp4-5).

While the appearance of singularity within universality is unflinching met with reactionary practices that seek to re-inscribe universality, such practices are counteracted in turn by what Janicka terms 'solidarity with singularity' – i.e., 'a form of political practice that is predicated on acts of cooperation and with and support for ... whoever and whatever is in the position of oppression or unintel-

ligibility' (p4). Such a practice operates by means of 'collectively creating habitable spheres on a daily basis in the hope that other people or groups will be mimetically infected by the change that [it] implement[s]' (p153). It is precisely the interplay between the re-inscription of universality (which is rooted in the past and aims at stasis and centralization) and the enactment of solidarity with singularity (which is rooted in the present and aims at movement and decentralization) that 'drives slow social transformation' (p5). For Janicka, intriguingly, anarchism provides an ideal framework within which to understand the latter 'in that they both share solidarity with singularity as the central idea' (p153). If solidarity with singularity represents the 'actualization of slow social transformation,' however, this implies that 'neither equality nor domination ... are the most appropriate terms for understanding [contemporary] anarchism,' as 'neither covers the diversity of anarchist concerns nor does it provide the most fruitful framework for thinking about entities in the position of singularity' (pp153-154). Among other things, she thinks, both of these concepts are fundamentally anthropocentric and so are unable to account for 'entities such as animals or the environment' (155). When understood as solidarity with singularity, anarchism is, by contrast, able to 'fully account not only for all entities that make up singularity (*homo sacer*, animals, the environment) but also for their singular (unintelligible) ways to affect universality' (p155).

Despite its straightforward remit, Janicka's volume is sprawling, ambitious, and intimidatingly complex – especially for those who, like myself, are less than well versed in the central elements of its theoretical apparatus. For these reasons it does not lend itself to cursory synopsis and, I suspect, is very easy to misinterpret. (I apologise to author and readers alike if I end up doing so in this review!) On my reading, in any case, Janicka's account seems to be both a re-thinking and a reinforcing of traditional anarchist emphases on prefiguration and 'making the new world in the shell of the old', albeit at the expense of anarchism's equally traditional emphasis on revolutionary praxis. Indeed, as she herself notes, 'revolution, defined as an irruptive event and as represented in the Marxist tradition, constitutes the principal counter model to ... slow social transformation' (p4). I wonder, though, to what extent this view can be accommodated within the *anarchist* tradition, which has not typically understood the kinds of prefigurative practices Janicka describes as *alternatives* to revolution so much as necessary *components* of any sustained revolutionary project.

While prefiguration discloses what is possible and even inspire efforts to achieve it, does it actually bring about radically new political and social realities by itself? If not, might this be because the prevalence of domination and inequality in existing reality makes it exceedingly difficult to engage in meaningful prefigurative practices in the first place, let alone to encourage others to follow suit? How

is solidarity with singularity sufficient when it is relentlessly opposed by the very conditions in which it is enacted? These (potentially misplaced) worries notwithstanding, Janicka deserves high praise for bringing a fresh and original theoretical perspective to bear on a host of extremely important, if frequently overlooked, issues. *Theorizing Contemporary Anarchism* is a remarkably rich and intrepid work that will surely make a lasting contribution to anarchist discourse in the present. I cannot recommend it to readers strongly enough.

*Nathan Jun, Midwestern State University*

Petar Jandrić, *Learning in the Age of Digital Reason*

Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2017; 422pp; ISBN 9789463510752

