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turn, that understanding *why* anarchists oppose whatever they oppose (including, but not limited to, the state) requires a more basic understanding of *how* anarchists conceptualise domination and oppression and, by extension, *why* they reject them. If nothing else, my hope is that the foregoing chapter has provided a foundation for the future pursuit of such understanding.

After all, perhaps exercising such power is necessary for (or, at the very least, conducive to) the achievement of higher moral ends, in which case denying the autonomy of others is morally justifiable (if not altogether right) in certain instances even if it is prima facie morally wrong to do so in general.

Anarchists do not claim that states are 'unjustifiable' because they believe the existence of states as such is contrary to any and all moral ends. On the contrary, anarchists recognise that there are different kinds of states, at least some of which have ostensibly beneficial consequences for the individuals and societies they govern.[94] As Paul McLaughlin notes, however, 'Anarchists do not simply disapprove of the state; they disapprove of it as a particular (if particularly important) and unjustifiable instance of a more widespread social phenomenon'[95]—namely, authority. For anarchists, this 'unjustifiable instance' of authority—the opaque political authority that is necessarily exercised by all systems of governmentand, by extension, by all polities, including nation-states—is unjustifiable precisely because it is an instance of domination and oppression. In other words, the fact that the state is necessarily co-extensive with opaque authority and that opaque authority is necessarily co-extensive with domination and oppression implies that the state dominates and oppresses *by definition*. If, as anarchists contend, domination and oppression are wrong in and of themselves, then the same must necessarily be true of the state in general, which trivially implies that all particular states are incapable of being reformed.

Anarchism is 'more than anti-statism' precisely because its particular brand of anti-statism rests on the more fundamental conviction that domination and oppression are not only unjustifiable but inherently and irredeemably wrong. This means, in

[94] Jun, 'On Philosophical Anarchism', 563.

[95] McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 28.

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subjects have a corresponding obligation to comply with that government's commands. If the subjects in question are autonomous, however, then it is not clear how any such obligation could possibly exist apart from the consent of those subjects themselves—in other words, how a government could possibly have de jure authority over its subjects if they themselves fail to recognise voluntarily that authority. Social contract theory and other liberal accounts of de jure authority have attempted to sidestep this issue by introducing various concepts of 'implicit' or 'tacit' consent according to which anyone who chooses to live in a particular political community incurs an implicit obligation to comply with the government of that community—in other words, that the government has de jure authority over anyone who refrains from explicitly rejecting that authority. Other accounts contend that a government has de jure authority over its subjects just in case the things it commands them to do (or not do) are things that they have good reasons to do (or not do) independently of their being commanded.

Anarchists obviously find these and all other attempts to justify de jure political authority wanting. As far as they are concerned, the very notion that there is or could be a right to 'compe[l] obedience to, or recognition of, authority through the direct or indirect perpetration of harm or the threat of harm constitutes a fundamental denial of … autonomy'[92] that is irreconcilably opposed to the 'self-respect and independence' of the individual.[93] That said, the fact that de jure authority cannot be justified on voluntarist grounds and so is arguably at odds with autonomy scarcely entails that the exercise of de facto power over others is categorically unjustifiable—let alone unqualifiedly *wrong*—nor that the institutions that exercise such power ought to be abolished.

[92] Jun, 'On Philosophical Anarchism', 561.
[93] Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays*, 67.

> resources. A ruling class is not just an economically dominant class; indeed, members have no direct relation at all to the means of production.[91]

In other words, the mere fact that 'capitalists, whether state or private, are part of the ruling class' does not necessarily imply that they are 'always the *dominant* part'. Although 'economic power allows individuals access to state power … state power allows individuals access to economic power as well…. [S]ince the political and economic elites wield different resources, their interests are convergent and mutually reinforcing but not identical'.

Unlike Marxism, which self-consciously aims to provide a purely 'scientific' theory of the State in the broader context of historical materialism, anarchist accounts of the nature and operation of the State are closely related to, if not altogether inseparable from, anarchist critiques of the State. As we noted at the outset, it is precisely this critique—no less than the engaged opposition it provokes—that truly distinguishes anarchism from other anti-statist ideologies. The foregoing has made clear that a central element of this critique is the rejection of de jure authority and, by extension, legitimacy. This is not the whole story, however, since the mere absence of de jure authority scarcely implies that the State is evil in itself, let alone that it should be abolished. Our goal in the next section, accordingly, is to provide a fuller understanding of anarchist's rejection of the State as well as their active attempts to eradicate it.

