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Post-Anarchism Anarchy

Hakim Bey

1987

The Association for Ontological Anarchy gathers in conclave, black turbans & shimmering robes, sprawled on shirazi carpets sipping bitter coffee, smoking long chibouk & sibi. **Question:** What's our position on all these recent defections & desertions from anarchism (esp. in California-Land): condemn or condone? Purge them or hail them as advance-guard? Gnostic elite... or traitors?

Actually, we have a lot of sympathy for the deserters & their various critiques of anarchism. Like Sinbad & the Horrible Old Man, anarchism staggers around with the corpse of a Martyr magically stuck to its shoulders — haunted by the legacy of failure & revolutionary masochism — stagnant backwater of lost history.

Between tragic Past & impossible Future, anarchism seems to lack a Present — as if afraid to ask itself, here & now, *what are my true desires?* — & what can I **do** before it's *too late*?... Yes, imagine yourself confronted by a sorcerer who stares you down balefully & demands, "What is your True Desire?" Do you hem & haw, stammer, take refuge in ideological platitudes? Do you possess both Imagination & Will, can you both dream & dare — or are you the dupe of an impotent fantasy?

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Look in the mirror & try it...(for one of your masks is the face of a sorcerer)...

The anarchist “movement” today contains virtually no Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans or children... even tho *in theory* such genuinely oppressed groups stand to gain the most from any anti-authoritarian revolt. Might it be that anarchism offers no concrete program whereby the truly deprived might fulfill (or at least struggle realistically to fulfill) real needs & desires?

If so, then this failure would explain not only anarchism’s lack of appeal to the poor & marginal, but also the disaffection & desertions from within its own ranks. Demos, picket-lines & reprints of 19th century classics don’t add up to a vital, daring conspiracy of self-liberation. If the movement is to grow rather than shrink, a lot of deadwood will have to be jettisoned & some risky ideas embraced.

The potential exists. Any day now, vast numbers of americans are going to realize they’re being force-fed a load of reactionary boring hysterical artificially-flavored *crap*. Vast chorus of groans, puking & retching... angry mobs roam the malls, smashing & looting... etc., etc. The Black Banner could provide a focus for the outrage & channel it into an insurrection of the Imagination. We could pick up the struggle where it was dropped by Situationism in ’68 & Autonomia in the seventies, & carry it to the next stage. We could have revolt in our times — & in the process, we could realize many of our True Desires, even if only for a season, a brief Pirate Utopia, a warped free-zone in the old Space/Time continuum.

If the A.O.A. retains its affiliation with the “movement,” we do so not merely out of a romantic predilection for lost causes — or not entirely. Of all “political systems,” anarchism (despite its flaws, & precisely because it is neither political nor a system) comes closest to our understanding of reality, ontology, the nature of being. As for the deserters... we agree with their critiques, but note that they seem to offer no new powerful alternatives. So for the time being we prefer to concentrate on changing anarchism from within.

Here's our program, comrades:

1. Work on the realization that *psychic racism* has replaced overt discrimination as one of the most disgusting aspects of our society. Imaginative participation in other cultures, esp. those we live with.
2. Abandon all ideological purity. Embrace "Type-3" anarchism (to use Bob Black's pro-tem slogan): neither collectivist nor individualist. Cleanse the temple of vain idols, get rid of the Horrible Old Men, the relics & martyrologies.
3. Anti-work or "Zerowork" movement extremely important, including a radical & perhaps violent attack on Education & the serfdom of children.
4. Develop american samizdat network, replace outdated publishing/propaganda tactics. Pornography & popular entertainment as vehicles for radical re-education.
5. In music the hegemony of the 2/4 & 4/4 beat must be overthrown. We need a new music, totally insane but life-affirming, rhythmically subtle yet powerful, & we need it **now**.
6. Anarchism must wean itself away from evangelical materialism & banal 2-dimensional 19th century scientism. "Higher states of consciousness" are not mere **spooks** invented by evil priests. The orient, the occult, the tribal cultures possess *techniques* which can be "appropriated" in true anarchist fashion. Without "higher states of consciousness," anarchism ends & dries itself up into a form of misery, a whining complaint. We need a practical kind of "mystical anarchism," devoid of all New Age shit-&-shinola, & inexorably heretical & anti-clerical; avid for all new technologies of consciousness &

metanoia — a democratization of shamanism, intoxicated & serene.

7. Sexuality is under assault, obviously from the Right, more subtly from the avant-pseud “post-sexuality” movement, & even more subtly by Spectacular Recuperation in media & advertising. Time for a major step forward in SexPol awareness, an explosive reaffirmation of the polymorphic eros — (even & especially in the face of plague & gloom) — a literal glorification of the senses, a doctrine of delight. Abandon all world-hatred & shame.
8. Experiment with new tactics to replace the outdated baggage of Leftism. Emphasize practical, material & personal benefits of radical networking. The times do not appear propitious for violence or militancy, but surely a bit of sabotage & imaginative disruption is never out of place. Plot & conspire, don’t bitch & moan. The Art World in particular deserves a dose of “Poetic Terrorism.”
9. The despatialization of post-Industrial society provides some benefits (e.g. computer networking) but can also manifest as a form of oppression (homelessness, gentrification, architectural depersonalization, the erasure of Nature, etc.) The communes of the sixties tried to circumvent these forces but failed. The question of *land* refuses to go away. How can we separate the concept of *space* from the mechanisms of *control*? The territorial gangsters, the Nation/States, have hogged the entire map. Who can invent for us a cartography of autonomy, who can draw a map that includes our desires?

Anarchism ultimately implies anarchy — & anarchy is chaos. Chaos is the principle of continual creation...& *Chaos never died*.

— A.O.A. Plenary Session
March '87, NYC