Petar, I agree: ‘Research and education can be sexy’ (p361) ☺ I’d like to thank yourself and each of the interlocutors for being *themselves* at your ‘virtual party’: honest, direct, illuminating, provocative, scary and encouraging. Feelings and ‘chemistry’ emerge from your party ‘guests’ within this collection of conversations – the term you quite rightly use instead of ‘interviews’. *Learning in the Age of Digital Reason* WILL reach a broad audience, as a ‘form of teaching’, bringing ‘ideas into the school reform marketplace’ (p12). As an artist-researcher-teacher with an irreverence for texts ‘written without much flair’ that ‘put people to sleep’ (Levinson, p283), these conversations kept me up at night. This tantalising collection of minds – forged by philosophy, activism, education, and creative practice – crosses and re-crosses artificial academic and linguistic ‘borders’ (p140). As a critical pedagogue and fledgling academic I have met too few ‘border-crossers’. And too many whose ‘vision of artistic development’ is ‘reactionary and boring’ (p342) – more enthused by homogenisation than discussion of the differences ‘between art education and education in other fields’ (p333) and arts-based research that is ‘predominantly linked to funding and academe’. Provocative honesty permeates the book, e.g. the response of Dmitry to Ana and yourself: ‘Art education is interesting because no one knows what art is – consequently, it is impossible to know how to teach it’ (p333). Each of these sixteen conversations is grounded in expertise that informs, and knowledge that surprises. As a video artist who worked with emerging digital technologies in the ’80s and ’90s, I was profoundly affected by feminist videos. But there are feminist media practices in this book which are completely new to me. For example, ‘Face Settings’ (1996-1998) – Kathy Rae Huffman’s collaboration with Eva Wohlgemuth (pp315-317).

I mentioned my sense of an honesty in this iterative collection of conversations. You acknowledge these conversations have affected your own thinking, research interests and career ambitions, developing towards transdisciplinary ‘digital epistemologies, collaborative research, web science, algorithms, knowledge cultures, and the relationships between science and art’ (p366). Academic discourse can look askance upon social and intersubjective information. The truth is that anecdotal evidence has ‘long historical tails’ and that critical discourse about digital technologies is ‘only a few small steps from Socrates’ (p367). Honesty is necessarily provocative from time to time. For instance, ‘academic publishing is a bit like capitalism’ (p378); automation spells ‘the end of education as we have known it since the Stone Age’ (p27); we exist in a digitally enhanced version of Foucault’s Panopticon (p45). We’re asked to consider that Marxist terminology may be applied to McLuhan’s theories on the convergence of media and the ‘self-expansion of capital as fixed media capital’ (p81). I also resonated deeply with McKenzie Wark’s admission that his work is often ‘hypocritical theory’ – questioning unequal modes of knowledge-production and yet still participating in them (p108). Isn’t that true for most of us? Different perspectives on technology abound in these conversations: Paul Levinson (p282) regards the Internet as one of the ‘greatest devices for furthering human understanding of human beings’, whereas Henry Giroux considers the Internet as poorly analysed, despite being ‘enormously political and educational’ (p145). Peter McLaren (p163) comments that computers ‘have not made us free and independent producers’, and Marcell Mars and Tomislav Medak (p255) discuss the symbiosis between information technologies and capitalism, reinforcing inherent contradictions and paving its ‘unfortunate trail of destruction’. Other conversers include Howard Rheingold (who coined the term ‘virtual communities’) who points to the male domination of technology when explaining the obscured contribution of women to technology engineering (p216). And though we may agree with Siân Bayne’s critical post-humanist claim that ‘online can be the privileged mode’ (p203), Fred Turner demands that we recognise that political consciousness is *not* built from the consumption of small-scale technologies and self-expression that uses ‘signs, symbols and devices provided for us online largely by the corporate world’ (p66).

This book includes genuine responses, ‘rather than simply assertion of individual positions’ (p364). The conversations feel close to real life, where ‘things get messy’ (Taylor, p235) and ‘jerky’ (p192). We live in a weird time. We *all* need to forge alliances, and conversations can help by using language that crosses borders. And when the going does get weird, ‘the weird turn pro’ (Hunter S. Thompson, p123). Which begs Mackenzie Wark’s question (p124): ‘How do you produce weird

people for the weird times we are in?' Now that is a *really* interesting challenge for education. Books like this can only help!

*Mark Smith, Loughborough University*

Peter Harrison, *The Freedom of Things: An Ethnology of Control*

Fair Lawn, NJ: Transformative Studies Institute, 2017; 288pp; 978-0-9832982-1-2

Peter Harrison's *The Freedom of Things: An Ethnology of Control* offers a compelling analysis of the historical and theoretical limitations underpinning current leftist, liberal, Marxist, anarchist, and 'radical democratic' discourse. Composed of four 'preludes' and ten chapters, the penultimate of which was co-written with Australian Bulwai elder Willie Brim, Harrison explores subjects as diverse as ethnography, labour, violence, community, empowerment, and reconciliation. Harrison invokes an equally myriad array of thinkers, from Hobbes and Rousseau to La Boétie, Clastres, Sorel, Bataille, Badiou, Nancy, Bourdieu, and Roberto Esposito, to name just a few. Beyond its impressive breadth, anarchist scholars will find value in Harrison's study for its forceful critique of ideas that leftist political theory still holds as sacrosanct.