Conclusion

As we have seen, conventional theories of de jure authority are intended to demonstrate that a government has a right to exercise de facto power over its subjects and that these

[91] van der Walt, 'Anarchism and Marxism', 522–523.

Abstract

This chapter draws upon Michael Freeden's morphological theory of ideology to examine diverse conceptions of the State within the anarchist tradition. Its principal aim in so doing is twofold: first, to determine how and to what extent these conceptions serve to distinguish anarchism from other libertarian ideologies, and second, to explore the role they play in the formulation of diverse anarchist tendencies. As I shall argue, the particular meaning and degree of relative significance that a given conception assigns to the State depends on the internal arrangement of its 'micro-components' and/or on its relation to other concepts within the ideological morphology. Both of these factors must be taken into account in order to understand anarchism's internal diversity as well as its distinctiveness among ideologies.

> The State, therefore, is the most flagrant, the most cynical, and the most complete negation of humanity. It shatters the universal solidarity of all men on the earth, and brings some of them into association only for the purpose of destroying, conquering, and enslaving all the rest.
>
> —Mikhail Bakunin[1]

Introduction

Although it had existed as a distinctive political movement since at least the mid-1870s, anarchism did not achieve

[1] Mikhail Bakunin, 'Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism' [1867], in S. Dolgoff (Ed), *Bakunin on Anarchy: Selected Works by the Activist-Founder of World Anarchism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), 133.

widespread public attention until the last decade of the nineteenth century following a series of high-profile bombings, assassinations, and other terroristic attacks that were attributed to individuals who identified themselves, or were identified by others, as 'anarchists'. As a result, the anarchist movement of the fin de siècle was initially seen by its contemporaries as an altogether new phenomenon with sinister if not altogether inscrutable motives.[2] This perceived inscrutability was intensified by sensationalistic portrayals of anarchists as mindless fanatics and sadistic villains in the popular press that made anarchism appear all the more dangerous and threatening.

Early studies of anarchism seldom questioned the accuracy of such portrayal. Insofar as many, if not most, simply took for granted that anarchism constituted a genuine existential threat to the established order, their overarching aim was not so much to understand anarchism on its own terms as it was to gain useful information for combating and ultimately eradicating it.[3] Although Paul Eltzbacher's *Der Anarchismus* (1900) was motivated by a similar desire to 'penetrate the essence of a movement' which, at the time, was growing in force and influence before the author's very eyes, it stands apart from related

[2] Marie Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism: Elisée Reclus and Nineteenth-Century European Anarchism* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), 16.

[3] See, for example, Francesco Crispi, 'The Antidote for Anarchy', *The Daily Mail* 807 (1898), 4. Adolf Lenz, *Der Anarchismus und des Strafrecht*, in *Zeitschrift für die gesamte Strafrechtswissenschaft* 16:1 (1896), 1–47; Cesar Lombroso, *Gli Anarchici*, 2nd ed. (Torino: Fratelli Bocca, 1895); Naum Reichesberg, *Sozialismus und Anarchismus* (Berlin: Seibert Verlag, 1895); Ettore Sernicoli, *L'Anarchia e gli Anarchici* (Milano: Fratelli Treves, 1894); and Van Hamel, 'L'Anarchisme et le Combat contre l'anarchisme au point de vue de l'anthropologie criminelle', in *Congrès international d'anthropologie criminelle, compte rendu des travaux de la quatrième session, tenue à Genève du 24 au 28 août 1896* (Genève, 1897), 254–257. For a detailed overview of early studies of anarchism, see Matthew S. Adams, 'The Possibilities of Anarchist History: Rethinking the Canon and Writing History', *Anarchist Developments in Cultural Studies* 1 (2013), 33–63.

comes to the same, that all oppression is ultimately reducible to economic exploitation.[87] Anarchists, in contrast, contend that there are multiple and mutually irreducible forms of oppression with distinct qualities, interests, and dynamics that can and do exist 'apart from and independent of … economic conditions'[88] (or, in Marx's parlance, 'economic requisites'[89]). The State, accordingly, doesn't exist simply for the sake of promoting 'the general interests of the ruling classes'; the State has its own interests—chief among them, 'the preservation of its exclusive governmental advantages and its personnel'—which it pursues independently of its collusion with economic elites.[90] As Lucien van der Walt notes:

