

THE ANARCHIST COOKBOOK

Keith McHenry

with

Chaz Bufe

See Sharp Press ♦ Tucson, Arizona

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This book is dedicated to



INTRODUCTION

Julien Benda in his 1927 classic “The Treason of Intellectuals”—“*La Trahison des Clercs*”—argued that we are faced with two options in life. We can serve the goals of privilege and power or the virtues of justice and truth. But, Benda warned, the more we make concessions to privilege and power the more we diminish the capacity for justice and truth. This is a truth any anarchist understands.

“As long as social injustice lasts we shall remain in a state of permanent revolution,” the French anarchist Elisée Reclus said in the same vein.

This, to me, is what it means to be an anarchist. Peter Kropotkin made this point when he said that anarchists do not seek power for themselves but understand “the close dependency on everyone’s happiness upon the happiness of all; and of the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the right of every other individual as equal to his [or her] own.” Anarchists understand that power is always the problem. It does not matter who wields it. And to remain steadfast to the virtues of justice and truth we must be eternally alienated from and antagonistic to all forms of power.

Kropotkin also grasped that the indiscriminate violence and terrorism practiced by some in the anarchist movement was a grotesque caricature of anarchism. Violence, he warned, demoralized and ultimately corrupted any revolutionary cadre. It justified the harsh counter violence of the state and discredited anarchism in the eyes of the public. Those who employ violence against the enemy, he knew, soon employ violence against internal rivals, as the Bolsheviks amply demonstrated. Revolutions are nonviolent. They succeed by appealing to the consciences of people within the structures of power who will no longer defend a discredited elite. No revolution succeeds until a significant segment of the organs of internal security and the state bureaucracy defect or refuse to use coercion to defend

the *ancien régime*. This was as true in revolutionary France as it was in revolutionary Russia.

It is only, Benda wrote, when we are *not* in pursuit of practical aims or material advantages that we can serve as a conscience and a corrective. All those whose primary allegiance is to the practical aims of power and material advantage—even if they defend this allegiance as one that will lead to justice and truth—are corrupted intellectually and morally. Anarchists, like the intellectuals Benda lauds, must be indifferent to popular passions. They must “set an example of attachment to the purely disinterested activity of the mind and create a belief in the supreme value of this form of existence.” They must look “as moralists upon the conflict of human egotisms.” They must preach “in the name of humanity or justice, the adoption of an abstract principle superior to and directly opposed to these passions.” Benda conceded that those who hold fast to these principles are often unable to prevent the powerful from “filling all history with the noise of their hatred and their slaughters.” But they did, at least, “prevent the laymen from setting up their actions as a religion, they did prevent them from thinking themselves great men as they carried out these activities.” In short, Benda asserted, “humanity did evil for two thousand years, but honored good. This contradiction was an honor to the human species, and formed the rift whereby civilization slipped into the world.” But once the intellectuals began to “play the game of political passions,” those who had “acted as a check on the realism of the people began to act as its stimulators.”

All forms of centralized power, from Vladimir Lenin and the Bolsheviks to the corporate state, seek to crush this spirit, which is the spirit of anarchism. The Russian revolutionary Victor Serge understood this when he wrote “every revolutionary government is by its very nature conservative and therefore

retrograde. Power exercises upon those who hold it a baleful influence which is often expressed in deplorable occupational perversions." Power seeks, even when in the opposition, to make cadre loyal to its doctrine and its hierarchy. It seeks, in short, to capture the individual conscience and make it serve the ends of power. This is done through the promise of lofty ideals and goals. But all who surrender to the dictates of any power structure become captives to the basest instincts of human existence.

Mikhail Bakunin, who foresaw the counterrevolution that would be imposed by the Bolsheviks, also made this point. A genuine revolution he said "does not foist upon the people any new regulations, orders, styles of life, but merely unleashes their will and gives wide scope to their self-determination and their economic and social organization, which must be created by themselves from below and not from above." It must "make impossible after the popular victory the establishment of any state power over the people—even the most revolutionary, even your power—because any power, whatever it calls itself, would inevitably subject the people to old slavery in new form."

Anarchists are the guardians of liberty. Their role, holding fast to justice and truth, is to thwart the lust by centralized power for absolute control. This means, unlike the protestations of black bloc self-styled anarchists, engaging in strategies and tactics that keep the powerful fearful of a public that refuses to be chained and that will revolt if they are manacled. And this makes anarchism the most important creed of our era, for it places its faith in perpetual resistance rather than the accumulation of power. The most successful examples of anarchist power took place in Russia after the 1917 revolution with the rise of the Soviets and during the civil war in Spain. These anarchist achievements, before being crushed by force, made visible the egalitarian and decentralized structures that are led by the people as opposed to a new class of bureaucratic mandarins. These structures must be our model as we enter an age of diminishing resources and corporate totalitarianism.

We have undergone a corporate coup d'état. It is over. They have won. A handful of corporate global oligarchs have seized everything—wealth, power and privilege—and the rest of us struggle as part of a vast underclass, increasingly impoverished and ruthlessly repressed. These oligarchs have cemented into place the most sophisticated and terrifying security and surveillance apparatus in human his-

tory. They have militarized police and given them license to kill with impunity. They have stripped us of our most basic civil liberties, including the right to privacy, can hold us in indefinite detention without access to the courts or due process, and have authorized the government to order the assassination of fellow citizens. At the same time, the corporate state through its corrupted elected officials and courts have established another set of laws and regulations for the power elite, ones that legalize criminality and perpetuate what is little more than a global mafia. Electoral politics is a charade. Money has replaced the vote. The consent of the governed is a cruel joke. And, handing us our death sentence, corporations have unleashed fossil fuel industries to ravage the planet, threatening the viability of the human species, along with all other species.

There is nothing in 5,000 years of economic history to justify the absurd doctrine that human societies should structure their behavior around the demands of the marketplace. The false promises of the market economy have, by now, been exposed as lies. The ability of corporations to migrate overseas has decimated our manufacturing base. Wages have been driven downward, impoverishing our working class and ravaging our middle class. Huge segments of the population—including those burdened by student loans—suffer from crippling debt peonage. And the elites stash an estimated \$18 trillion in overseas tax havens while corporations such as General Electric pay no income tax. Corporations employ virtual slave labor in Bangladesh and China, making obscene profits. As corporations suck the last resources from communities and the natural world, they leave behind vast sacrifice zones, horrific human suffering and dead landscapes. The greater the destruction, the more the corporate apparatus is used to crush dissent and exact tribute in the name of "austerity." This is the terrible algebra of corporate domination.

Anarchism is about steadfast defiance. Anarchism is about resisting forces of oppression as Mumia Abu Jamal, Edward Snowden, Jeremy Hammond, Chelsea Manning, and Julian Assange have resisted. Anarchism means refusing to succumb to fear. It means refusing to surrender, even if you find yourself, like Manning, Hammond, and Abu Jamal, caged like an animal. It means saying no. To remain safe, to remain "innocent" in the eyes of the law in this moment in history is to be complicit in a monstrous evil. Anarchism is about, as Benda and Kropotkin, knew, living morally. Rebellion is not

defined for an anarchist by what he or she achieves, but by what he or she becomes. And all the great rebels including Christ, Buddha, Sitting Bull, Harriet Tubman, Emma Goldman, and Malcolm X preached this truth. All the great rebels also knew that they could not let fear—the primary instrument those in power use to maintain control—cripple resistance.