*The Freedom of Things* is organised around three core themes: the intractable limitations inherent to ethnographic method; the distinction between societies of *self-control* ('autonomic' or 'contra-historical') and those of *other-control* – the former referring to non-hierarchical, egalitarian societies, the latter to State formations which manifest an 'impulse to control others' and the acceptance 'of the necessity of such control' (pxi); finally, an ethnology which challenges the notion that society must be construed on the basis of endless productivity.

Following the 'anti-organizational' approach of his earlier *Nihilist Communism* (2003), the individual chapters of *The Freedom of Things* are less stages in the development of a grand thesis than a series of topical interventions through which these themes resonate. Harrison's opening chapter argues that societies ethnographers perceived as excluded from 'history' are not simply non- or pre-historical, but '*contra-historical*' in that they actively withdraw from the encroachment of the State. In chapters 2 and 3, which contain some of the book's most provocative arguments, Harrison turns his critical eye towards Marxist assumptions that the liberation of humanity's productive forces lead to the liberation of humanity itself. According to Harrison, Marx advocates the freedom *of* labour rather than freedom *from* labour (p67). To move beyond the Marxist narrative of 'ennobled

drudgery', Harrison extends Bataille's paradoxical notion of sovereignty, which arises in moments of radical non-productivity, to theorise an ethos of anti-production within contra-historical societies primarily driven not by subsistence, but by a socio-political imperative to maintain autonomy.

Harrison further extends his notion of contra-historical societies to recent theoretical debates on community and violence. In the paradoxical formulation of Nancy's 'community' as an 'impossible but necessary' task, Harrison finds an implicit recuperation of communism as an unsurpassable horizon, concluding that perhaps we should move on from such approaches. In 'Violence', Harrison excavates a contra-historical conception of violence, manifest in tribal practices of feuding and vengeance, which runs contrary to State mechanisms of dominance and submission. Contra-historical violence functions as 'part of the structure of autonomy' (p164) which ensured dispersion between different groups, warding off the unifying and hierarchical structures inherent to State formations.

The study's final two chapters focus on Indigenous concerns, specifically the interrelationship between capitalism, colonialism, education, and Indigenous resistances to them as contra-historical societies. 'Perspective', co-authored with Brim, rethinks capitalism in the context of Amerindian concept of 'soul-blindness', a condition in which one 'capable only of seeing one's world, oneself, and all thinking entities as empty things [ ... ] within the geometry of economic value'. Perspectivism, conversely, suggests a 'myriad of worlds in which animals live', a 'thinking life we all share' (pp214-15). Perspectivism entails respect for the autonomy and multiplicity of 'worlds', rather than forcing their unity, and a basic acknowledgement that other beings see, think, and feel. The final chapter on 'Knowledge' usefully explores Indigenous knowledge as a 'non-interventionist' process that respect individual autonomy in contrast to Western, institutionalised models of education. In turn, Harrison and Brim rethink how liberal buzzwords like 'empowerment' and 'reconciliation' function as 'processes of assimilation' that recuperate white settler culture by 'smoothing out' a sense of difference central to the autonomy of Indigenous groups (pp243-44).

Harrison is justifiably tentative about offering solutions; indeed, he sees 'solutionism' as something which 'closes down thinking' (pxv). Harrison's study gestures towards a certain value in the withdrawal from 'solutionism' afforded by critical theory, insofar as theory grants the freedom to challenge 'all the modern religions [...] particularly the leftist ones' (pxv). Moreover, Harrison's ethnographic focus provides a wealth of insight that should provide fertile ground for debate over issues of principle, not just practice, within radical politics, the importance of posing *problems* which are themselves forms of theoretical anti-production, and through

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which one might offer not just more solutions, but perceive the solutions on offer through a more critical lens.

