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Perspectives on Anarchist Theory

INSTITUTE FOR ANARCHIST STUDIES

An Interview with Osvaldo Bayer, Argentinean Public Intellectual and Social Historian By Fernando Trujillo

Fernando Trujillo, Argentinean activist and writer, received a grant award from the IAS for his project, The FACA and the Anarchist Movement in Argentina, 1930-1950. Translation by Peter Larsen. (Footnotes on page 16.)

I am with Osvaldo Bayer in his austere study in the residential district of Belgrano in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. As would have happened normally, Bayer himself receives the inconvenient visit with his usual friendliness. Exile has cut his life in two. Now he has a home in Germany, where his companion, children and grandchildren await him. Far away, however, in this Buenos

Aires, is where he spends the majority of his life. As always when in Buenos Aires, Bayer is at home alone. But this tranquility is an illusion; Bayer's days in this city are incredibly fatiguing, with lectures, talks and invitations to events and meetings throughout Argentina. The Department of Human Rights founded by him in the School of Philosophy and Humanities of the University of Buenos Aires, although abandoned by him only last year, has not been able to do without him. I had mentioned to him by telephone that I wanted him to tell me something about the '30s and the activities of the FACA and Bayer upon receiving me bypasses the question

But you're asking me about the '30s, I don't know anything about the anarchism of the '30s..."

Obviously not! How old were you at that time, ten?
Well look, in 1940 I was thirteen. My contact with anarchism started in the '60s, when the building was in Humberto Primo Street(1) with all the old guys, who died one by one...

The FORA(2) was in Humberto Primo Street?
No, the Argentinean Libertarian Federation's building was.

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Anarchism and the Struggle to Move Forward By Kim Fyke & Gabriel Sayegh

(All footnotes are on page 13)

The *Dispossessed*, a well-known novel by Ursula LeGuin, details a functioning society built upon anarchist principles. (1) Anarchists are often adept at imagining a new and different world, and, inevitably, we must ask ourselves: *how are we going to achieve this?* Visions such as LeGuin's are often borne from rigorous anti-authoritarian, multi-dimensional critiques of current society- its problems, failures, and contradictions. Yet within the current U.S. anarchist trend, there is a painful absence of articulate

strategy to help move us towards such a world.

The question of *how to move forward* forces us to examine a number of weaknesses and contradictions within contemporary anarchism: U.S. anarchism is predominantly white, upper/middle class, and led by men; consistently avoids leadership issues; and has an unhealthy aversion to building or participating in organizations. These weaknesses contribute to anarchism's incredibly isolated position on the Left, its perceived irrelevance to many people who might otherwise identify with

anarchist principles, and has yielded an anarchism rooted in *activism*.

All too often, we assume that simply being anarchists means we are against oppression, and thereby we willfully overlook the complex problems of white supremacy, patriarchy, and classism. We often mistake activism for building a free society. And we create informal hierarchies by failing to deal with issues of leadership and power. To move forward we must address these- our greater

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Perspectives on Anarchist Theory

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Rebecca DeWitt

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IAS Update

“Since September 11”... the news media’s singular preoccupation with the recent terror attacks does announce a compelling truth: there is a new reference point in American politics that seems to have obliterated all others. Even among anarchists the phrase “Since Seattle,” which was the point of departure for so much of activism and theory, now seems to have been trumped by “Since September 11th. This is nothing new as anarchists have always had to respond to an agenda set by someone else. However, we must respond to this agenda while continuing to pursue our long term tasks: the development of a radical vision of social change and the construction of counter-institutions that embody this vision. This makes it more important than ever for the IAS to carry on with its mission to promote and develop anarchist theory. We can be sure of one thing: the alternatives have to exist in order for anyone to utilize them.

To that end, here at the IAS, we continue to award grants and publish our newsletter and find that our services continue to be in great demand. At different times, ideas for other projects and directions for the IAS are discussed but we always find ourselves returning to the basics. In fact, our grant awards are becoming increasingly competitive due to an overall increase in the amount of quality applications we are receiving.

This Summer’s round of grants indicate the level of quality and diversity of ideas within the anarchist movement, which we strive to nurture. Carlos Fernandez’s and Jena Cephas’ project, *Anarchists of Color*, confronts anarchism with the often ignored issue of race and how people of color contribute to and change anarchism; Ronald Campbell’s project, *The Anarchist Within: Anarchist Prisoners Building a Movement*, seeks to extend our understanding of how anarchism develops in the prison environment and can be incorporated into anarchist theory as a whole; and Bill Weinburg, with his book, *Pachamama Betrayed: Ecological Crime and Indigenous Resistance in the Andean Drug War*, continues his thorough investigation into what the “Drug War” is really about. These new projects, as well as all the projects we have supported, are slowly becoming part of a new body of anarchist thought.

We are infinitely pleased with our facilitation

of anarchist ideas and we need to raise \$20,000 by January 2002 in order to keep doing so. We are also frustrated with having to turn down deserving grants or give less money to the projects we do choose, and so I appeal to everyone to give a little more this year, whether it’s \$5 or \$1000, so that we can begin to increase our grant awards. We have our great selection of books for donors and, most importantly, we have another round of grants coming up. Anarchist writers are emerging just as we wanted them to do, so please help us help them!

~ Rebecca DeWitt

- The Interview with Todd May (Fall 2000) has been published in the magazine “El Rodaballo” n°13 (Invierno 2001). Translated by Fernando Trujillo.
- Our writing contest deadline has been extended to December 15, 2002. See page 13 for more details.
- See our website for up to date information on IAS supported projects, past issues of the newsletter, how to apply for a grant, and our brochure in several different languages.

<http://flag.blackened.net/ias>

Letter to the IAS:

*In the conversation with Rebecca DeWitt, (Spring 2001 Interview with Diva Agostinelli Wiecek), I inadvertently proved my point about the unreliability with oral history. In talking about the person who made disparaging remarks about the old Why? people, I let anger overcome good sense. My remarks [Diva said that, in order to justify his liking serving in the Army, an old comrade, quoted in Paul Avrich’s book *Anarchist Voices*, said the Why? Group was not supportive of those who chose to either enlist or not avoid the draft during WWII] are obviously speculation and I should have said so. I do not know why, nor do I have any hard facts therefore I should not have said what I did. Yet I do speculate as to why a person would say untrue things and mean spirited things about his former comrades. I also will say that my ‘negative’ attitude towards history is not meant to disparage the really good work done by Avrich and others—only that we add the proverbial bit of salt.*

~ Diva Agostinelli Wiecek

Grant Awards

The IAS Board of Directors was pleased to award grants to the following individuals for July 2001:

\$2000 to Carlos Fernandez and Jena Cephas for their two part project *Anarchists of Color* (recently renamed *The Quilombo Project*). This project will explore the experience and theories of people of color within anarchism. The first part of the project, in the form of interviews and reports, will describe the actual presence of people of color in contemporary US anarchism. The second part will consist of an overview of the theories used by anarchists of color in comparison with anarchist canon and will seek to reevaluate anarchist theory in the light of this comparison. They have created a website for this project: <http://www.quilomboproject.org>. Carlos Fernandez is pursuing an undergraduate degree in Film Studies while his activist work ranges from protests against the Gulf War to prison reform work and his work has been published in *Arsenal Magazine* and *Onward Maga-*

zine. Jena Cepha is currently studying architecture as an undergraduate with a focus on gentrification and affordable housing and she has been engaged in grassroots activism for over ten years, including the Youth Power! Anti-racist conference in Detroit, 1996.

\$1000 to Ronald Campbell for his project *The Anarchist Within: Anarchist Prisoners Building a Movement*. This project will examine contributions made by imprisoned anarchists to the anarchist community and will cover the various organizations and projects founded by these prisoners, as well as their reception by fellow prisoners, prison administrators, and the anarchist community. While many prisoners have written for various anarchist publications, this project focuses on anarchist groups operating within prison. Ronald Campbell has been actively involved in anarchist support groups as well as, while serving time, anarchist groups within prison.

\$1000 to Bill Weinberg for his book,

Pachamama Betrayed: Ecological Crime and Indigenous Resistance to the Andean Drug Wars. This book seeks to deconstruct the Orwellian euphemism of the "War on Drugs" to reveal how US military involvement in Latin America has not changed since the era of "gunboat diplomacy." By dissecting corporate interests in Columbia and examining indigenous resistance movements against US plans for the region, which violate international standards on war crimes and genocide, it will make a case for the revival of anti-war activism in the US and forge ties between the US and Andean activist communities. Bill Weinberg is the author of *War on the Land: Ecology and Politics in Central America* (Zed, 1990) and *Homage to Chiapas: The New Indigenous Struggles in Mexico* (Verso, 2000).