“Repression,” Serge wrote, “can really only live off fear.”

“But is fear enough to remove need, thirst for justice, intelligence, reason, idealism—all those revolutionary forces that express the formidable, profound impulse of the economic factors of a revolution?” Serge asks. “Relying on intimidation, the reactionaries forget that they will cause more indignation, more hatred, more thirst for martyrdom, than real fear. They only intimidate the weak; they exasperate the best forces and temper the resolution of the strongest.”

The anarchist does not succumb, not because he or she is assured of victory, but because to be ruled by fear, to bow before the demands of power, means one is no longer an anarchist. Anarchism is a state of being.

In his poem of resistance, “If We Must Die,” the poet Claude McKay reminded us that rebellion, like anarchism, is finally about personal dignity and independence. The act of rebellion alone defines us. If they come for us, if we are cornered, if as McKay said we must die, then let us be defined as rebels, and “let it not be like hogs/Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot/While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs.”

—Chris Hedges
Princeton, New Jersey

ITS AUTHOR ON THE ORIGINAL “ANARCHIST COOKBOOK”

Forty-four years ago this month, in December 1969, I quit my job as a manager of a bookstore in New York City's Greenwich Village and began to write the *Anarchist Cookbook*. My motivation at the time was simple; I was being actively pursued by the US military, who seemed single-mindedly determined to send me to fight, and possibly die, in Vietnam.

I wanted to publish something that would express my anger. It seems that I succeeded in ways that far exceeded what I imagined possible at the time. The Cookbook is still in print 40 years after publication, and I am told it has sold in excess of 2m copies.

I have never held the copyright, and so the decision to continue publishing it has been in the hands of the publisher.

I now find myself arguing for it to be quickly and quietly taken out of print. What has changed?

Unfortunately, the source of my anger in the late 60's and early 70's—unnecessary government-sanctioned violence—is still very much a feature of our world. The debacle of the US invasion of Iraq is yet another classic example. It still makes me very angry. So my change of heart has had less to do with external events than it does with an internal change.

Over the years, I have come to understand that the basic premise behind the Cookbook is profoundly flawed. The anger that motivated the writing of the Cookbook blinded me to the illogical notion that violence can be used to prevent violence. I had fallen for the same irrational pattern of thought that led to US military involvement in both Vietnam and Iraq. The irony is not lost on me.

To paraphrase Aristotle: it is easy to be angry. But to be angry with the right person, at the right time and to the right degree, that is hard—that is the hallmark of a civilized person. Two years ago, I co-authored a book entitled *Becoming an Emotionally Intelligent Teacher*. Although written for educators,

the book serves as an implicit refutation of the emotional immaturity of the Cookbook. The premise is that all learning takes place in a social context, and that teachers with a high degree of emotional intelligence construct relationships with students that enhance learning. I continue to work hard, in an Aristotelian sense, to be more civilized.

For the last 40 years, I have served as a teacher and school leader in Africa and Asia, working in some of the poorest and least developed countries of the world. Together with my wife, I have been involved in supporting schools around the world in becoming more inclusive of children with learning challenges. We have written books on the subject and speak regularly at international conferences. In 2010 we founded, together with other colleagues from international schools, the Next Frontier: Inclusion, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping schools be more inclusive of children who learn differently—children with developmental delays, dyslexia, ADHD, and autism.

I suspect that these children have taught me a great deal more than I have taught them.

So what is the connection between the needs of these children with learning disabilities and my wish to see the Cookbook go out of print?

For one thing, children with learning challenges are often ostracized; sometimes informally by peers, sometimes more formally by schools that deny them admission, and sometimes by teachers who fail to understand their academic, social and emotional needs. No child should have to earn the right to belong.

The Cookbook has been found in the possession of alienated and disturbed young people who have launched attacks against classmates and teachers. I suspect that the perpetrators of these attacks did not feel much of a sense of belonging, and the Cookbook may have added to their sense of isolation.

Schools need to be safe places. Students and teachers need to feel physically and psychologically safe. Learning is greatly inhibited when fear pervades the schoolhouse. Learning is also greatly inhibited when children and young adults do not feel a sense of belonging.

I do not know the influence the book may have had on the thinking of the perpetrators of these attacks, but I cannot imagine that it was positive. The continued publication of the Cookbook serves no purpose other than a commercial one for the publisher. It should quickly and quietly go out of print.

—William Powell, author of the original
Anarchist Cookbook

(This piece originally appeared in the December 19, 2013 issue of *The Guardian*. Reproduced here by permission of the author.)

ANARCHISM

What It Is & What It Isn't

There are many popular misconceptions about anarchism, and because of them a great many people dismiss anarchists and anarchism out of hand.

Misconceptions abound in the mass media, where the term "anarchy" is commonly used as a synonym for "chaos," and where terrorists, no matter what their political beliefs or affiliations, are often referred to as "anarchists." As well, when anarchism is mentioned, it's invariably presented as merely a particularly mindless form of youthful rebellion. These misconceptions are, of course, also widespread in the general public, which by and large allows the mass media to do what passes for its thinking.

Worse, some who call themselves "anarchists" don't even know the meaning of the term. These people fall, in general, into two classes. The first, as the great Italian anarchist Luigi Fabbri pointed out a century ago in *Influencias burguesas sobre el anarquismo*, consists of those who are attracted to the lies in the mass media. By and large, these people are simply looking for a glamorous label for selfish, antisocial behavior. The good news is that most of them eventually mature and abandon what they consider "anarchism." The bad news is that while they're around they tend to give anarchism a very bad name. As Fabbri put it:

[These are] persons who are not repelled by the absurd, but who, on the contrary, engage in it. They are attracted to projects and ideas precisely because they are absurd; and so anarchism comes to be known precisely for the illogical character and ridiculousness which ignorance and bourgeois calumny have attributed to anarchist doctrines.¹

The second class consists of those who equate anarchism with some pet ideology having essentially nothing to do with anarchism. In modern times, the most prominent of these mislabeled beliefs have

been primitivism and amoral egotism. Again, the identification of such beliefs with anarchism tends to give anarchism a bad name, because of, on the one hand, the absurdity of primitivism and, on the other, the obvious antisocial nature of amoral egotism. To put this another way, the identification of anarchism with chaos, mindless rebellion, absurdities (such as primitivism), and antisocial attitudes and behaviors (such as amoral egotism) has three primary undesirable effects: 1) it allows people to easily dismiss anarchism and anarchists; 2) it makes it much more difficult to explain anarchism to them, because they already think that they know what it is and have rejected it; and 3) it attracts a fair number of what Fabbri calls "empty headed and frivolous types," and occasionally outright sociopaths, whose words and actions tend to further discredit anarchism.

So, if we're ever to get anywhere, we need to make plain what anarchism is and what it isn't. First, let's deal with the misconceptions.

What Anarchism Isn't

Anarchism is not terrorism. An overwhelming majority of anarchists have always rejected terrorism, because they've been intelligent enough to realize that means determine ends, that terrorism is inherently vanguardist, and that even when "successful" it almost always leads to bad results. The anonymous authors of *You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case Against Terrorism* put it like this:

You can't blow up a social relationship. The total collapse of this society would provide no guarantee about what replaced it. Unless a majority of people had the ideas and organization sufficient for the

creation of an alternative society, we would see the old world reassert itself because it is what people would be used to, what they believed in, what existed unchallenged in their own personalities.