> For [anarchists], the class system was not defined simply in economic terms—that is, in terms of *relations of production*—but also had to be understood in terms of *relations of domination*; not just in terms of inequitable ownership of the *means of production*, but also in terms of ownership of the *means of coercion* (the capacity to physically enforce decisions) and of *administration* (the instruments that govern society). It is only possible to understand the anarchist claim that a state must (with "iron logic") generate a new ruling class, and that state managers are themselves part of a ruling class and not mere servants of a ruling class *external* to the state, by recognizing that class is envisaged here in relation to ownership or control of one or more of the aforementioned core

[87] van der Walt, 'Anarchism and Marxism', 523; cf. Karl Marx, 'After the Revolution: Marx Debates Bakunin', in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 544.

[88] Mikhail Bakunin, 'Letter to *La Liberté*' [1872], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 282–283.

[89] Marx, 'After the Revolution', 544.

[90] Bakunin, 'Science and the Urgent Revolutionary Task,' 365.

> have always been powerless because they were poverty-stricken, and they were poverty-stricken because they lacked organized power.[82]

Bakunin's point here is that the ability of one class to exploit another class—and thus to acquire and maintain economic power at its expense—requires political power. As Lucien van der Walt notes, 'Private ownership of the means of production can only be used for exploitation if buttressed by relations of domination, whereas monopoly of the means of coercion and administration requires the financing provided by economic exploitation'.[83] This implies that the interests of economic elites are inextricably bound up with the interests of the government, and vice versa, which explains why 'every government' is committed to 'preserving and strengthening … the systematic and legalized dominance of the ruling class over the exploited people'.[84]

The notion that economic interests naturally converge with political interests is, of course, a basic presupposition of classical Marxist theories of the State as well. A crucial difference, however, is that Marxism regards the State as nothing more than 'a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie'[85] or as 'an organ of class rule, an organ for the oppression of one class by another […] which legalizes and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the conflict between classes'.[86] This implies that all 'relations of domination' are consequences of 'relations of production' or, what

[82] Bakunin, 'Science and the Urgent Revolutionary Task', 358.

[83] Lucien van der Walt, 'Anarchism and Marxism', in Nathan Jun (Ed), *Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy* (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 523.

[84] Bakunin, 'Science and the Urgent Revolutionary Task', 365.

[85] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party' [1848], in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker (New York: Norton, 1978), 475.

[86] Vladimir Lenin, 'The State and Revolution' [1917], in *The Essential Works of Lenin*, ed. H. Christman (New York: Dover, 1987), 274.

volumes in its self-conscious desire to treat its subject matter fairly and objectively.[4] As the translator of the English edition noted, Eltzbacher approached his task as an impartial 'investigator trying to determine the definition of a term he finds confusedly conceived' rather than as a military strategist seeking to understand and outmaneuver an enemy.[5] Even if it is an exaggeration to claim that Eltzbacher attained the goal of 'impartiality … as perfectly as can be expected of any man'—so much so as to leave his readers unsure 'whether [he] is himself an Anarchist or not'—there is no doubt that his aspiration to 'know Anarchism scientifically' was sincere.[6]

Eltzbacher's study begins by lamenting the 'lack of clear ideas about Anarchism … not only among the masses but [also] among scholars and statesmen'.[7] To some, he explains, anarchism has 'only a negative aim' that 'culminates in the negation of every programme'.[8] To others, this 'negative and destroying side is balanced by a side that is affirmative and creative', the latter constituting anarchism's 'real, true essence…'.[9] In order to determine what anarchism is really all about, Eltzbacher undertakes a thorough study of 'the most important Anarchistic writings'—that is, writings 'of certain particular men' (to wit, Godwin, Proudhon, Stirner, Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tucker, and Tolstoy) that are recognised as 'particularly prominent' by 'the greater part of those who at present are scientifically concerned with Anarchism'.[10] His goal in so doing is to ascertain the common element

[4] Paul Eltzbacher, *Anarchism*, trans. Steven T. Byington (New York: B.R. Tucker, 1908), 3. The original German text (*Der Anarchismus*) was published by J. Guttentag Verlagsbuchhandlung of Berlin in 1900.

[5] Ibid., vii.

[6] Ibid., viii, 3.