If you are interested in applying for a grant, please send a SASE to the IAS at P.O. Box 1664, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009; or print an application from our website

Grant Updates

Caitlin Hewitt-White has completed her study, "Gender in Current Anti-Globalization Activism in Canada" and published the following articles: in April 2001 she published "Women talking about sexism and oppression in the movement," in *Rip It Up*, a special issue of the Guelph Peak about corporate globalization and the movement against it; in September 2001 "Gender in Anti-Globalization Activism" in *Kick It Over* (No. 39); and "Women talking about sexism in the anti-globalization movement," in *RESIST! A Grassroots Collection of Stories, Poetry, Photos and Analysis from the FTAA Protests in Québec City and Beyond*, edited by Jen Chang et al. Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood, 2001. She is currently working on a full length manuscript, which will be submitted to Fernwood Books. She also has plans to write additional chapters that delve further into the theoretical implications of the project. She was awarded \$2000 in January 2001.

Andres Perez and Felipe del Solar will complete the first of their three part work, *Chile: Anarchist Practices Under Pinochet*, by the end of October. Focusing on the 70's era of anarchism in Chile, they have studied important historical documents and conducted interviews. They will next focus on anarchism in the 80's and 90's. They were awarded \$2000 in January 2001.

Will Firth has completed the first part of his three piece translation project. Entitled, "Russian Capitalism and the Global Economy" by the MPST in Moscow. This piece is available on the IAS website. He is working on the translations of two essays on Nestor Makhno, one by Russian anarchist Ida Melt and another by N. Sukhogorskaya, originally published in Nestor Ivanovich Makhno (ed. VF Verstyuk, Dzvin Publishers, Kiev 1991). He was awarded \$500 in January 2001.

Kevin Doyle has completed research and is now working on a draft of his play, *Orange Fire*, a three act play about the life, beliefs and struggles of Irish anarchist Captain Jack White (1879-1946). He plans to complete the play this Fall. He was awarded \$1000 in June 2000.

Alberto Villareal is working on his Spanish translation of *Remaking Society*. His work will be completed in March 2002. He was awarded \$2500 in January 2000.

Joe Lowndes' essay, *Anarchism and the Rise of Rightwing Anti-statism*, has become much larger over time. He plans to publish his work as a book in Spring 2002. Of the chapters and drafts that he has completed, one chapter is currently being considered for a collection of essays on populism edited by Ernesto Laclau and Fransisco Panizza. He was awarded \$1000 in June 1998. ~

What's Happening: Books and Events By Chuck Morse

Globalize Resistance!

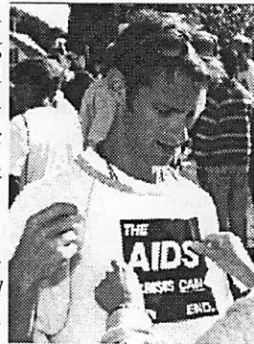
Anarchists have had an extraordinary influence upon the anti-globalization movement and bear considerable responsibility for its confrontational, decentralized character. However, we cannot afford to gloat over our accomplishments: we must study this movement and nurture its revolutionary potential. *Restructuring and Resistance: Diverse Voices of Struggle in Western Europe* is one of several new publications that can help us in this task. This book examines some of the rapid changes in social, political and economic relations that have been occurring in Western Europe, particularly European Unification, and the new social conflicts they have produced. The book contains contributions from (mainly) Western European activists directly involved in diverse grassroots movements. Its seventy-seven chapters chart the breakdown of social consensus in post-WWII Western Europe and the growth of new challenges to the social order produced by this breakdown. Analyses of restructuring processes and accounts of resistance are intertwined with each other, demonstrating their inseparability. It is edited by Kolya Abramsky and available from AK Press (UK) or directly from resresrev@yahoo.com (2001, 566 pages). Another useful work is *The Other Davos: The Globalization of Resistance to the World Economic System*, edited by Francois Houtart and Francois Polet (Zed Books, 144 pages, 2001). This anthology contains articles produced at the counter-summit held at the 1999 meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Also of interest is *Women Resist Globalization*, edited by Sheila Rowbotham and Stephanie Linkogle (Zed Books, 224 pages, December 2001). This book analyzes resistance to globalization led by groups that are exclusively or significantly female in the Northern and Southern regions of the globe. It focuses on women's grassroots activism in the two key areas: claims to livelihood and



human rights. It contains an essay by Temma Kaplan, author of *Anarchists of Andalusia*, among others.

Predecessors

The contemporary resurgence of anarchism has roots in years of anti-authoritarian political and cultural work. For a perspective on the radical urban culture that has shaped the lives and consciousness of many US activists, readers will want to pick up *Tearing Down the Streets: Adventures in Urban Anarchy* by Jeff Ferrell (Palgrave, November 2001, 304 pages). This book looks at how "graffiti artists, young people, radical environmentalists, and the homeless clash with police on city streets in an attempt to take back urban spaces from the developers and "disneyfiers." Act Up!, with its decentralized, colorful, and media-savvy approach, is certainly a predecessor of the anti-globalization movement. The group's history is documented in *From ACT UP to the WTO: Urban Protest and Community Building in the Era of Globalization*, edited by Benjamin Shepard and Ronald Hayduk (Verso Books, February 2002, 360 pages). *Direct Action in British Environmentalism*, edited by Benjamin Seel (et al), examines the resurgence of direct action in the UK's environmental movement during the 1990s. This anthology discusses topics such as protest camp tactics, the anti-roads movement, among others (Routledge, 2001, 256 pages).



zapatistas

In many respects the Zapatista launched the first salvo in the war against global capitalism and their movement continues to produce invaluable lessons for radicals worldwide. *Auroras of the Zapatistas: Local & Global Struggles of the Fourth World War* by Midnight Notes

(Autonomedia, 2001, 256 pages) examines the Zapatista rebellion as part of a broader assault against global capital. Essays in the book look at the Zapatistas directly as well as their impact upon radical movements around the globe. Lynn Stephen's *Zapata Lives! Histories and Cultural Politics in Southern Mexico* (University of California Press, January 2002, 460 pages) chronicles recent political events in southern Mexico up to and including the July 2000 election of Vicente Fox. Stephen focuses on the meaning that Emiliano Zapata, anarchist and great symbol of land reform and human rights, had and has for rural Mexicans. She documents the rise of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas and shows how it was understood in other parts of Mexico, particularly in Oaxaca. Stephen illuminates the cultural dimensions of these political events, showing how indigenous Mexicans and others fashioned their own responses to neoliberal economic policy, which ended land reform, encouraged privatization, and produced increasing socioeconomic stratification in Mexico. She shows how activists appropriated symbols of the Mexican revolution to build the contemporary political movement, examines the history of land tenure, racism, gender issues in the Zapatista movement, the Zapatista uprising of the 1990s, its aftermath, and more. *The Zapatista Reader: A Literary Anthology* includes reflections on the Zapatistas by writers such as Bill Weinberg, Eduardo Galeano, and many others. It is edited by Tom Hayden, the primary author of SDS's Port Huron Statement and now a schmuck in the Democratic Party (Thunder's Mouth Press /Nation Books, November 2001, 400 pages).

The Broad View

A broad treatment of the anarchist movement and tradition can be found in a new edition of *The Anarchist Papers*, edited by Dimitrios Roussopoulos (Black Rose, 2001, 216 pages). This issue contains articles by Murray Bookchin, Cornelius Castoriadis, among others. A similarly broad treatment will be accessible to French readers in *L'Anar-*

chisme a-t-il un Avenir?: Histoire de Femmes, D'Hommes et de leurs Imaginaires (trans: *What is the Future for Anarchism? The History of Women, Men, and Their Visions*). This work derives from a 1999 conference of the same name held in Toulouse, France and examines issues in the history of anarchism, its presence in contemporary social movements, and its future (Atelier de Création Libertaire, June 2001, 555 pages). A less contemporary but sweeping treatment of the anarchist tradition in Europe is available in Gaetano Manfredonia's *L'Anarchisme en Europe* (Presses Universitaires de France, 2001, 158 pages). This French language work analyzes the formation of the anarchist movement, its influence upon the European labor movement, and its possible future in the 21st century.

Nuances

The literature on anarchism has generally become more specialized as the movement has grown. An extensive treatment of the relationship between anarchism and Judaism is available (in Italian) in *L'Anarchico e L'Ebreo: Storia di un Incontro* (Trans: *The Anarchist and the Hebraic: History of an Encounter*, Eleuthera, 2001, 238 pages). This work contains essays on thinkers such as Gustav Landauer, Gershom Scholem, studies of Jewish anarchist movements in Poland, Argentina, and many other issues. Portuguese readers will want to pick up *Foucault eo Anarquismo* (trans: *Foucault and Anarchism*) by Salvo Vaccaro (Editora Achiamé, 2001, 40 pages).