Proponents of terrorism and guerrillaism are to be opposed because their actions are vanguardist and authoritarian, because their ideas, to the extent that they are substantial, are wrong or unrelated to the results of their actions (especially when they call themselves libertarians or anarchists), because their killing cannot be justified, and finally because their actions produce either repression with nothing in return, or an authoritarian regime.²

Decades of government and corporate slander cannot alter this reality: the overwhelming majority of anarchists reject terrorism for both practical and ethical reasons. In the late 1990s, *Time* magazine called Ted Kaczynski “the king of the anarchists”; but that doesn't make it so. *Time*'s words are just another typical, perhaps deliberately dishonest, attempt to tar all anarchists with the terrorist brush.

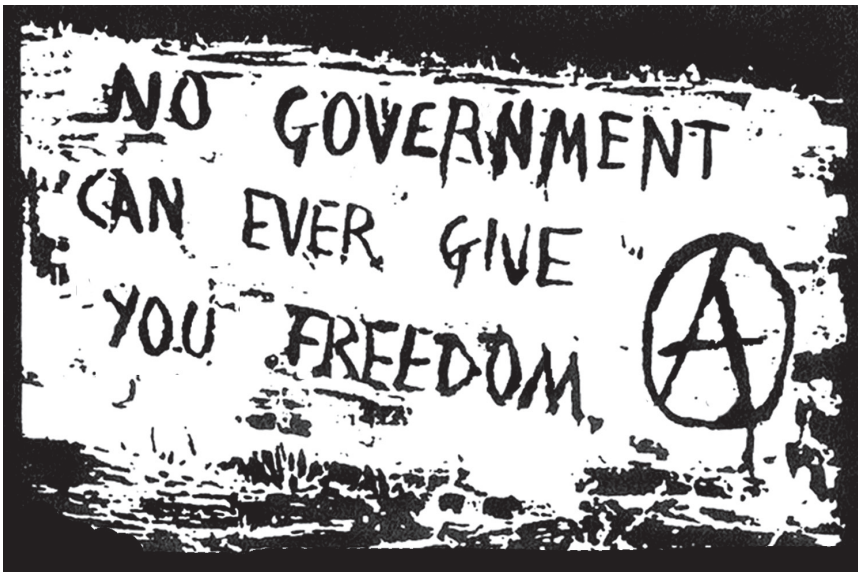
This is not to say that armed resistance is never appropriate. Clearly there are situations in which one has little choice, as when facing a dictatorship that suppresses civil liberties and prevents one from acting openly—which has happened repeatedly in many countries. Even then, armed resistance should be undertaken reluctantly and as a last resort, because violence is inherently undesirable due to the suffering it causes; because it provides repressive regimes excuses for further repression; because it provides them with the opportunity to commit atrocities against civilians and to blame those atrocities on their “terrorist” opponents; and because, as history has shown, the chances of success are very low.

Even though armed resistance may sometimes be called for in repressive situations, it's a far different matter to succumb to the romance of the gun and to engage in urban guerrilla warfare in relatively open societies in which civil liberties are largely intact and in which one does not have mass popular support at the start of one's violent campaign. Violence in such situations does little but drive the public into the “protective” arms of the government; narrow political dialogue (tending to polarize the populace into pro- and anti-guerrilla factions); turn politics into a spectator sport for the vast majority of people³; provide the government with an excuse to suppress civil liberties; and induce the onset of repressive regimes “better” able to handle the “terrorist” problem than their more tolerant predeces-

sors. It's also worth mentioning that the chances of success of such violent, vanguardist campaigns are microscopic. They are simply arrogant, ill-thought-out roads to disaster.⁴

Anarchism is not primitivism. In recent decades, groups of quasi-religious mystics have begun equating the primitivism they advocate (rejection of science, rationality, and technology—often lumped together under the blanket term, “technology”) with anarchism.⁵ In reality, the two have nothing to do with each other, as we'll see when we consider what anarchism actually is—a set of philosophical/ethical precepts and organizational principles designed to maximize human freedom. For now, suffice it to say that the elimination of technology advocated by primitivist groups would inevitably entail the deaths of literally billions of human beings in a world utterly dependent upon interlocking technologies for everything from food production/delivery to communications to medical treatment. Primitivists' fervently desired outcome, the elimination of technology, could only come about through means which are the absolute antithesis of anarchism: the use of coercion and violence on a mass scale, as it's inconceivable that a majority of human beings would voluntarily give up such things as running water, sewer systems, modern medicine, electric lights, and warm houses in the winter.⁶

Anarchism is not chaos; Anarchism is not rejection of organization. This is another popular misconception, repeated *ad nauseam* by the mass media and by anarchism's political foes, especially marxists (who sometimes know better). Even a brief look at the works of anarchism's leading theoreticians and writers confirms that this belief is in error. Over and over in the writings of Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Rocker, Ward, Bookchin, et al., one finds not a rejection of organization, but rather a preoccupation with it—a preoccupation with how society should be organized in accord with the anarchist principles of individual freedom and social justice. For over a century and a half, anarchists have been arguing that coercive, hierarchical organization (as embodied in government and corporations) is not equivalent to organization *per se* (which they regard as necessary), and that coercive organization should be replaced by decentralized, nonhierarchical organization based on voluntary cooperation and mutual aid. This is hardly a rejection of organization.



Anarchism is not amoral egotism. As does any avant garde social movement, anarchism attracts more than its share of flakes, parasites, and outright sociopaths, persons simply looking for a glamorous label to cover their often-pathological selfishness, their disregard for the rights and dignity of others, and their pathetic desire to be the center of attention. These individuals tend to give anarchism a bad name, because even though they have very little in common with actual anarchists—that is, persons concerned with ethical behavior, social justice, and the rights of both themselves and others—they're often quite exhibitionistic, and their disreputable actions sometimes come into the public eye. To make matters worse, these exhibitionists sometimes publish their self-glorifying views and deliberately misidentify those views as “anarchist.” To cite one example, several years ago the publisher of an American “anarchist” journal published a book by a fellow egotist consisting primarily of *ad hominem* attacks on actual anarchists, knowing full well that the “anarchist” author of the book is a notorious police narcotics informant who has on a number of occasions ratted out those he's had disputes with to government agencies. This police informer's actions—which, revealingly, he's attempted to hide—are completely in line with his ideology of amoral egotism (“post-left anarchism”), but they have nothing to do with actual anarchism. Amoral egotists may (mis)use the label, but they're no more anarchists than the now-defunct German Democratic Republic (East Germany) was democratic or a republic.

The full absurdity of identifying amoral egotism—essentially “I'll do what I damn well please and fuck everybody else”—with anarchism will

become apparent in short order when we'll consider what anarchism actually is.

Anarchism is not “Libertarianism.” Until relatively recently, the very useful term “libertarian” was used worldwide as a synonym for “anarchist.” Indeed, it was used exclusively in this sense until the 1970s when, in the United States, it was appropriated by the grossly misnamed Libertarian Party.

This party has almost nothing to do with anarchist concepts of liberty, especially the concepts of equal freedom and positive free-

dom—that is, access to the resources necessary to the freedom to act. (Equal freedom and positive freedom are discussed in the following section of this essay.) Instead, this “Libertarian” party concerns itself exclusively with the negative freedoms, pretending that liberty exists only in the negative sense, freedom from restraint, while it simultaneously revels in the denial of equal positive freedom to the vast majority of the world's people.