*Jared McGeough*

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Nangwaya, Ajamu, and Michael Truscello (eds), *Why Don't the Poor Rise Up?: Organizing the Twenty-first Century Resistance*

AK Press, 2017

This book offers an excellent and wide-ranging contribution linking poverty to resistance from a variety of radical theoretical and geographical perspectives drawing examples and inspiration from very diverse social movements. Whilst most of the chapters appear to be broadly anarchist or autonomist, they cover a very broad spectrum. It might have been useful for the sake of coherence, had the editors provided a more explicit overview of the theoretical diversity of the book and the basis upon which contributions were selected, and given some consideration to theoretical affinities and tensions across the chapters. This might also have given more of a clue as to the contribution of the book to wider debates in anarchism and radical thought. Nonetheless, the diversity of perspectives taken as a whole provides an intersectional critique that does not privilege class nor any single identity category as a primary axis of oppression, but rather offers multiple perspectives on complex and overlapping forms of oppression and resistance.

I genuinely enjoyed reading this book, in large part due to the diversity and vibrancy of the movements and contexts that it examines. Some chapters focus on case studies of grassroots, leftist and anarchist movements and communities of resistance (e.g. Vasquez; Khasnabish; Araujo; Pilar and Wilson; Wood); some on understanding the conditions which promote undesirable/right-wing ideology or movements (e.g. Berardi; Cummings; Jun); whilst others engage in structural critique in order to understand why movements have failed to emerge, or were unsuccessful, in specific contexts (e.g. Chimurenga; Nangwaya; Brucato).

The book is divided into two sections, 'The Global North' and 'The Global South'. It is great that the editors have attempted to incorporate geographical diversity, as it is certainly true that poverty has many levels of meaning which are complexified at a global scale. Without wishing to undermine the diversity and appropriateness of the examples, it is worth pointing out that of the seventeen chapters of the book, North and South America are very strongly represented, with most of the chapters drawing on examples based in North America, Latin America

and the Caribbean. Berardi's brief chapter nods towards Europe and the final three chapters of the book are based in Africa.

As the title might suggest, the anthology is constituted by a series of replies to the question: 'Why don't the poor rise up?' The provocation was posed by Thomas Edsell in a *New York Times* editorial, whose own response assumes an electoral approach which the editors take to belie the autonomy of the poor (p8). The question itself is not unproblematic, and many of the chapters in the book begin by unpacking or problematising its terms. Khasnabish offers the most sustained critique of the question, arguing its terms are awash with 'liberal sentiment and capitalist alienation': 'the poor' implies a 'they' which is a homogenous entity, which is objectifying and class-reductionist, and like the language of 'allyship' relies on 'an endless deferral of responsibility on the part of the socially privileged speaker' (p120). Selemeczi in conversation with Eloff cautions against naming the political subject in advance, arguing that the collective political subject emerges from the moment of disrupting the order of assigned categories. Araujo also problematises 'the poor' as a category of resistance, arguing the terminology and associated metrics of poverty are essential to the functioning of capitalism (p201) and promote a policy discourse which ignores and represses other definitions of richness such as resourceful and well-organised community life. Other chapters question whether 'rising up' is the terminology one might wish to use for an anarchist revolution (p121, p155). Furthermore, as several of the chapters argue and illustrate, 'the poor' frequently *do* rise up, but often their struggles are misrecognised as apolitical, because those who are rising up are black and historically portrayed as 'anti-citizens' and criminals so they are violently repressed (Brucato); or they are misrecognised as apolitical because they deal with grassroots struggle or they lack demands and are therefore incomprehensible to representative politics (Eloff and Selemeczi); or they are subdued or quashed through censorship and repression (Vasquez). Khasnabish argues a better phrasing of the question might be: 'why are robust, powerful, and resilient mass movements for radical social change so conspicuous in their absence in the global north?' (p121).