Homage to Catalonia

The already vast information on anarchist participation in Spanish social revolution of 1936 continues to increase. Miguel Íñiguez's *Esbozo de una Enciclopedia Histórica del Anarquismo Español* (trans: *Sketch of an Historical Encyclopedia of Spanish Anarchism*) will be an indispensable resource for Spanish readers interested in the history of Spanish anarchism (Anselmo Lorenzo, 2001, 648 pages). This will be complemented by the first English language translation of the first volume of Jose Peirat's seminal book on the Spanish anarcho-syndicalist union: *The CNT in the Spanish Revolution* (Meltzer Press, 2001, translated by Paul Sharkey and Chris Ealham). For an audio introduction to the Spanish Revolu-

tion, listeners should obtain *Canciones Anarquistas* (anarchist songs) produced recently by Grupo "Paso a la Verdad".



Ricardo Flores Magon

This 36 track CD contains anarchist songs from Spain as well as Argentina (write: Grupo "Paso a la Verdad", Apartado 2372, 39080 Santander, Spain or pasoalaverdad@ono.com).

Living My Life

Biographies and autobiographies are essential documents for the history of anarchism and two new studies of anarchists who lived during the movement's heyday will be published soon. *The World's Most Dangerous Woman: A New Biography of Emma Goldman* by Theresa and Albert Moritz draws upon previous ignored resources in Europe and the US and places special emphasis on Goldman's years in Canada (Subway Books, 2001). Frank Ray Davis's *Ricardo Flores Magon: the Man who Saw Tomorrow* will be the first English-language biography of this leading Mexican anarchist (See Sharp Press, 2001).

Post-War Anarchism

Many historians of anarchism would lead us to believe that the movement died when World War Two began, but this assertion is not true and increasingly difficult to sustain thanks to the expanding literature on post-WWII anarchism. Margareth Rago's Portuguese language *Entre a História e a Liberdade: Luce Fabbri e o Anarquismo Contemporâneo* (trans: *Between History and Liberty: Luce Fabbri and Contemporary Anarchism*) studies the life and times of this remarkable Uruguayan/Italian anarchist theorist and activist (Fundação Editora Da Unesp, 2000, 368 pages). Bernard Thomas's Spanish-language *Lucio, el Anarquista Irreductible* (trans: *Lucio, the Irreducible Anarchist*) narrates the life of Lucio Urtubia,

a consummate anti-fascist and post-war anarchist activist. This book recounts his extraordinary life, which included decades of anarchist activity, meetings with figures such as Quico Sabaté and Che Guevera, and much more (Ediciones B, 2001, 304 pages).

Labor

The lessons of the IWW are vital for anyone who wants to bring a revolutionary spirit back to the labor movement. Greg Hall's *Harvest Wobblies: The Industrial Workers of the World and Agricultural Laborers in the American West, 1905-1930* (Oregon State University Press, 2001, 288 pages) analyzes how "harvest Wobblies" organized the migrant and seasonal workers who were so essential and so exploited on the farms of the West.

Emma Goldman

Paris will host *The Emma Goldman Colloquium in Paris* at the Université Paris VIII, 2 rue de la Liberté, 93526 Saint-Denis, France, from November 30 to December 1st, 2001. This conference will feature presentations by numerous scholars of Goldman's life and politics.

Bookstores

Two new anarchist bookstores/information centers have opened recently. Anarchists have filled the vacuum left by the closure of New York's Blackout Books by opening *Mayday Books*. It is located in the lobby of the Theater for the New City at 155 1st Avenue, New York, NY (between 9th & 10th Streets). It is open Thursday to Sunday, 12-6 PM. For more information call (212) 894 3749, ext. 2156 or write maydaybooks@excite.com. Comrades in São Paulo, Brazil have recently opened the *Instituto de Cultura e Ação Libertária* (trans: *Institute of Libertarian Culture and Action*) at Praça Américo Jacumino, 89., Ao lado do metrô Vila Madalena., São Paulo, capital, phone: (011) 38657028. The Instituto will contain a bookstore, a meeting space, and many other vital resources for anarchists. ~ End



An Interview with Osvaldo Bayer, Argentinean Public Intellectual and Social Historian

Continued from page 1

You made contact with people of the FACA?

Well it wasn't really called the F.A.C.A. It was called the FLA(3) and they remembered the F.A.C.A. as something of the remote past. Shortly we had to move because of the continuation of 9th July Avenue(4) to Brazil Street [the present location of the FLA], premises which I have known since their birth.

I wanted to ask you about your book *Severino Di Giovanni*. Was it the first militant activity of anarchism in Argentina that you became acquainted with?

Yes, absolutely. It was the first, then came Los Anarquistas Expropiadores [The Expropriator Anarchists]. I started in the year's '65 and '66, and I had the luck that, except for those killed by the police, the majority of the compañeros of Severino's group were still living. And those that belonged to groups hostile to Severino, too, like Abad de Santillán, for example. And the men who had founded La Antorcha in the early '20s, they were all living, and a few of the memories were still alive, too. In fact, so many were that they didn't like it at all that I was dedicating time to Severino Di Giovanni, who was an enemy. They still expressed solidarity with López Arango(6) and his compañero, Diego Abad de Santillán. Santillán did every thing possible to stop me from writing this book. The wounds were still very much open and there was a lot of hate involved. For them Severino was the antithesis of anarchism, not only him, but the people who surrounded him too.

But amongst them there were anarchists like Morán(7)...

Like Morán, yes, doubtlessly...But Severino got the full brunt of Santillán's hate. He made statements to me about

Severino, that I later proved to be false. On the other hand there were others who worked in La Antorcha and appreciated him very much, such as Alberto Bianchi(8). For me Alberto Bianchi was one of the most important fighters for this tendency, which, of course, didn't foresee that the FLA was going to turn into a place for meetings and weekends. Then there were very valuable people, who came from the FORA or the interior of the country, who met in the FLA, like Borda, who was a great fighter, who was in La Forestal(9), a

The Italo-Argentinian anarchist group of Severino di Giovanni first attacked North American establishments with bombs at the time of the murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, and then Fascist Italian firms. At the same time the group carried out several hold-ups to finance a secret press which in 1930 was to publish two volumes of 'Social Writings' by Elisee Reclus in Italian. (<http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/spain/barbieri.html>)

quiet man, but who made it perfectly clear for me that Severino had never betrayed the cause or any thing of the sort. What happened is that Severino's attacks were used by the police to persecute anarchists who were militants at surface level [with] the objective of criminalizing the entire libertarian movement. And a lot of anarchists complained saying, "...but Severino should've warned us...", but Severino, who was always running from the police, could never warn anybody of anything. So that's how I was able to reconstruct, bit by bit, both of these tendencies. Those two tendencies of the '20s were really hard on each other.

Were you able to see Fina(10) then?

No, Fina didn't want to receive me. She was tired of the "crows", the journalists who sought sensationalist material and cops-and-robbers treatment of the case. But then, when the first edition was published, when she saw that it was something different, she phoned me and explained why she hadn't received me before. She was happy with the book because of how it handled the love between Severino and her, but she wanted to know where I'd found the material and the letters that I'd quoted. Of course, I'd studied all of the material in the court records, in the police records of the case, I'd done the entire circuit, I'd visited the places they'd lived in, I'd

even arrived as far as the country-house in Burzaco where they lived together and which was Severino's last dwelling. She was a girl of sixteen... She's always denied it! She phoned me up and said, "No Bayer, you have to make this correction in the book. I wasn't sixteen, I was seventeen..." What a difference! Of course, being seventeen, she was a young lady, because the main point of the press attack was that he was living with a minor.

So, you wrote this book in the '60s, but you were aware of the Patagonia issue earlier...

Yes, I already knew that topic, because my father was a history buff, who had lived with my mother in Rio Gallegos (11) during the entire strike. It interested him a lot and he collected the workers' leaflets and newspapers of the period. That way, I had a lot of material as well as my father's accounts.

Then you moved to Santa Fé(12)?

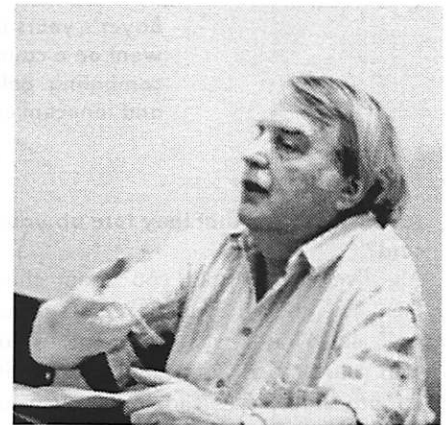
No, they moved to Neuquén(13). What happened is my mother went to Santa Fé, where her sisters lived, to have her last two children. The eldest was born in Rio Gallegos, Franz, the second, was born in Neuquén. Then they moved to Concepción del Uruguay(14) and I was born, but my mother went to Santa Fé to have us. But I was conceived in Concepción del Uruguay! Imagine that! [he laughs]...they decided to go to live in Tucumán(15). So, my first four years were spent in Tucumán and I still have memories of when I was four. It's incredible how I still remember the carts loaded with sugar cane passing by. But when I was four, I went to live in Bernal in the Province of Buenos Aires...when I was seven we came to live in Belgrano [from suburban Buenos Aires, Bernal, to a residential district in the City of Buenos Aires, Belgrano]. Then I lived here till I got married.