These “Libertarians” not only glorify capitalism, the mechanism that denies both equal freedom and positive freedom to the vast majority, but they also wish to retain the coercive apparatus of the state while eliminating its social welfare functions—hence widening the rift between rich and poor, and increasing the freedom of the rich by diminishing that of the poor (while keeping the boot of the state firmly on their necks). Thus, in the United States, the once exceedingly useful term “libertarian” has been hijacked by egotists who are in fact enemies of liberty in the full sense of the word, and who have very little in common with anarchists.

This is what anarchism isn't.

What Anarchism Is

In its narrowest sense, anarchism is simply the rejection of the state, the rejection of coercive government. Under this extremely narrow definition, even such apparent absurdities as “anarcho-capitalism” and religious anarchism are possible.⁷

But most anarchists use the term “anarchism” in a much broader sense, defining it as the rejection

of coercion and domination in all forms. So, most anarchists reject not only coercive government, but also religion and capitalism, which they see as other forms of the twin evils, domination and coercion. They reject religion because they see it as the ultimate form of domination, in which a supposedly all-powerful god hands down “thou shalt” and “thou shalt not” to its “flock.”

Anarchists likewise reject capitalism because it's designed to produce rich and poor and because it's designed to produce a system of domination in which some give orders and others have little choice but to take them. For similar reasons, on a personal level almost all anarchists reject sexism, racism, and homophobia—all of which produce artificial inequality, and thus domination.

To put this another way, anarchists believe in freedom in both its negative and positive senses. In this country, freedom is routinely presented only in its negative sense, that of being free from restraint. Hence most people equate freedom only with such things as freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of (or from) religion. But there's also a positive aspect of freedom, an aspect which anarchists almost alone insist on.⁸

That positive aspect is what Emma Goldman called “the freedom to.” And that freedom, the freedom of action, the freedom to enjoy or use, is highly dependent upon access to the world's resources. Because of this the rich are in a very real sense free to a much greater degree than the rest of us. To cite an example in the area of free speech, Donald Trump could easily buy dozens of daily newspapers or television stations to propagate his views and influence public opinion. How many working people could do the same? How many working people could afford to buy a single daily newspaper or a single television station? The answer is obvious. Working people cannot do such things; instead, we're reduced to producing ‘zines with a readership of a few hundred persons or putting up pages on the Internet in our relatively few hours of free time.

Examples of the greater freedom of the rich abound in daily life. To put this in general terms, because they do not have to work, the rich not only have far more money (that is, access to resources) but also far more time to pursue their interests, pleasures, and desires than do the rest of us.

To cite a concrete example, the rich are free to send their children to the best colleges employing the best instructors, which the rest of us simply can't afford to do; if we can afford college at all, we make

do with community and state colleges employing slave-labor “adjunct faculty” and overworked, underpaid graduate teaching assistants. Once in college, the children of the rich are entirely free to pursue their studies, while most other students must work at least part time to support themselves, which deprives them of many hours which could be devoted to study. If you think about it, you can easily find additional examples of the greater freedom of the rich in the areas of medical care, housing, nutrition, travel, etc., etc.—in fact, in virtually every area of life.

This greater freedom of action for the rich comes at the expense of everyone else, through the diminishment of everyone else's freedom of action. There is no way around this, given that freedom of action is to a great extent determined by access to finite resources. Anatole France well illustrated the differences between the restrictions placed upon the rich and the poor when he wrote, “The law, in its majestic equality, forbids the rich as well as the poor to sleep under bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal bread.”

Because the primary goal of anarchism is the greatest possible amount of freedom for all, anarchists insist on equal freedom in both its negative and positive aspects—that, in the negative sense, individuals be free to do whatever they wish as long as they do not harm or directly intrude upon others; and, in the positive sense, that all individuals have equal freedom to act, that they have equal access to the world's resources.

Anarchists recognize that absolute freedom is an impossibility, that amoral egotism ignoring the rights of others would quickly devolve into a war of all against all. What we argue for is that everyone have equal freedom from restraint (limited only by respect for the rights of others) and that everyone have as nearly as possible equal access to resources, thus ensuring equal (or near-equal) freedom to act. This is anarchism in its theoretical sense.

In Spain, Cuba, and a few other countries there have been serious attempts to make this theory reality through the movement known as anarcho-syndicalism. The primary purpose of anarcho-syndicalism is the replacement of coercive government by voluntary cooperation in the form of worker-controlled unions coordinating the entire economy. This would not only eliminate the primary restraint on the negative freedoms (government), but would also be a huge step toward achieving positive freedom. The nearest this vision came to fruition was

in the Spanish Revolution, 1936–1939, when huge areas of Spain, including its most heavily industrialized region, came under the control of the anarcho-syndicalist Confederación Nacional del Trabajo. George Orwell describes this achievement in *Homage to Catalonia*:

The anarchists were still in virtual control of Catalonia and the revolution was in full swing. . . . the aspect of Barcelona was something startling and overwhelming. It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle. Practically every building of any size had been seized by the workers and was draped with red flags or with the red and black flag of the anarchists; . . . Every shop and café had an inscription saying it had been collectivized; even the bootblacks had been collectivized and their boxes painted red and black. Waiters and shop-workers looked you in the face and treated you as an equal. Servile and even ceremonial forms of speech had temporarily disappeared. . . . The revolutionary posters were everywhere, flaming from the walls in clean reds and blues that made the few remaining advertisements look like daubs of mud. . . . All this was queer and moving. There was much in it that I did not understand, in some ways I did not even like it, but I recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for.

This is anarchism. And Orwell was right—it is worth fighting for.⁹

7. Indeed, there have been a fairly large number of admirable religious anarchists, individuals such as Leo Tolstoy and Dorothy Day (and the members of her Catholic Worker groups, such as Ammon Hennacy), though to most anarchists advocating freedom on Earth while bowing to a heavenly tyrant, no matter how imaginary, seems an insupportable contradiction. To the best of my knowledge there have been no such shining examples of anarcho-capitalists.

8. To be fair, marxists also tend to emphasize positive freedom, but for the most part they're curiously insensitive, and often downright hostile, to "negative" freedom—the freedom from restraint (especially when they have the guns and goons to do the restraining).

9. Of course, this discussion of anarchism is necessarily schematic, given that this essay is intended as an introductory 10-minute read. For elaboration see the many books on anarchism listed in the bibliography, especially *Anarchism and Anarcho-syndicalism*, by Rudolf Rocker; *What Is Communist Anarchism?*, by Alexander Berkman (now published by AK Press as *What Is Anarchism?*); *Fields, Factories and Workshops Tomorrow*, by Peter Kropotkin; and *Anarchy in Action*, by Colin Ward.

1. *Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism*, by Luigi Fabbri. Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 2001, p. 16.