Whilst a recurring theme is therefore that the poor do, in fact, rise up frequently, chapters in the book also provide an array of answers that tackle the question whilst questioning the terms. A recurring theme is division, separation and alienation. Many of the chapters address the idea that the attitude of the economic and cultural centre is to 'divide and rule' that much larger group which constitutes the 'margins' (p234). Examples of dynamics which divide this potentially revolutionary force include neoliberal ideological constructions of religion (Jun); culture (Nangwaya; Sheikheldin); race (Brucato; Chimurenga; Akuno; Cummings); gender

(Cummings; Carlson); and the pitting against one another of public and private sector workers (Cummings). The division of the left by identity politics is also seen to be a problem; and one which not only weakens the left but creates a script which can be flipped and appropriated by the Alt Right (p103). Only Jun explicitly uses the language of ‘false consciousness’ (p134) but many of the chapters deal with the idea that ideological factors are a particular obstacle to sustainable organising (Brucato; Chimurenga; Cummings; Khasnabish; Berardi; Nangwaya).

The book is sparser on solutions for praxis than elaborations of the problem, which is predictable given the negative phrasing of the question. In some ways, this is a real lack given that the strength of anarchism lies in its connection of theory with living movements. Indeed Eloff and Selemeczi foreground the issue of epistemology, encouraging deep examination of the relationship of academics to the movements they write about. Whilst the book is replete with excellent case studies of living movements, sometimes chapters slip into the trap of writing about, rather than for these movements. Nonetheless, I think that the anthology as a whole does have an implicit coherence which unites many chapters and develops the praxis of the book itself (if one takes publishing to be a practice, which of course it is), and this coherence lies in the importance of developing and building a conscious and critical political culture. Some of the chapters touch upon this explicitly, simultaneously addressing themes of a divided left and of a divided and alienated ‘poor’ by thinking through the conditions for developing political culture. Suggested means for doing so include connecting to other struggles and radical ecology (Khasnabish); telling stories of prior struggles (Khasnabish; Kimara); and through political education and pedagogy (Phillip; Sheikheldin). It is here that the contribution is strongest; because the book itself can act as a critical act of culture and a pedagogy for movement organising.

*Rhiannon Firth, University of Essex*

### Daniel Loick, *Anarchismus zur Einführung*

Hamburg: Junius, 2017; 256pp; ISBN 9783885067689

Almost a dozen years have gone by since the publication of a German language introduction to the topic of anarchism (Degen and Knoblauch’s *Anarchismus*, 2006; Stowasser’s *Anarchie!*, 2007). Last year, the publisher Junius filled this lacuna with a new book as part of their renowned *zur Einführung*-series. In the late 1980s, this series had already presented two volumes on the life and work

of Gustav Landauer (by Siegbert Wolf, 1988) and Peter Kropotkin (by Heinz Hug, 1989). Daniel Loick has now penned the newest addition to this endeavour. Already issued in a second edition, the book provides an admirable survey of anarchism, whose adherents carry the notion in their hearts that ‘life in freedom and without violence is possible’ (p9). Loick’s introduction certainly arrives as proof that the explosion of anarchist studies in the English-speaking world over the past decade has had a discursive ripple effect elsewhere. In Germany, for instance, the founding of the journal *Ne znam. Zeitschrift für Anarchismusforschung* by Phillippe Kellermann and the publication of *Den Staat zerschlagen! Anarchistische Staatsverständnisse* (Nomos), edited by Peter Seyferth, both in 2015, may be seen as two additional indicators of this development.

Loick divides his book into four chapters. The first examines anarchism from three different angles: a political philosophy, a political movement, and a way of life (*Lebensform*) (pp9-47). The second chapter discusses anarchism’s ‘main currents and most important representatives’ (pp48-103). Particularly remarkable is the author’s apology for reproducing a conventional account of allegedly representative anarchists: ‘Introductions and overviews perform canonizations, that is, a stipulation as to which contents, arguments, styles of writing or kinds of knowledge are seen as relevant. Because universities, publishers and the media in the existing society are also structured through hierarchies and domination, certain positions (above all: white, European, male) are privileged and others (above all: non-white, non-European, non-male) are denigrated or excluded’. (p48f). Nevertheless, Loick does not draw upon earlier attempts at ‘blasting the canon’ (Ruth Kinna and Süreyya Evren, *ADCS*, 2013).