How did you take up contact with the libertarian movement?

Since my student times in Germany, I'd been strongly attracted to the libertarian movement. I'd read a lot. Over there I'd

Books by Osvaldo Bayer (some books are also available in German and Italian):

- *Anarchism And Violence: Severino Di Giovanni In Argentina. 1923-1931.* Introduction By Alfredo M. Bonanno and Jean Weir. Translated By Paul Sharkey. London : Elephant Editions, 1985 (1986 Printing)
- *La Patagonia Rebelde.* Mexico, D.F. : Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1980.
- *Exilio /* Juan Gelman, Osvaldo Bayer. Buenos Aires : Editorial Legasa, 1984.
- Argentine Writer Osvaldo Bayer Reading From His Work [Sound Recording]. 1984. Library Of Congress.
- *A Contrapelo : Conversaciones Con Osvaldo Bayer.* Introducción Reportaje Ulises Gorini. Buenos Aires : Instituto Movilizador De Fondos Cooperativos, 1999
- *Fútbol Argentino : Pasión Y Gloria De Nuestro Deporte Más Popular.* Buenos Aires : Editorial Sudamericana, C1990.
- *El Populismo En La Argentina.* Buenos Aires : Plus Ultra, C1974.



become a militant of the Socialist Students' League, who were left-socialists, left of the social democrats. They had a very libertarian tendency and there I read the classics. So, when I came back from my studies in '56, I already had a libertarian posture. What happened is I wanted to enter the Socialist Party here, but the internal disputes were so tremendous that they didn't accept me. The old guys who represented the right wing of the party and feared the growth of the youth thought that I'd come to break the voting tie in the committee to their disadvantage, because the assembly of associates had to accept me. I remember that assembly, it was pathetic! It embarrassed me, because they tied twice or three times! And all I wanted was to be a member. So, I thanked them, and good bye, never again, ... never again the Socialist Party! Then I started to go now and then to the lectures at the Libertarian Federation in Humberto Primo Street.

How big of an influence did the FLA have in the social movement at that time?

I'd say very little, because peronism had completely defeated anarchism. And anarchism had committed some grave errors. All the people who were against Severino Di Giovanni when I started my research took me to be an enemy. And there were those who had openly collaborated with the "Libertadora" (16). Openly! So much so that some syndicates [until that moment they were peronist] were taken by the marine infantry. These syndicates held a banquet in the Libertarian Federation for Admiral Rojas(17)...Well, they were ferociously anti-peronist and unbearably anti-communist. Furthermore, I arrived there with my surname of German ori-

gin, and some said that they had to check out if I was nazi or not. It was a really shitty environment, controlled by the old guys, the old guys who had lost to peronism.

You have told me that you were once a sailor. When was that?

That was before I went to study in Germany. I had to work to save for my studies, and first I worked in an insurance agency belonging to some Germans. My third job was in the merchant marine. One of my brothers was an officer there, and he had me enter as an apprentice commissary. The commissaries were the ones who did the administrative paper pushing on the ships. But on the second day Captain Almirón saw me and said, you're not going to stay here doing numbers in the office. Come to the bridge, You're going to be an apprentice helmsman. So, for six months I was an apprentice helmsman. We went from

Buenos Aires to Puerto Caballero to the North of Asunción along the River Paraná. It was a very nice period, dangerous because the crew was Paraguayan

then. The Paraguayans and Correntinos (18) held shindigs on top of the barges with an accordion and some played the harp(19) really well and they danced all night long, those nights of full moon and heat. At the beginning I went but it was very dangerous because I was the only pale face there. I was going to have to close myself up in my cabin [he laughs]. Those trips were really nice, until the Maritime Workers' Strike was called because they wouldn't accept

Bayer's book, *La Patagonia Rebelde*. (The Rebellious Patagonia) is about the strikes of 1921-1922 in the Argentinean far South where about 1500 Patagonian workers were murdered by the Argentinean Army. It was banned in the 70's by the government and even publicly burned with other subversive books.

Perón's decree, by which, I can't remember, seven or eight percent of their earnings were to be discounted for the Eva Perón Foundation [founded by Eva Peron to give money to the poor]. So the Maritime Workers said "no". The Maritime Workers and the Railway Workers were the only unions still in the hands of the socialists and the anarchists. Well, the anarchists still had influence within the sailors union, not amongst the leaders but amongst the rank and file members, amongst the mechanics. I attended the assembly where the automatic discount was rejected - it was to be voluntary, he who wanted to donate, should donate. We embarked upon the steamer Madrid, and the strike started before we arrived in Rosario(20). So, I said to the captain, "O.K., I'm on strike", and he answered, "You're not going to fool around, you're not going to strike if no one's going to stop working here".

"What do you mean, nobody's going to stop working - we have to follow the decisions of the assembly?" "Look, not one Paraguayan or Correntino's going to stop working here".

And that's the way it was, I was the only striker on the steamer Madrid, and of course when we arrived in Rosario, they disembarked me and told the Coast Guard that I was a striker. It was 2 o'clock in the morning. A jeep came to pick me up and took me to the Coast Guard Station. They made me stand at attention for about six hours straight.

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Bayer's years in exile....In a coup on March 24, 1976, a military junta seized power in Argentina and went on a campaign to wipe out left-wing terrorism with terror far worse than the one they were combating. Between 1976 and 1983 - under military rule - thousands of people, most of them dissidents and innocent civilians unconnected with terrorism, were arrested and then vanished without a trace.

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And it was then that they tore up your card?

Ah, I've already told you about this, then. Yes, then the Under-prefect came and said, "Watch what I'm going to do with your embarkation card". He tore it up into little pieces and threw them in the garbage. And he said, "You are never going to sail again on an Argentinian vessel." And he was right.

Had you already registered at the School of Philosophy and Humanities?

First I registered in medicine, because I wanted to learn about the body before learning about the soul. I passed my first year of medicine...and I left medicine to enter philosophy. There I became acquainted with... well, "they" came to speak to me about peronism! Peron had given the School of Philosophy and Humanities over to Catholic Fundamentalism and the Right, so you only saw Saint Thomas and Saint Augustine. The CEU, Centro de Estudiantes Universitarios [University Students' Center] were the peronists who dominated the School and kicked the shit out of you. Their boss was Jorge Cesarsky(21), you remember....After that, I continued with journalism until [eventually] I accepted to go to Patagonia [with the Esquel(22) newspaper]. I went with a contract with the owner of the chain of newspapers of Chubut(23), who [contracted] me for the Esquel paper. I went there with all my family, because I intended to stay for a few years. But right after a year they kicked me out, the gendarmerie(24) that is, because of my subversive articles. Because, they said, Esquel was a border town. And so it was that I returned to Buenos Aires as a sort of national journalistic hero, because they had kicked me out and they had put me in the can. The day I arrived in Buenos Aires I started working for the newspaper Clarín. Only a short time afterwards, they elected me to be Adjunct Secretary General of the Press Workers' Syndicate and I immediately went on to be the General Secretary, the journalists' maxi-

mum commander. There was also the Journalists' Association, a minority union of gorilas [reactionaries]. There, in the Syndicate, I learnt a lot.

Were you independent within the union or did you belong to any certain tendency?

No, I belonged to a tendency..., there were two "lists" [tendencies] in the union, one Blue and White(25), who were right peronists on the absolute Right and more a group of intelligence servicemen and collaborators, always mixed together with the SIDE [Secretaría de Inteligencia del Estado, State Intelligence Secretariat]. We were the Green List, the independent list, formed out of radicales(26), socialists, communists and anarchists. The list, because of the communists, was introduced orders from the Central Committee [of the Communist Party]...We carried out a lot of struggles...in the assemblies and the interior of the country. I traveled throughout the world and I was under arrest for 63 days. That was in '63, a little after Illia'd been elected [President of Argentina] and took power on the 12th of October. I was arrested during the dictatorship that had Guido as president, after the milicos' coup d'état, and I was under arrest from the 2nd of April till the 20th of June, in the women's prison. After that, that was everybody's joke with me! [he laughs] They had moved all the women because there wasn't enough room in the men's prisons - they were all full! In our pavilion there were seventeen communists and two others. Well, I was there for 63 days. You learn a lot... Well, after that my life went back to its normal work, and little by little I started with my research projects.

When you had gone to Esquel, was that your first contact with Patagonia? Did you start to do research there?