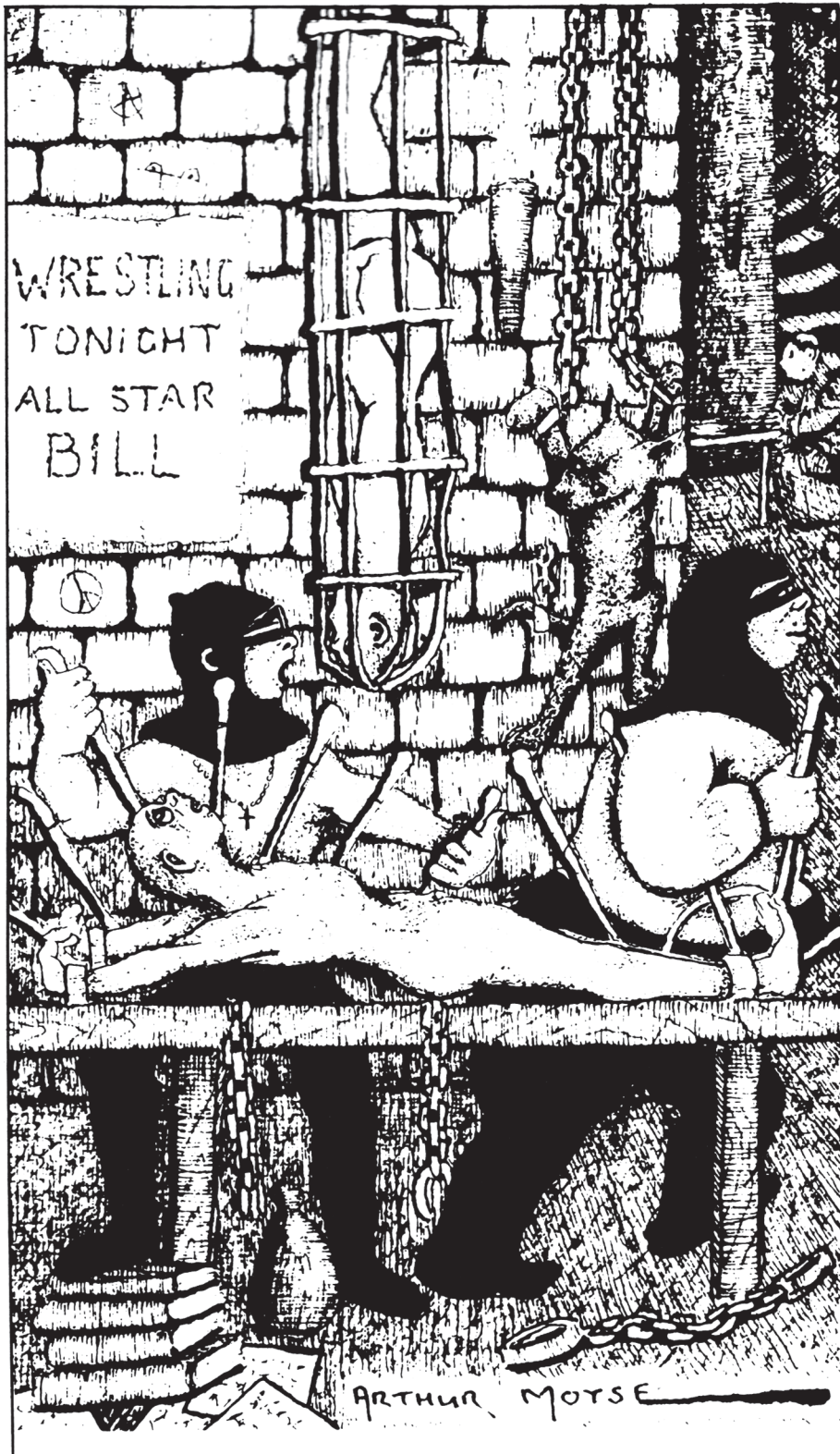
2. *You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship*. Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 1998, p. 20.

3. It may be that now due to apathy, but in violent/repressive situations other options are cut off for almost everyone not directly involved in armed resistance.

4. For further discussion of this matter, see *You Can't Blow Up a Social Relationship: The Anarchist Case Against Terrorism and Bourgeois Influences on Anarchism*.

5. Ted Kaczynski is in some ways quite typical of this breed of romantic. He differs from most of them in that he acted on his beliefs (albeit in a cowardly, violent manner) and that he actually lived a relatively primitive existence in the backwoods of Montana—unlike most of his co-religionists, who live comfortably in urban areas and employ the technologies they profess to loathe.

6. For further discussion of this topic, see *Anarchism vs. Primitivism*, by Brian Oliver Sheppard. Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 2003. See also the "Primitive Thought" appendix to *Listen Anarchist!*, by Chaz Bufe. Tucson, AZ: See Sharp Press, 1998.



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"And Sue said to me, 'But Richard, how can someone as sensitive as you and a practicing humanitarian take this job?' And I said, 'Sue love, I genuinely believe that by doing so I can alleviate some of the worst excesses of the system.'"

AVOIDING FBI ENTRAPMENT

The government wastes millions, probably tens of millions, of dollars annually spying on and disrupting the anarchist movement. It wouldn't waste all that money trying to stop us if it wasn't worried that we might inspire resistance.

Even though most anarchists are dedicated to nonviolent direct action and many participate in useful projects such as infoshops, bicycle co-ops, and the sharing and growing of food, the police, state agencies, federal agencies, and military intelligence units in the United States routinely infiltrate anarchist groups, and government provocateurs have repeatedly attempted to entrap activists. For the most part, they've failed at that.

But unfortunately some activists have not only been arrested, but have been tried, convicted, and sentenced to years in prison.

The FBI and other law enforcement agencies can and do frame or entrap anarchists to devastating effect, so it is important to do all you can to reduce the possibility of being set up on phony "terrorism" or other charges. Not only could you be removed from the community for many years, your family and friends would suffer through your ordeals in court and through the pain of knowing you are in prison. Defense activities also siphon off huge amounts of energy, time, and resources from the good work of building a better world.

Still it is not always possible to avoid being the target of the authorities, so take precautions to limit the damage if the state seeks to silence you. Taking actions that you can be proud of may be the most important single thing you can do. Think of the consequences of your acts. How will you feel if someone is injured or killed because of something you did? Could your actions be used to discredit the movement? Could they add to the divisions, fear, and paranoia in the community?

Don't think that you can get away with risky, pointless actions. You're not clairvoyant. The government targets even the most peaceful groups through its use of informers and provocateurs, and

surveillance is unrelenting and omnipresent. So what can you do beyond carefully considering your actions and doing only things you feel good about?

You can take some simple steps to reduce the possibility of being arrested and prosecuted on phony charges. When people talk or joke about taking up arms, trashing communities, or bombing or burning down some place, speak loudly about how you would never participate in any action that could injure someone.

The fact that we know that we are not considering acts of terrorism can cause us to make light of statements about arson, bombings, and rock throwing, but the FBI and Homeland Security have sent infiltrators to political meetings to talk about using violence or property destruction, or initiated conversations while being wired to record conversations. Months later, out-of-context statements can appear as evidence that anarchists were plotting acts of terrorism. When the cases get to court, prosecutors and the media can point out that the accused activists didn't object to the comments made by the informants, "proving" their guilt.

You can minimize the success of the state in harming you and your efforts by making it clear that you are not going to participate in acts of violence or destructive sabotage. (They're not the same: violence involves damage to people or animals; sabotage involves—sometimes, not always—damage to property.) If you are planning to damage property, consider making your intentions clear in advance by offering a public explanation of your actions. Examples could include pulling up genetically modified crops or dismantling the separation wall in Palestine, actions designed to stop an egregious harm. At the same time you can refrain from giving the exact time or location of your plans so that the authorities will have at least some difficulty blocking your actions. While you may still be accused of taking part in a "terrorist" plot, you will have much more popular support, and you'll make the authorities' "terrorism" accusations less credible.