The third chapter is the most comprehensive and interesting one. On roughly one-hundred pages, the author analyses what to him are the most important ‘motifs and discourses’ (pp104-211) within the anarchist tradition: 1) freedom between individual and community, 2) the state, 3) capitalism and anti-capitalism, 4) gender relations, 5) (post-)colonialism and racism, 6) ecology, 7) modes of action and organising, and 8) theory of transformation. Unfortunately, references to the pacifist strand from Leo Tolstoy to Bart de Ligt remain marginal. Still, even well-versed readers may look forward to stimulating thoughts, e.g. a pronounced criticism of the consensus-principle favoured within many anarchist groups (p139; p215), or the proposal to flesh out an aesthetic notion of freedom, capable of clearly demarcating anarchism from all other political ideologies (p117f).

Revisiting the implications of Proudhon’s slogan ‘Anarchy is order without domination’ in the fourth chapter, Loick’s pleasant writing style changes. In contrast to the other chapters, a stronger academic jargon suddenly characterises

the nevertheless convincing final plea for future theoretical engagements with anarchist theory. These, according to the author, should primarily happen in the areas of theories of freedom and democracy as well as social and post-colonial theory.

Bearing in mind that Loick's highly recommendable book is an introduction (!), his nuanced account of anarchism does justice to its many manifestations. The book handles the subject without trivialising it, while illustrating his arguments with current examples. A decisive difference to other texts of this kind is this: instead of treating the matter self-referentially, Loick relates anarchist ideas and practices to authors such as Hannah Arendt, Nicos Poulantzas, Isaiah Berlin und Giorgio Agamben. Finally, one of the greatest strengths of the book is the confrontation of uncomfortable challenges to anarchism in the twenty-first century. For example, the lack of a 'theory of an *alternative globalization* [...] This would, among other things, consist of a concept for making political decisions of global reach. The unjust distribution of global resources as well as the current technological potentials, whether in the shape of the internet, international traffic, or, in the extreme case, energy production in nuclear power plants, all make decisions necessary that would have such great consequences and effects that they cannot be taken by a commune alone but require binding international coordination and cooperation' (p140). The chance to grapple with this future is precisely the project opened up by the book's skilful interlinking of anarchism's past and present.

*Dominique Miething, Freie Universität Berlin*

### Andrew Kolin, *Political Economy of Labor Repression in the United States*

Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2017; 436pp; ISBN 9781498524025

Numerous students of industrial relations in the United States have observed the paradox of the intense militancy of workers asserting their dignity in the face of employers' hostile behaviour and the trade unions' lack of power. Andrew Kolin deepens our understanding of this paradox by analysing the sources and the instruments of employers' power. In a densely detailed, albeit at times disorganised, study, the author develops his thesis that capital "'institutionally" excluded' labour from power by establishing a monopolistic control over the means of production, and also excluded labour from assuming a 'primary role as a decision maker in the state' (pxii). These twin sources of power allowed employers to exercise both covert and overt repression of workers' collective action.

The book examines the power relations between capital and labour from the formative period of the US following the American Revolution until the contemporary period when neo-liberal policies have resulted in decimation of trade unions and collective bargaining. In the process of discussing the emergence of commercial and manufacturing elites, the growth of the factory system, and the transition from entrepreneurial to corporate capitalism, Kolin emphasises the consequences on workers ability to defend their interests.

The author meticulously probes the process by which workers were denied power over the sphere of production and thereby control over their working conditions. This dis-empowerment began ironically during the period of the American Revolution when, notwithstanding the democratic political ethos, economic elites achieved dominance over the 'organisation and trajectory of the economy' (pxiv) The nineteenth century saw a strengthening of capital's control with the undermining of skilled craft labour. The ascendancy of monopolies during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries systematically defanged organised labour's capacity to resist, by deploying private police forces, spies and agent provocateurs, and turning to the judicial system to curb strikes and boycotts.

Labour was not a passive victim of this regime of repression. The Industrial Workers of the World (1905-1921) mounted a challenge by aiming to establish One Big Union to attain the emancipation of labour through workers' control of industry. Likewise during the Great Depression and New Deal (1929-1941) workers waged mass strikes aiming to gain union recognition in the previous unorganised mass production industries.

The employers responded to the threat of the IWW by granting some recognition to the American Federation of Labor (AFL). In addition the state, during the upsurge in the 1930s and the Second World War, adopted a twin-tract strategy of mediation and pacification of labour by accepting the Congress of Industrial Organisations (CIO) and AFL as 'junior partners in the policy making process' (pxxv) and collective bargaining as long as it did not challenge capital's control over the workplace.