Yes, yes, mostly to collect data, because someone always appeared who knew something. There was an old journalist and I once wrote an article on him. The Horse-back Journalist he was called and he wrote his articles on horse back. He went to all the villages, always on horse

back. He has a really beautiful book. One day we're going to do a reproduction with some publisher. Any way, when I got back [from Patagonia]... the communists really betrayed the posture we had chosen, which was a completely independent one. They wanted to bend it, twist it, and so finally I didn't want to have anything more to do with that [Green] list. I left it and continued completely independently. At that time I was director of a magazine called Imagen, a current events magazine of German style, which went pretty well. But then the owner sold it to Alberto J. Armando (27) and to that son of a bitch of a painter, the one that always has ads calling him the best painter, what's his name?...Pérez Celis, unbearable. I had to deal with him. He's miserable, egotistic, a horrible painter. I don't know how he keeps pulling off what he does. He's considered to be the best Argentinean painter, any way, let's leave him. Well, I carried on with my work there.

You were still with the Clarín, you had started to work on Di Giovanni, you'd collected all that material for La Patagonia.

Yes, I started to work on Di Giovanni, and then the Clarín positioned me as the Chief of Politics and one of my reporters was named Félix Luna. So, one fine day he told me, "I want to start a history magazine. Would you help me?" and I said, "Yes, I'm very interested." and he asked me, "What would you like to do?" "I'd like to do research on the crimes of the beginning of the century, really get into the nitty-gritty, and describe it all." And he said to me, "O.K., do it. But do some history too." And so I started to collaborate with the magazine Todo es Historia. I signed the cop-and-robber articles with a pen name and the other ones with mine. The first issue started with the Palomar(28) affair. I liked the topics where I could still find the participants, not from the previous century, where all you have left are the newspapers and documents. I always liked doing research where I could find people to interview. And in all the research work I found the participants alive - the

In 1983, after democracy was restored, a national commission was appointed to investigate the fate of the disappeared. Its report revealed the systematic abductions of men women and children, the existence of about 340 well organized secret detention centers, and the methodic use of torture and murder. Records of the atrocities were destroyed by the military. The disappeared have not been heard of to this day.

members of Di Giovanni's group, the members of the expropriator bands and groups. Absolutely everybody of La Patagonia was still living, the soldiers were 62 years old. So all my historical articles are based on oral testimony, except for one topic, which interested me very much, which was the sinking of the Rosales, the only Argentinean ship that sunk with the saving of all of the officers and the drowning of all the other crew members. It was the first time that the matter was researched. The work on Di Giovanni appeared in two pretty long articles. After that, the editor of the Galerna publishers called me to say, "We're going to publish a book [on Di Giovanni]." So I told him I had tons of material and that I'd had to summarize to fit all of it into the magazine. Then I started to put the book together. It was among the highest sellers for 24 weeks, I think.

It has to be the historical number one best seller of the history in the Argentinean press. I still see kids of 20 or so reading it as if it were the Bible.

Yes, it was, until it was prohibited by that son of a bitch, Lastiri(29), before Peron did it. And then began the whole adventure with the film, which was going to be done on Di Giovanni.

Did you actually write a script?

Yes, first with Roberto Bezza. Then there was Fabio [Leonardo Fabio, movie director], who had it for ten years or more, and after Fabio the famous Italian, the one who made "Christ Stopped at Eboli", Gino? I wish he'd made it. Just when he was about to make it the bombing took place in Milan, a bomb in a bank that killed sixteen people, and he said to me, "No, in no way are we going to do the life of a terrorist." Well, that's the way it stayed till I returned from exile... In the mean time there was Fabio again, who spoke to me from Columbia. I remember it was snowing in Germany and he phoned me at three in the morning saying, "We're going to do it on the Côte d'Azur, it's all set." Imagine, what a title, "Severino Di Giovanni on the Côte d'Azur" [he laughs]. After I got

back here in '83 and Olivera [who had the rights after Fabio] finally gave it up.

Why did he give it up?

He was really enthusiastic, we'd already started with the wardrobe, everything was ready, with the script written and everything else, and one day he phoned me and said, "Look Osvaldo, I can't do it." I asked him, "Why not? Don't just tell me that." And he answered, "Look, Severino's a nice terrorist and each time he places a bomb, the people in the cinema are going to give him a tremendous applause. It's going to cause some really messy problems, and I've already had enough of the experience of La Patagonia Rebelde [Rebellious Patagonia]"

But it [the movie] was the success of his life...

True, but there was no way. And then who called me? Fabio, who had every thing all ready. He described each scene to me, everything... Well, after Fabio appeared Desanzo, the one who did Evita. And I flatly refused him. He said, "I've got great news, Bayer, Fabio's just given me the rights." I asked him, "Who is Fabio to give the rights to you?" Desanzo went on, "I'm really very happy, it's the dream of my life..." And I asked again, "Who is he to give you the rights? Stop fucking around with me, don't hassle me with this stuff any more. That gentleman had no right! Keep yourself out of these things..." Poor Desanzo... So, well, after Desanzo nobody touched the stuff again, until the matter with Luis Puenzo(31) began...

Now Luis Puenzo has the rights, is he considering filming?

I don't know. I hope not, because he's trash.

Give us your evaluation of the situation, today, half way through 2001. What is the situation of progressive politics, of the Left, of humanists faced with the offensive of the Right, of capitalism at its most voracious point?

Mothers of the Disappeared

A group of mothers who began demonstrating in the Plaza de Mayo, demanding that the government give them answers as to where their children were. Bayer is very involved with this group.

<http://www.madres-lineafundadora.org/>

I'm encouraged by the picketeers' movement(32) and by the movements of the campesinos and the unemployed. It's really curious, because they appear spontaneously... They are living examples of the phenomenon of the [Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of the Disappeared)]. When there are demonstrations, people go into the streets. It is as if the absolute and total defeat of ten years ago had somehow been overcome. These movements are calling the attention of the First World. The huge demonstrations against the World Trade Organization, the system isn't working. The system is finding absolutely no solution to any problem either of the First World or of the Third World...I have real confidence that we're going to have a more and more revolutionary climate! You see that the bourgeois parties don't know what to do. They change one guy, put in another one, they make ridiculous speeches... If you listened to the thing in Tucumán..., it's just one more radical speech, it seems like they'd looked for one of Yrigoyen's(33) speeches... "All of us have to be united, all of us have to be together..." Yeah! Who united, who?! "Unite! The Mother Land is in danger!" Such stupidity, at least the peronists put a little salt on things, they at least seem to be revolutionaries when they speak...

One sees more and more people who are excluded, marginalized. Those who are integrated and who have an income are terrified of losing it, of losing their integration. All the movements which you have mentioned are all movements which have nothing to do directly with production. You've mentioned the Madres and the picketeers, are they generally outside the system?

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weaknesses- in order to develop the intermediary structures necessary to bring about an anti-authoritarian world.

Activism and Organizing - Where Anarchists Stand

Throughout this article, we use the terms *activism* and *organizing* in opposition to each other, as a way to illustrate the necessity of organizing, not to create strict dichotomies between the two. We can think of activism this way: Activism: a doctrine or practice that emphasizes direct vigorous action especially in support of or opposition to one side of a controversial issue. (emphasis ours) (Definition from Merriam-Webster Dictionary, [http:// www.m-w.com](http://www.m-w.com))

We can also learn about activism from June 18 organizer Andrew X: Defining ourselves as activists means defining *our* actions as the ones which will bring about social change, thus disregarding the activity of thousands upon thousands of other non-activists. Activism is based on this misconception that it is only activists who do social change-whereas of course class struggle is happening all the time. (2)

Over the last three decades, anarchist activism has taken form through many dynamic projects and issue-based campaigns. By definition, though, activism has not- and can not- be the way through which the revolutionary project is built, because activism *elevates issues over relationships with human beings*. (3) While the- politic of anarchism emphasizes *relationships*, our commitment to activism has been developed with an almost oppositional stance towards *organizing*, which is, at its root, about building relationships: Organizing. An organizer is a person who is responsible to a defined constituency and who helps build that constituency

through leadership development collective action, and the development of democratic structures. (definition by *National Organizers Alliance*) (4)

We need to reexamine what it means to be an 'activist', and what we tend to think of as an 'organizer'. Many anarchists who utilize organizing methods may identify themselves as activists simply because they do not know about the idea of *organizing*. It is important to examine how we practice our politics and who we are working with, because to achieve collective liberation we will need to work with the mass of society. Doing this will require us to prioritize *relationships* with others, i.e. organizing, rather than prioritizing *issues*, i.e. activism.

Breakdown: racism, sexism, and classism in the U.S. anarchist movement

The U.S. anarchist 'movement' is dominated by white people, and its politics and practice are currently rooted in white privilege. (5) As a result, anarchism in the U.S. has become defined by white privilege and white supremacy. As a group, white anarchists are largely without an anti-racist analysis of, and *practice against*, white supremacy and white privilege. Critiques of capitalism put forth from the anarchist movement are largely void of any analysis of white supremacy. This is particularly problematic, as the two cannot be separated. (6)

By internalizing sexism, men often silence and marginalize women's voices. The history and current work of anarchist women has been largely relegated to obscurity by a patriarchal political practice wherein women are both undervalued and made invisible. Anarchist men do not come together enough (or at all) to discuss how male power and privilege shapes the anarchist trend. And while anarchist men *sometimes* prioritize the voices and histories of women, this becomes quickly *tokenistic* when such prioritization is not coupled with active work to change the underlying social

and institutional structures, which afford men both privileges and a sense of entitlement.