You can make your positions clear in your literature, statements to the media, at meetings, social gatherings, and during informal conversations. If people are joking about using violence or talking about the virtues of acts that could injure or kill people, it is wise to make several statements making it clear that you will not engage in any kind of violent activity. Point out that you are dedicated to nonviolent direct action and that anyone considering any other strategies or methods should talk elsewhere.

It once was possible to use the defense of entrapment, but that is no longer the case. Vice News contributor Natasha Lennard's article, "The Line Between FBI Stings and Entrapment Has Not Blurred, It's Gone," makes this quite clear.

In her introduction to the Human Rights Watch report, "Illusions of Justice: Human Rights Abuses in US Terrorism Prosecutions," Andrea Prasow said that "Americans have been told that their government is keeping them safe by preventing and prosecuting terrorism inside the US . . . But take a closer look and you realize that many of these people would never have committed a crime if not for law enforcement encouraging, pressuring, and sometimes paying them to commit terrorist acts." While this report focuses on the entrapment and framing of people in the Muslim community, anarchists in the United States have also been targeted, as described in the report.

Natasha Lennard writes:

Since 9/11, Muslims in the US have been the focus of major counterterror stings. But other groups have been caught in the net where sting meets entrapment. A small group of self-identified anarchists in Cleveland were all convicted and sentenced to around 10 years in prison for allegedly plotting to blow up a bridge in Ohio. But an FBI infiltrator provided the target and the fake C-4 explosives. Rick Perlstein wrote of the case in *Rolling Stone*, "the alleged terrorist masterminds end up seeming, when the full story comes out, unable to terrorize their way out of a paper bag without law enforcement tutelage."

The case of entrapment in Cleveland provides concrete examples of what activists should watch out for. The FBI sent an informant, Shaquille Azir or "Kalvin Jackson," to the kitchen at Occupy Cleveland on October 21, 2011, seeking to build a relationship with some of the cooks.

FBI Special Agent Ryan M. Taylor filed Federal Complaint 1:12-mj-3073 regarding the matter. The

government presented it at the defendants' May 1, 2012 arraignment; it details how the entrapment worked. It's a stark warning to anyone who might be a target of the FBI. In sections 8 and 9, the FBI admits to using a Confidential Human Source (CHS) and Undercover Employee (UCE) to encourage acts of terrorism:

8. The (CHS) Confidential Human Source hereinafter has been working as a source for the FBI since July 20, 2011. The CHS has a criminal record including one conviction for possession of cocaine in 1990, one conviction for robbery in 1991, and four convictions for passing bad checks between 1991 and 2011. The CHS is currently on probation in Cuyahoga and Lorain Counties for passing bad checks. Since July 20, 2011, the CHS has been paid approximately \$5,750 for services and \$550 for expenses, the CHS has not been paid since beginning her/his probation.

9. The (UCE) Undercover Employee has been employed by the FBI for over 15 years and has been working in an undercover capacity for 10 years. The UCE has received ongoing training in conducting undercover investigations and has participated in dozens of investigations in an undercover capacity.

Section 12 suggests the FBI was seeking anarchists to frame at Occupy Cleveland.

12. Based on an initial report of potential criminal activity and threats involving anarchists who would be attending an event held by a protest group, the Cleveland FBI directed the CHS to attend that event. On October 21, 2011, at approximately 6:30 pm, and while the CHS was attending the event, the CHS identified four suspicious males with walkie-talkie radios around their necks. Three of the four men had masks or something covering their faces; one male did not. The men were wearing black or dark colored shirts, had black backpacks, carried the anarchist flags and acted differently than the other people in attendance.

Section 29 shows that informant Shaquille Azir was recording meetings for the FBI and claimed that one of those targeted, Michael Wright, had talked of making smoke bombs from a recipe taken from the William Powell book titled *The Anarchist Cookbook* (NOT this *Anarchist Cookbook*).

(In a separate case, according to a terrorism complaint filed in Brooklyn in April 2015, FBI informants provided Asia Siddiqui and Noelle Velentzas with

copies of the Powell book on November 2, 2014, circling the types of bombs the government thought would help build their case.)

29. On March 22, 2012, the CHS was provided a body recorder [and] consensually recorded a meeting between the CHS and WRIGHT. In sum and substance, WRIGHT described using an upcoming festival as an opportunity to create a civil distraction in order to commit a larger act of violence. WRIGHT also discussed making smoke bombs and other explosive destructive devices using the 'Anarchist Cookbook,' a book that describes the construction and use of weapons and explosives. The following are some of the relevant excerpts from that conversation:

Sections 97 and 98 show that phone calls and conversations were recorded a couple of days before the FBI-engineered May Day fake bombing:

97. On April 29, 2012, the UCE recorded a telephone call with WRIGHT. In sum and substance WRIGHT said that he would call the UCE around 1:30 pm to give the UCE the exact meeting location, however it was in the Warrensville Heights, Ohio area.

98. On April 29, 2012, the CHS was provided with a body recorder and consensually recorded a meeting with the UCE and WRIGHT, BAXTER, and HAYNE.

In Section 110 of the federal complaint, the FBI admits that the alleged criminal activity that they were investigating amounted to no more than "smoke grenades and destruction of signage on buildings in downtown Cleveland":

110. WRIGHT recruited BAXTER, C.S. and the CHS to participate in some form of direct action, initially involving smoke grenades and destruction of signage on buildings in downtown Cleveland;" Erick Trickey of Cleveland Magazine noted that defendant Connor Stevens expressed support for nonviolent direct action.

On a Saturday in April, about three weeks before his arrest, Stevens served dinner in Market Square with Food Not Bombs. He got talking with fellow volunteer Aidan Kelly about Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in which an American joins the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War to fight a fascist uprising, and is assigned to dynamite a bridge. "I remember distinctly talking about his

ideas about pacifism," Kelly says. He and Stevens agreed that movements such as Food Not Bombs offered a better alternative for creating social change than violence.

Trickey writes of the first meeting of Stevens and co-defendant Brandon Baxter, a meeting like those you may have had if you travel in anarchist circles.

At Food Not Bombs last year, Stevens met another young anarchist, Brandon Baxter, as intense and passionate as Stevens was cerebral.

The 19-year-old Lakewood High graduate's influences weren't long-dead, bearded writers, but websites ranging from the far right (the conspiracy-minded InfoWars) to the far left (the Anonymous "hactivist" movement). He embraced Food Not Bombs with gusto, screaming "Free food!" across Market Square when dinner was ready.

Yet the FBI claims that Wright downloaded Powell's version of the *Anarchist Cookbook* with the purpose of making a bomb, which would have been a good trick given that to all appearances Powell's book has never been sold in e-book format.

111. WRIGHT repeatedly asserted he downloaded the 'Anarchist Cookbook' in an attempt to learn how to make explosives including constructing plastic explosives from bleach and other household items; . . .

The complaint finally shows that the FBI was moving their own plot along by providing the defendants with phony C4.

112. When presented with the opportunity to purchase C4, WRIGHT and BAXTER met with an individual offering it for sale;

Michael Winter of *USA Today* reported that "Three self-described anarchists were sentenced to prison Tuesday for trying to blow up a highway bridge between Cleveland and Akron using dummy explosives provided by an undercover FBI agent."

Ed Meyer of the *Akron Beacon Journal* wrote that "U.S. District Judge David D. Dowd, Jr. rejected the government's insistence that the defendants get 30 years in prison and instead gave Douglas L. Wright 11½ years, Brandon L. Baxter nine years and nine months and Connor C. Stevens eight years and one month."