The accommodation that existed between capital and labour in the mid-twentieth century, unravelled, starting in the 1970s, as de-industrialisation, the downsizing of business operations, capital flight and employers' strike breaking efforts took their toll on workers. By the twenty-first century union density plummeted from a high of thirty-five percent in 1955 to about ten percent and down to six percent in the private sector and real wages fell despite gains in labour productivity.

Kolin offers an alternative to this bleak picture by underscoring the potential opportunities of 'non-market and non-profit interactions' within the capitalist system to 'liberate labour' (ppxxxii-xxxiii). A shift in focus to 'quality of life' issues

such as education, public services and discrimination could reposition labour as a movement of workers beyond their workplace and as a vehicle for political change in the United States.

Notwithstanding a cumbersome structure and a narrative prone to repetition, Kolin makes an important contribution to our understanding of how capital has thwarted labour's capacity to fulfil one of its historically fundamental aims, that is, workers' emancipation.

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L.A. Kauffman, *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism*

London & New York: Verso, 2017; 236pp; ISBN 9781784784096

Written from the perspective of a participant and observer, Kauffman's book provides an accessible and engaging history of four decades of social movement activism in the United States. She begins her tale with the national action against the war in Vietnam known as Mayday in 1971 and concludes with the 2014 actions in response to the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. The culmination of decades of work, the book tells the story of radical politics in the US "through the lens of direct action: the fierce, showy tradition of disruptive protest employed by many of the era's most distinctive and influential movements" (px).

The broad outline of Kauffman's narrative is quite familiar to most radical activists and scholars. All the exemplars are present – Murray Bookchin and Dave Foreman, Starhawk and the Combahee River Collective, ACT UP and CISPES, Washington and Seattle, Occupy and Black Lives Matter, and many more besides. People who have lived through and participated in these struggles can easily insert themselves and their own experiences pretty much anywhere in the story she tells. The people, organisations, movements, and tactics described in the book come to life again – revealing their origins, concerns, and vitality. People who have studied radical history can again review the life cycle of past political causes, ponder once again the innovations and limitations of notable struggles and tendencies. Kauffman traces the rise of identity politics, the advent of intersectional analyses, and the challenges of organising across lines of political tendency, race, gender, and sexual orientation. Readers learn about the utility of affinity groups and the tyranny of structurelessness, tactics such as monkey-wrenching and puppetry, and strategic approaches such as prefiguration and consensus decision making.

Kauffman is highly skilled in the art of telling a good, almost cinematic story. Her historical overview crosses decades of political ideas and actions, but never seems rushed or glib. Each chapter seems to give the people, movements, and struggles that it covers their due attention and regard. Throughout the book, Kauffman emphasises how one group or effort influences another, how its experiences and activists build on lessons learned. In many ways, the story she tells highlights the significant political contributions made by otherwise marginalised people – women, African Americans, lesbians, and gays. Their roles, perspectives, experiences, and energies form the daisy chain linking the various struggles profiled in the book.

Although direct action is regarded as a central component of anarchism, this book does not provide a conceptual analysis of the term, an ethnography of its practices, or a manual of its techniques. Rather, it offers a sense of how direct-action tactics have evolved in recent decades. Individual techniques emerge and change. Radical activists debate the relative merits of mass demonstrations, civil disobedience, and other forms of struggle – occupation, property destruction, and the like. The nature of political action undergoes a series of transformations – from being the province of white activists to emerging as the work of multiracial coalitions, from organising at the national level to organising in local communities, from efforts that are planned and regulated from the top down to struggles that embrace a diversity of tactics and aims.

Even though the continual and continually reinvented struggles portrayed rarely achieve unalloyed success, the story presented by Kauffman remains a story of progress and hope. It is ‘a story about deep political continuities, hidden connections, and lasting influences’ (p4). As such, Kauffman’s book will be useful for younger activists wanting to develop a sense of history and connection prior to engaging in deeper study of a given movement or struggle. It will also be helpful in stimulating the thinking and reflection of more mature activists and scholars, in helping the radical choir rehearse its songs of praise and sorrow.

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