The majority of self-declared anarchists come from upper/middle class backgrounds, but are largely without a complex-analysis of class. By complex-analysis, we mean an analysis which digs further than that of 'owning class/working class'—an analysis which stems from, and engages in, the voices and experiences of working class/poor people. One brief example of this lack of class analysis can be seen within some anarchist cultural practices: perhaps in attempt to find autonomy from wealth and privilege, many anarchists from upper/middle class backgrounds take on roles of voluntary 'poverty', creating entire subcultures wherein 'poverty' is an aesthetic of value. While ostensibly rooted in a desire for simplicity, this so-called poverty, taken on as a cultural attribute, often itself becomes the expression of class analysis. This volunteer 'poverty' quickly mocks the struggles facing many working class/poor people, and can be terribly alienating to anyone whose been *forced* to live in poverty. We must develop a radical, complex class analysis if we are to work with working class/working poor people in constructing viable, class-conscious economic alternatives.

In this self-imposed isolation, we have chosen to build *activist projects*, which are severely limited in that they have been largely thought of, designed, built, and implemented by white upper/middle class people to *attract, draw in, and politicize other white, middle class people*, most of whom already sympathize or identify explicitly with anarchist politics. Rather than build an anti-authoritarian revolutionary project in the U.S., this strategy has instead served to build an isolated sub-movement of white *activists* who join forces around a common adherence to anarchist politics and perpetuate the very structures instigated by capitalist society.

The anarchist movement is in dire need

Building a World of Vision

of an anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-classist analysis and a *commitment to bring that theory into action*. This commitment must be to challenge oppression by transforming the institutions and structural mechanisms that give oppression power. We must also address how, as individuals, we perpetuate male supremacy, white supremacy, and classist ideas and behaviors. These are expressions of both institutional realities and psychological socializations, under which every person in the U.S. is subjected to and often benefits from or is targeted by (or both). Devising plans to address these problems can be found by examining anarchist leadership and the complexities of becoming more organized.

There's No Anarchist Leadership or Let's Ignore that Big Pink Elephant in the Room

The question of leadership in anarchist circles brings up a host of contradictions, which anarchists too often avoid by denying that leadership exists. This is complete hogwash. As Love and Rage points out: "Anarchism tends to assume a theoretical posture of total hostility towards leadership. But every anarchist group or project that lasts any length of time has clearly identifiable, if informal, leadership." (7)

When we deny that leadership exists, we allow for informal hierarchies rooted in racism, classism, and sexism to form. These hierarchies are built on power, and in their construction, people with privilege take on leadership roles. In these 'invisible' hierarchies, some people exercise power *over* others, rather than exercising power *with* others.

Critiques of power may be at the heart of anarchist theory but there is a disturbing trend to deny that power exists in anarchist spaces, and to utilize anarchist rhetoric to deny the existence of leaders and power. Furthermore, many anarchists define their politics by

the destruction of power- a view that is flawed and rooted in privilege. Power can be given away, take away, reclaimed, and exercised- but it cannot be destroyed. It is the way in which power can be reclaimed and exercised collectively that anarchists should devote themselves to.

"What anarchists are missing is a conception of leadership that we find relevant"

If we deny the existence of leaders in our work, we create a perfect environment for the creation of internal hierarchies while at the same time limiting our capacity to challenge those who abuse power. This question of *how power is used- power over people or power with people-* is crucial to address when thinking about leadership.

Rethinking Leadership

"A position of leadership is in some sense unavoidably a position of authority. As Anti-authoritarians, we need to create systems that make leaders accountable to the broader body of people who make up a movement or organization. We must also develop a practice of leadership that consciously subverts those authoritarian tendencies, and assists in generalizing leadership skills among the people." (8)

What anarchists are missing is a conception of leadership that we find relevant; one that defines leadership by the processes, activities, and relationships in which people engage, rather than as the individual in a specific role, having authoritarian power over others.

Organizers throughout history have struggled with this question of non-hierarchical leadership. Civil rights/ SNCC organizer Ella Baker demonstrated one different form of leadership. As Chris Crass writes, "Ms. Baker had an innovative understanding of leadership, an idea which she thought of in multiple ways: as facilitator, creating processes and methods for others to express themselves and make decisions; as coordinator, creating events, situations and dynamics that

build and strengthen collective efforts; and as teacher/educator, working with others to develop their own sense of power, capacity to organize and analyze, visions of liberation and ability to act in the world for justice. Ella believed that good leadership created opportunities for others to realize and expand their own talents, skills and potential to be leaders themselves. This did not mean that she didn't challenge people or struggle with people over political questions and strategies. Rather, this meant that she struggled with people over these questions to help develop principled and strategic leadership capable of organizing for social transformation." (9)

Baker did not believe in the 'single' leader, which anarchists rightly criticize. Instead she sought to develop new types of leadership. Baker described good leadership as group-centered leadership, meaning that leaders form in groups and are committed to building collective power and struggling for collective goals. This is different than leader-centered groups, in which the group is dedicated to the goals and power of that leader. (10)

As Crass deftly notes in his article, Baker's practice as an organizer was infused with principles and ethics that could be considered anarchist, though Baker herself probably never identified as such. Such models of leadership are crucial points of study for anarchists.

'Group Leadership' can only be realized through building relationships. Building relationships and taking collective action is the root of what it means to organize people. But to consider building relationships, we must consider the material, social, and psychological reality of power. To build liberatory relationships with people, it is crucial to have an analysis of power as it relates to our social status, material access, and psychological development. As James Mumm writes, "Relationships are always political, and as such are the foundation

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of all conceptions of power.” (11)

Organizations: a historical necessity in the struggle for social transformation

We would not be wrong to assert that in today's anarchist trend, most anarchists hold a strong reservation to any formally organized structure. We would argue, however, that it is precisely this lack of structure that has weakened Anarchism and caused many anarchists, like the now-defunct Love and Rage, to doubt “the viability of anarchism as a theoretical framework for revolutionary politics in the 21st century, in some cases to the point of saying they were no longer anarchists.” (12) Many anarchists incorrectly equate organizations with authoritarianism, but structured organization does not necessarily contradict anarchism. The authoritarianism of some organizations is due to the politics, principles, and people that make up the organization, not in the idea of organization itself.

Organizations have been central to liberation movements throughout U.S. history. Interestingly, when examining these movements, we find that many of them were influenced or driven by concepts familiar to anarchists. *Self-determination* was a central element to the struggles of Black, Native American, Puerto Rican, et al nationalist struggles. Movements like the Civil Rights and student movements of the 60's were committed to *direct action*. The labor movements of the teens and thirties, the queer liberation movement of the 60's and 70's, and the women's' liberation movement all incorporated ideas and practices which anarchists call *mutual aid*.

Organizations are necessary because they serve as the structure within which radical or revolutionary ideas can unfold. The direction and fuel for these ideas comes from the people who make up the organization- the base, the constituency of the group. The role of the organization should be to bring about improvements in the lives of

people, and to develop leadership of all members. Organizers- many of whom are radicals participating in the revolutionary project through the structure of an organization- organize *people* and develop leadership in the people they organize with.

Organizations can also be useful in developing both a person's political analysis and long-term political goals. Consider the perspective of Frantz Fanon, who argued that a defined organization is absolutely crucial to aid in the transformation of the *consciousness* of human beings, where genuine revolution arises. He writes, “The success of the struggle presupposes clear objectives, a definite methodology and above all the need for the mass of the people to realize that their unorganized efforts can only be a temporary dynamic. You can hold out for three days- maybe even for three months- on the strength of the admixture of sheer resentment contained in the mass of the people; but you'll... never overthrow the terrible enemy machine, and you won't change human beings if you forget to raise the consciousness of the rank-and-file. Neither stubborn courage nor fine slogans are enough.” (13)

Building organization does more than just give a place for people to practice politics. It establishes structures that shape the relationships people have with each other- as in power *with* others or power *over* others. Within these structures, accountability- an element anarchists have much to learn about- can be built into the processes. With organization, structures can be built and processes developed to prevent the creation of hierarchies and to develop accountable leadership.

Moving Forward- Where to begin?

“There is no “pure” Anarchism. There is only the application of Anarchist principles to the realities of social living. The aim of Anarchism is to stimulate forces that propel society in a libertarian

direction.” ---Sam Dolgoff (14)

Without ideas and strategies to get us ‘from here to there’, we fall back on an often unspoken, but readily existent, assumption that if everybody became anarchists, or believed in anarchism, we'd all of a sudden reach our goals. This is both dangerous and naive. When we talk about transforming society, we're talking about transforming people's lives, and about this we must be serious, respectful, and fully aware of our impacts.