Both of Stevens' parents, James and Gail Stevens, lashed out at the government's actions.

“My son is guilty, and so are you!” James Stevens told federal prosecutor Duncan Brown at one point. Gail Stevens called her son “my hero,” said she loved him with all her heart, and that he never would have acted as he did if not for the provocateur.

The entrapment of the young Occupy anarchists in Cleveland was the most dramatic attempt to discredit the Occupy movement. And it worked—with the help of some protesters who played into the hands of the police.

Efforts to re-energize the movement failed as the media reported on a wave of Occupy-related violence. Reuters reported:

Occupy Wall Street protesters smashed windows in Seattle, fled police on scooters through the streets of New York, and clashed with officers in Oakland on Tuesday in a May Day effort to revive the movement against economic injustice with demonstrations around the United States. . . .

New York police reported 10 instances of harmless white powder—apparently meant to raise an anthrax scare—being mailed to financial institutions and others . . .

In Seattle, some 50 black-clad protesters marched through downtown, carrying black flags on sticks they used to shatter the windows of several stores including a Nike Town outlet and an HSBC bank before police moved them out of the area. Others smashed windows at a Seattle federal building, and swarms of demonstrators gathered in an open-air plaza.

May 2012 was not the first time authorities used an alleged May Day bomb plot to discredit anarchists. Chicago police, seeking to stop the movement for an eight-hour workday, attacked a peaceful rally in May 1886. A bomb was set off and police shot into the rally in what has become known as the Haymarket massacre. The bomber was never identified and the government provided no evidence linking them to the bombing, yet anarchists August Spies, Samuel Fielden, Adolph Fischer, George Engel, Louis Lingg, and Albert Parsons were accused of the bombing, convicted, and executed.

Historians James Joll and Timothy Messer-Kruse claim the evidence points to Rudolph Schnaubelt, brother-in-law of Michael Schwab, as the likely bomber. Howard Zinn, in *A People's History of the United States* also indicates it was Schnaubelt, sug-

gesting “he was a provocateur, posing as an anarchist, who threw the bomb so police would have a pretext to arrest leaders of Chicago’s anarchist movement.”

Spies would later testify, “I was very indignant. I knew from experience of the past that this butchering of people was done for the express purpose of defeating the eight-hour movement.”

That was in the 19th century. The government has been framing, imprisoning, and occasionally murdering anarchists ever since.

But you’re not powerless. You can take some simple steps to protect yourself from being arrested, charged, and convicted of planning or participating in acts of terrorism. The FBI and Homeland Security have sent infiltrators to our meetings to talk about using violence. The authorities will often attempt to give the impression in affidavits or typed memos that someone other than their informant or undercover officer made statements advocating violence, and imply that everyone participating in the discussion supported its use.

One of the most successful strategies used by the FBI is to have those infiltrating joke about the use of violence. When the words they used become the text in memos or court filings, they’re out of context, they no longer seem humorous, and can be presented as a serious conversation supporting the use of violence. Since those participating in such conversation consider the statements nothing more than an awkward attempt to be humorous or fit in with the group, no one thinks to make it clear that they don’t intend to participate in a violent action. Months later, out-of-context statements can appear as evidence that anarchists were plotting acts of terrorism. Even if you state clearly that it is not appropriate to talk or joke about violence, you can still be arrested and tried, but you will greatly reduce that possibility if you do speak up.

Activists have been charged as terrorists after getting a ride home with people that turned out to be infiltrators. After dropping off their passengers, provocateurs and those they’re setting up have burned down buildings or torched vehicles. The fact that you were seen getting into the informant’s vehicle before the act of alleged terrorism happened can provide the evidence needed to accuse you of taking part. The FBI and their informants are not always honest, and may choose not to mention that you were not at the scene of the crime, even though they can honestly say you got into a vehicle with the arsonist. Sometimes federal prosecutors have been

able to get convictions simply because the set-up activists were intimidated into not expressing their dedication to nonviolence, fearing that they would be accused of being “weak” and not serious about social change, the well-being of animals, or the environment. Both provocateurs and holier-than-thou true believers use such fears to manipulate people into saying or doing things they would never otherwise say or do. Don’t let anyone manipulate you into silence. Don’t let anyone manipulate you into saying or doing things that could land you in prison.

The first step is to make it clear that you are not going to participate in acts of violence or destructive sabotage. You can make this clear in your literature, statements to the media, at meetings, social gatherings and during informal conversations. If people are joking about using violence or talking about the virtues of acts that could injure or kill people, it is wise to make several statements making it clear that you will not engage in any kind of violent activity. Point out that you are dedicated to nonviolence and that anyone considering any other strategies or methods should meet elsewhere. To help protect your friends you might also point out that it is very unlikely that such plans could be concealed from the government. As you can see in the Cleveland case, otherwise innocent conversations can be recorded and provide support for prosecution.

Another step you can take is to include statements about nonviolence in your literature about any direct action you might be planning or supporting. On occasion, the media and prosecutors will claim that our literature didn’t make any mention that our protests would be nonviolent, and use that as “proof” we are terrorists. If your group is planning an action, you can protect yourself by including explicit language about nonviolence in your publications. This can be difficult when working in coalition with groups that might not share our principles of nonviolence, but you could publish your own literature on the action. Don’t be intimidated into remaining silent on the issue of violence. It isn’t necessary to exclude reference to nonviolent direct action just because people are arguing in support of a “diversity of tactics.” You may initiate a pledge of nonviolence for the campaign you are supporting and organize nonviolence training sessions. Nonviolent resistance is every bit as valid as other methods and is often more effective.

Nonviolent direct action, noncooperation, and nonviolent resistance can be very empowering. It takes courage to organize and participate in cam-

“There is no greater fallacy than the belief that aims and purposes are one thing, while methods are another. This conception is a potent menace to social regeneration. All human experience teaches that methods and means cannot be separated from the ultimate aim. The means employed become, through individual habit and social practice, part and parcel of the final purpose; they influence it, modify it, and presently the aims and means become identical.”

—Emma Goldman, *My Disillusionment in Russia*

paigns of nonviolent struggle. Nonviolent struggle can build trust between participants and the public. Campaigns of nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience can be so effective that governments and corporations will try anything to push our movement into adopting violent tactics. That is one reason groups like Food Not Bombs have been the focus of infiltration and why the authorities rely on agents provocateur to reduce the impact of nonviolence, while sowing fear and alienation.

Don’t let people intimidate you into silence. People can make comments about nonviolent activists being “wimps” or “pussies,” that nonviolence never works, or that you are not really committed to change if you aren’t willing to use sabotage or violence. You might even hear that nonviolence is racist because people of color “have to take up arms,” and that white, first-world people have the luxury to use nonviolence. Infiltrators or government agents may be talking to some of your friends at cafes, clubs, or other public locations, promoting the idea that armed resistance or arson is the only solution. Honest discussion of all tactics and methods, including types of violence, is fine, but make it clear that you and your group are dedicated to nonviolence.

At the same time, it is not wise to make claims of infiltration or accuse someone of being an informant. It is best to not worry about infiltration and to stay focused on the work of your organization. Just take the simple precautions of asking that any discussions of violent tactics take place somewhere

other than at public meetings, make it clear you are dedicated to nonviolence; and make that plain in your publications and through organizing nonviolence trainings. If you do this, attempts to convict you on terrorism charges will likely fail, and the fear and mistrust that so often destroy movements will be defused. The government can use the fear of infiltration as a way of destroying trust in your community. Don't accuse people—just be careful about what you say and do.

You can make sure you and your friends will not fall prey to the government's efforts to disrupt your work. First, stay focused on the fundamentals of your project or campaign. Don't feel guilty about refusing to take violent action. Since the world is facing so many dire crises, it might seem rational to consider arson or other acts deemed violent by the corporate state, but these tactics often backfire. They can cause the public to withdraw any support they may have had for your cause. The use of violence also breeds distrust among activists, because of the secrecy involved. But as we have learned from Ed Snowden and other whistleblowers, it is nearly impossible to have secrets in the United States. According to the *Washington Post*, over eighty billion dollars is spent each year on government and corporate spying.

A campaign of violence would add to the disempowerment in our community and scare the public into greater support of the authorities. If you feel you must investigate tactics that include violent action, ask yourself whether such tactics will do more harm than good for you personally and for the cause you support. Are you really ready to live fearing capture? How will you feel if your friends spend their lives in prison while you're all portrayed as dangerous and crazy? Will your actions really inspire the public to rise up and save the earth? How will you feel if you kill someone or if one of your friends is killed? Can you really see yourself coordinating a campaign of bombings, arson, shootings? How will you feel spending the rest of your life in prison, seeing the stress this puts on your family and friends?

While it is possible you could spend decades in prison for taking nonviolent direct action, you are likely to feel more empowered and have wider support on the outside than if you were imprisoned for violent acts. Unlike people who are doing life in prison for bombings or shootings, if you are sentenced to a long prison term for organizing or participating in a campaign of nonviolent direct action and noncooperation, you have a much greater chance of

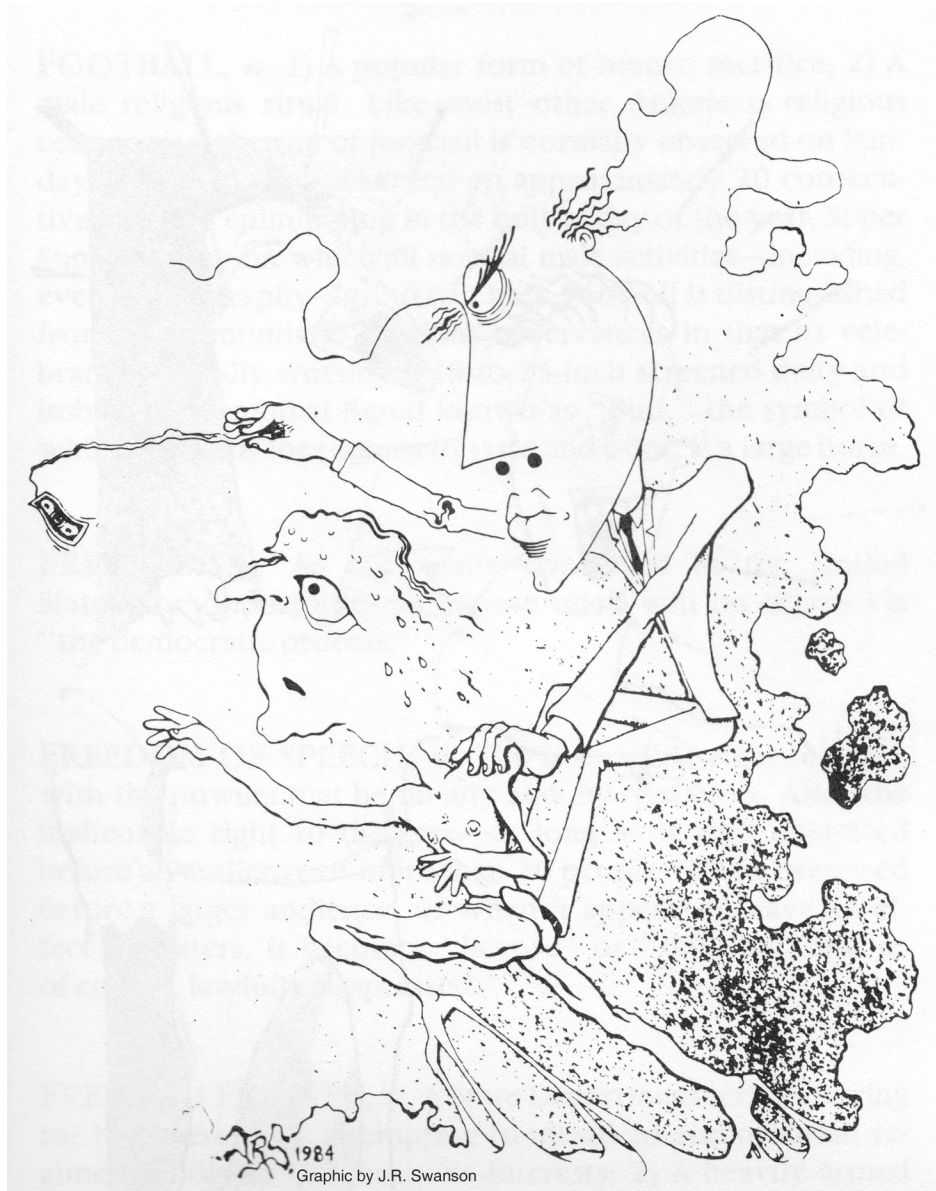
inspiring popular support, possibly achieving your political or environmental goals, and of leaving prison before your sentence is up.

In addition, mass nonviolent direct action based on a thoughtful strategy is more likely to be effective. Agents provocateur encourage drastic actions, knowing we are knowledgeable about environmental and economic threats. If pressured, you can remind your friends that many of the anarchists in prison were framed for "terrorist" acts and that as anarchists we are dedicated to nonviolent direct action.

Along with making it clear you are not going to be silent when people suggest using violence, you may want to organize nonviolence preparations, trainings or workshops with your friends or organizations. Suggest that your community study the history of nonviolent direct action in books by people such as Emma Goldman, Erica Chenoweth, Gene Sharp, Martin Luther King Jr., and others who experienced first hand the power of noncooperation and nonviolence.

Again, be concerned about jokes concerning violence. If people joke about armed revolution, bombings, rock throwing or other acts of violence, make it clear that you are dedicated to nonviolent direct action and ask them to stop. You might remind your friends that conversations and jokes about using violence have resulted in activists being framed and sentenced to long prison terms. Terms sometime decades long. The activists that are joking about violence or making statements about the need to use violence are not necessarily infiltrators or police agents, so don't make any accusations. They may have been influenced by someone they met or may have read some of the many books romanticizing violence. It is best not to worry and to stay focused on the work of your group. The government can use the fear of infiltration as a way of destroying trust in your community. Again, simply remind your friends that you are dedicated to nonviolent direct action and that we don't joke or talk about taking violent action.

While armed resistance has worked to overthrow governments and change the power structure of some countries, in virtually every case the system that resulted continued to use violence to retain its authority. That is the exact opposite of what anarchists are seeking: a society free of coercion, exploitation and domination. Nonviolent social change offers the clearest route there.



FREE ENTERPRISE, n. A system in which a few are born owning billions, most are born owning nothing, and all compete to accumulate wealth and power. If those born with billions succeed, it is due to their personal merits. If those born with nothing fail, it is due to their personal defects.

—from *The American Heretic's Dictionary*