Many anarchists incorrectly equate organizations with authoritarianism, but structured organization does not necessarily contradict anarchism.

We are poised at a potentially revolutionary moment. We must consider how we will harvest the building libratory energy and contribute anarchist ideas and principles to its formation. We do not need to create explicitly anarchist organizations to do this. In fact, we would argue against such. We need to work with existing groups, or work with others outside of our anarchist sub-group to create new organizations. We have to confront the fact of leadership and to work on developing different forms of leadership which are anti-authoritarian and ‘group centered’. We need to engage in vigorous educational campaigns, build relationships with the people we are organizing with, and support the development of individuals that they might begin to act on their own behalf and become organizers (leaders) in their own right. The politics of anarchism are in many ways rooted in building relationships. It is our task to develop these politics in such a way that we are engaged in organizing *people*, and not just committed to *issues*.

As anarchists, we understand that transforming society will require a means that reflect the ends we wish to achieve: breaking down hierarchy, consensus building, and personal transformation- the very processes that spoke to us and brought many of us to anarchism in the first place. It is our task now to develop strategic methods

to move us closer to liberation. Moving forward means first being clear about where we stand- having a grasp of our weaknesses, our strengths, and our politics. In this way, we can make clear decisions about how to proceed. In the words of James Mumm, we would do better to "stop trying to build a *movement of anarchists*, and instead build an *anarchistic movement*." (15) ~ End
 If you have any comments or would like discuss the article with the authors, contact at: anarchiststrategy@hotmail.com

Footnotes

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- 2 Andrew X. *Give up Activism*. Available online at www.infoshop.org/octo/j18_rsl.html#give_up.
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- 4 National Organizers Alliance. "What is an Organizer?" Online. Internet. Available online at: www.noacentral.org
- 5 For in-depth analysis of white supremacy in the anarchist trend and the anti-globalization movement, see Colours of Resistance. Available Online at www.tao.ca/~colours.
- 6 For detailed analysis of the connections between white supremacy and capitalism, see the *Challenging White Supremacy Workshop* web page. Available online at www.cwsworkshop.org/.
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- 12 Love and Rage, p. 28
- 13 Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 1963. pg 136
- 14 Dolgoff, Sam. *The Relevance of Anarchism to Modern Society*. 1970. Online. Available online at <http://flag.blackened.net/liberty/spunk/Spunk191.txt>
- 15 Mumm, *Active Revolution*

Writing Prize

Deadline Extended to Dec. 15, 2001

The IAS is offering a \$1000 award for an essay that advances anarchist perspectives on the "new social movements" represented by recent international anti-globalization protests. Essays should address this movement in a fashion that links theory to practice in order to contribute to the emergence of new anarchist praxis, theory informed by practice. Submissions should be between 3000 and 10,000 words. Written work already funded by the IAS will not be considered. The winning essay will receive \$1000 and excerpts will be published in the IAS newsletter.

An Anti-Authoritarian Response to the War Efforts September 21, 2001

This letter was originally written as a working document for activist groups to use in responding to the events on September 11, 2001.

Dear Comrades,

We are living through scary times. Clearly the US Government and its allies believe they have a grand opportunity to realign domestic and international relationships in their interest. This is frightening: major shifts in the political landscape threaten to tear the ground from beneath our feet.

However, these glacial shifts in the political scene also offer anti-authoritarians a unique opportunity to obtain a new, more secure footing in our struggle against economic exploitation, political hierarchy, and cultural domination. Political conditions are changing radically and, if we respond correctly, we have the chance to advance our movement to a much higher level.

First of all, we must not be cowed by present circumstances, as disturbing as they are. On the contrary: recent events call upon us to exercise political leadership in the best, most principled and visionary sense of the term. This is our challenge, and one that we can meet with an anti-authoritarian vision and politics.

We believe it is imperative that anti-authoritarians formulate a coherent response to the war buildup and their role within the growing peace movement. We must not allow our perspective to be subsumed under more prominent but less radical tendencies in the left. Also, the peace movement is presently defining its politics and structures and we have a great opportunity - at this moment - to engage the movement and push it in the most radical direction.

This purpose of this letter is to explore the contours of an anti-authoritarian position on recent events. We encourage you to discuss this letter with your friends and comrades and to prepare for broader discussions that we intend to initiate in the near future.

We want to address three important issues in this letter: structure, politics, and the future.

STRUCTURE

We anticipate that the anti-war movement will experience divisions similar to those that beset the peace movement during the Gulf War. In other words, national organizing efforts will be split into two organizations: one will be pacifist and more libertarian in character, and the other will be more militant and Stalinist. Both will be top-down mobilizations, built around well-known "leaders", and awash with a moralism that would turn off even the most open-minded citizens and activists.

Thus, we think our immediate challenge is to ensure that the anti-war mobilizations are decentralized and democratic in structure: specifically, that those doing the work make the decisions in these organizations. We recommend the model of assemblies, spokescouncils, or other horizontal networks of small, decentralized groups that are unified around an anti-authoritarian vision of social change. This will assure that those at the base hold decision-making power and thus that the mobilization reflects the political consciousness of the base, which is typically more radical and sane than that held by the leadership. It will still be possible for sectarian groups to infiltrate the base, but much harder for them to seize control. We believe that instituting such a decentralized structure is consistent with a principled commitment to democracy and should be our first act of defense against the party building hacks and the omnipresent "leadership".

POLITICS

Decentralized political structures have little significance unless complemented by a decentralized, radically democratic politics. We need to have radically democratic goals as well as methods, anti-authoritarian means and ends. Our response to the war must be concrete, immediately comprehensible, and one

Continued on page 14

An Anti-Authoritarian Response to the War Efforts September 21, 2001

Continued from page 13

that gives political content to our democratic structures.

Presently we are aware of two positions on the war:

The rightwing position asserts that the US is entitled to take unilateral military action against whomever. This position is not reasoned, just retaliatory, and is thus utterly barbaric. The argument crumbles when faced with questions of social justice.

The liberal-left position condones military action against Osama Bin Laden if - and only if - the UN or some pre-existing international legal body decides that such action is required and determines its nature. This appears to be Z Magazine's position, as well as many others.

This position is inadequate because it appeals to the political authority of the UN (and/or similar bodies). This is untenable because the UN is an illegitimate political body and thus incapable of determining a just or unjust response to the terror attacks. The UN is illegitimate because a) it presupposes the nation-state, which is inherently anti-democratic and b) because the US has veto power over many of the UN's most important decision-making bodies, such as the Security Council.

The anti-authoritarian position must obviously be much more radical than the liberal-left position. We believe that anti-authoritarians should advance the following demands:

First, all war criminals must be brought to justice (and judged by an international people's tribunal). Osama Bin Laden, Augusto Pinochet, Henry Kissinger, and those who have committed acts of terror and violence must be held accountable for their actions and dealt with accordingly.

Second, there should be an international grass roots assembly/plebiscite/encuentro/assembly/truth and recon-

ciliation commission on global terror. This assembly will define the terms of terror and the appropriate responses to it. There are existing decentralized, grassroots networks and organizations that could provide basis for such an initiative.

Third, we must oppose military action against Osama Bin Laden, Afghanistan, or anyone else until these first two conditions are met.

FUTURE

We believe that anti-authoritarians should work to radicalize the anti-war movement. We should ensure that it is democratic and decentralized in structure, that its demands are anti-authoritarian in content, and that we use this movement to build cooperative relationships with the oppressed and enraged throughout the world who share our horror at the US's impeding military action and the world it seeks to create.

We believe there is a great potential to create a radically democratic and deeply oppositional movement against the war. We believe this movement could sustain the accomplishments of the struggle against global capital and bring our movement to a new level of engagement, diversity, and radicalism.

Another world is possible, Marina Sitrin (active with the Direct Action Network) & Chuck Morse (active with the Institute for Anarchist Studies)

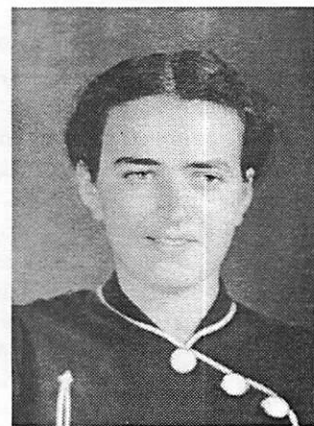
~ End

The authors encourage readers to use this letter as a way to begin discussing how we can respond as anarchists to current American activities.

If you would like to respond to this article and/or connect with groups that are using this document for activist purposes, please contact Chuck Morse at cwmorse@newyorknet.net, or Marina Sitrin at

This letter is also available in Spanish from the LAS website:

<http://flag.blackened.net/ias>



Clara in her twenties

Clara Solomon, Anarchist July 30, 1913 to December 20, 2000

We neglected to mention a very important and sad event in the last issue of Perspectives: the death of Clara Solomon on December 20th, 2000. Clara was a lifelong anarchist, an accomplished pianist, and a lovely comrade and friend. She instilled feelings of confidence in all those she encountered and her warm words of encouragement were especially important to younger activists (such as myself). Her cosmopolitan intelligence, steadfast commitment to anarchism, and gentle manner pushed many of us to fight harder and to be more bold. I am one among many who will miss her deeply. ~ Chuck Morse



Clara and Sidney Solomon at Blackout Books, NYC, for an exhibit of Sidney's paintings.

To learn more about Clara, please visit this website set up in her honor:

<http://www.clarasolomon.org>

5 Years and Over Twenty Projects from Six Different Countries The IAS' 2001 Fundraising Campaign

Five years ago, the IAS was created by committed activists who believed in the necessity of supporting their comrades in the face of incredible resistance to radical change. The resistance part hasn't changed and that's why we're still here. What has changed is that the IAS has now supported over twenty-five projects by authors from six different countries, projects that might have been put on the back burner due to financial difficulties. We've funded contemporary research, Spanish language pieces, historical studies, and even a play.

It's been a great five years and we're looking forward to many more! Most importantly, because of our generous supporters, many more years of IAS funded projects is a reality. And, the IAS needs your continued support to achieve this. We must raise \$20,000 by January 2002 to continue awarding grants to

radical writers and publishing *Perspectives*.

Your contribution will help the IAS meet its 2001 fundraising goal and thus make the following contributions to the development of anti-authoritarian social criticism:

- The IAS will award \$8000 in grants to writers struggling with some of the most pressing questions in radical social theory today. IAS grants help radical authors take time off work, hire childcare, purchase research materials, pay for travel expenses and other things necessary to produce serious, thoughtful works of social criticism.
- The IAS will publish *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory*, our biannual newsletter. *Perspectives* is a unique source of interviews, publishing news, and commentary pertaining to anar-

chism. It helps keep people informed about anarchist scholarship and encourages dialogue among those interested in this work.

- The IAS will award \$1000 to the best essay on anarchist perspectives on the new social movement. Recent and on-going political activity around the world has excited many people and opened up many issues. Help us to support new thought on how contemporary political activity affects our understanding of anarchism and how anarchism can contribute to this movement.

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						Cubano

Interview continued from page 9

They're outside the system, in one way but in another they're the ones who made the French Revolution, right? The ones who started to throw stones, thinkers aside, the urban plebes. They threw stones and started the whole thing. All the rest, you see, stayed back...Communism has been defeated. Look, socialism doesn't exist any more - socialism as a party. The parties which try to organize are organized by village priests who know the poor and distribute food...or by the Right, isn't it so? With torturers who are recognized by the people and say, "These guys are tough and they're going to kill the delinquents, right? Finally!" That is how the Right thinks and there are more than a few of them...like Bussi(34) [General Domingo].

There is always a public for the Right...

Always, yes always. And especially when there's some big danger, like now: Cavallo(35) falls and inflation will take its toll. We will relive the last few months of Alfonsín's(36) presidency. And what will happen then? Then suddenly someone [will] launch a proclamation, it could be Rico(37), Seineldín(38) or Patti(39), or it could be Bussi again. You can just imagine how the Avenida the Mayo(40) is going to be opened up so that they can parade...And we thought that it had already finished, but it hasn't. At any moment, imagine - not the same ones as before - [a military figure] makes a proclamation saying, "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is chaos, the army has to keep vigil over the destiny of the Mother Land"...Any way, there're people in the streets, yeah, people in the streets...

Why anarchism today?

Because libertarian socialism is the way...or as I prefer to say, libertarian solidarity. That's where we find the essence of a better world, the essence of a society formed from the grass roots up, through the people's discussion, the protagonism of the people. That is the most beautiful poem of all...Now, we have to be practical but one can think that finally, after so many problems, humanity's going to start to think...the

only way is by the people being the protagonists within an enormous mutual-ity ...

~ End

1 A street in the old district of San Telmo of Buenos Aires

2 Federación Obrera Regional Argentina, Argentinean Regional Workers' Federation.

3 FLA, Federación Libertaria Argentina, the continuation of the FACA, Federación Anarco Comunista Argentina, Argentinean Anarco Communist Federation

4 A centrally located multi-laned avenue, the construction of which determined the demolition of many city blocks.

5 Anarchist publication, opposed to La Protesta.

6 Secretary of edition of the anarchist daily, La Protesta, who, according to most testimonies, was assassinated by Di Giovanni in 1929 as corollary of an extensive ideological and political battle fought in libertarian publications in Argentina. For further details see Bayer's book.

7 General secretary of the maritime workers' union, one of the most important of the workers' movement of the '20s and '30s, as well as being a well-known expropriator and proponent of direct action.

8 Rector of the University of La Plata and important militant of the FACA.

9 Workers' struggle against a British tannin company, which occupy decades of history of the workers' movement in Argentina.

10 América Scarfó, Di Giovanni's adolescent lover.

11 Coastal town in the extreme South of continental Argentina.

12 Small city in northeastern Argentina on the River Paraná))

13 Small city in northern Patagonia.

14 Town in northeastern Argentina on the River Uruguay.

15 Largest city of northwestern Argentina.

16 Term used to designate the military coup d'état against the peronist government on 16th of September, 1955, and the succeeding dictatorial process, which lasted three years, until the results of the elections of 1958.

17 The vice-president after the ultra-reactionary coup d'état of December 1955, when he together with Aramburu dislodged moderate military command, who had carried out the coup d'état in September, from power.

18 Argentineans from the Province of Corrientes, on the River Paraná, opposite Paraguay.

19 The national instrument of Paraguay, surprisingly similar to the Celtic harp.

20 First large port upstream.

21 Famous rightist and leader of combat groups of peronism of the right.

22 Town in west-central Patagonia.

23 Central province of Patagonia.

24 Border guard corps, who, presently, are the forces used throughout the North and South of Argentina, in the province of Salta, for example, specifically for the repression of the movements of popular demands, and have thus abandoned the tasks they were origi-

nally created to fulfill.

25 The colors of the Argentinean flag.

26 Members of the Partido Radical, the Radical Party, liberal bourgeois party. Successive use of radical implies of the Partido Radical.

27 Conservative, populist president of Boca Juniors, the most popular Football team of Argentina.

28 Famous case of corruption involving the donation of a large tract of land to be used as the site for the National Military School, and its subsequent fraudulent purchase and resale to the state, involving military officers and radical politicians, and obviously huge quantities of money.

29 President of the House of Representatives, who in 1974 because of the Campora's renunciation, assumed the Presidency of the Nation before Peron's assumption

30 Bayer speaks about "la Strage di Piazza Fontana". "It was a bomb in the Banca Nazionale di Lavoro, in Piazza Fontana in Milan, December 1969. It was in fact the bombing of which Pinelli was accused." [Thanks Leslie Ray, who gives me these data]

31 Director of the film The Official Story, Oscar award winner in the '80s. Although good, it is based on "the theory of the two demons" (Teoria de los dos demonios, the reactionary, official view about the dictatorship years)

32 Movimiento de los piqueteros, a protest movement, of which the basic tool is blocking the flow of traffic on roads and highways, which has gained considerable strength in Argentina in the last ten years and which in July of this year was declared illegal.

33 Radical, twice President of Argentina, removed from power in his second term by the military coup d'état of 1930.

34 Appointed inspector-general of the province of Tucumán during the military dictatorship, against whom the lawsuits for genocide and torture have yet to be concluded, and who, nevertheless, was elected Governor of Tucumán during the '90s.

35 Neo-liberal "Chicago boy" (Milton Friedman disciple), President of the Central Bank during the military dictatorship, Minister of Economy under Ex-president Menem, present Minister of Economy in De la Rúa's radical government.

36 Hyperinflation and civil unrest.

37 Nationalist military officer who stood out during the Malvinas-faulkland Islands War.

38 Military companion of Rico's, from whom he took distance upon the arrival of Menem's peronist government in 1989; imprisoned for a frustrated coup d'état during the '90s; these days maintains relations with a chavista -so named after the Venezuelan general Chávez- group within the army.

39 Ex-police official and torturer who received support from scared sectors of the middle class who be convinced with the promise of law and order during the campaign -which he won- for mayor of Escobar, a small city in northern metropolitan Buenos Aires..

40 Mayo Avenue, central avenue of Buenos Aires leading from Government House and Plaza de Mayo to the Congress Building, which is used for protests and demonstrations not for military parades.

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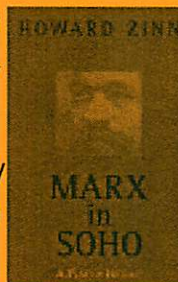
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