[7] Ibid., 3.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 4, 12.

within these otherwise diverse writings, which he ultimately identifies as 'the negation of the State for our future'.[11]

Whether owing to its perceived objectivity or something else entirely, *Der Anarchismus* has had a profound influence on popular understandings of anarchism, both at the time of its publication and subsequently.[12] Indeed, Eltzbacher's central conclusion—that anti-statism is the defining element of anarchist thought—has 'become such a commonplace that [it has been] incorporated into almost every study of the subject up to the present day'.[13] That said, the fact that 'anti-statism' has become the single-most ubiquitous element within conventional definitions of anarchism scarcely implies that said definitions share a uniform understanding of this element. Although some follow Eltzbacher in identifying 'anti-statism' with a principled call to oppose and ultimately abolish the state, others construe it as a kind of abstract moral judgment (e.g., 'the rejection and criticism of all state authority and of the power and coercion that combine to make up the machinery of government'[14]) or, more generally, as a species of 'belief' (e.g., that 'society should do without government'[15] or that 'society without the state,

[11] Ibid., 292.

[12] Kropotkin lavishly praised the book in his famous article on anarchism for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (*Encylopedia Britannica*, 11th edition [New York: The Encyclopedia Britannica Co., 1910], 914) and Benjamin Tucker regarded it as 'the best book on anarchism ever written by an outsider' (James Martin, *Men Against the State* [Colorado Springs, CO: Ralph Myles, 1972], 271). For more on Eltzbacher's influence, see Andrew Carlson, *Anarchism in Germany* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1972), 1–4; Marie Fleming, *The Geography of Freedom* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1988), chapter 1; Michael Schmidt and Lucien van der Walt, *Black Flame: The Revolutionary Class Politics of Anarchism and Syndicalism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2009), chapter 1.

[13] Fleming, *The Anarchist Way to Socialism*, 16.

[14] Jeremy Jennings, 'Anarchism', in R. Eatwell and A. Wright (Eds.), *Contemporary Political Ideologies*, 2nd ed. (New York: Continuum, 1999), 132.

[15] J. Narveson, *You and the State: A Short Introduction to Political Philosophy* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 183.

seen that anarchists regard the state in general and the nation-state in particular as paradigmatically oppressive institutions—'permanent conspiracy[ies] on the part of the minority against the majority' which, even when they are 'dresse[d] up in the most liberal and democratic form[s]' are 'essentially based on domination, and upon violence, that is upon despotism—a concealed but no less dangerous despotism…'.[77] As a centralised, hierarchical institution that actively concentrates power in the hands of the few, the State 'by its nature places itself outside and over the people and inevitably subordinates them to an organization and to aims which are foreign to and opposed to the real needs and aspirations of the people'.[78] Were the people themselves to 'stand at the head of the government', Bakunin writes, there would be 'no government, no state'. Indeed, the very existence of the State implies that 'there will be those who are ruled and those that are slaves'.[79]

Anarchists have also insisted that otherwise distinct forms of oppression are 'linked in various ways,'[80] 'bound together … by the bond of cause and effect, effect and cause'.[81] This is most vividly illustrated in the 'inseparable' relationship between the State and capitalism. As Bakunin writes:

> Political power and wealth are inseparable. Those who have power have the means to gain wealth and must center all their efforts upon acquiring it, for without it they will not be able to retain their power. Those who are wealthy must become strong, for, lacking power, they run the risk of being deprived of their wealth. The toiling masses

[77] Bakunin, 'Science and the Urgent Revolution Task' [1870], in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 211.

[78] Bakunin, 'Statism and Anarchy', in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 328.

[79] Ibid., 330.

[80] Proudhon, *What is Property?*, 43.

[81] Peter Kropotkin, 'Modern Science and Anarchism' [1912], in *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets*, 181.

Anarchist vs. Marxist Views of the State

Anarchists have frequently recognised a distinction, if only implicitly, between *domination* and *oppression*, the latter referring to a 'systematic' iteration of the former. Like domination more generally, oppression involves exercising power over people in a way that 'limits [their] freedoms, choices, and abilities'.[74] The difference is that oppression entails *asymmetrical* power—that is, power that is exercised by one group over another group in a way that harms the latter to the benefit of the former. Whether the harm in question is 'direct physical harm, as when the oppressor group uses violent coercion or force against the oppressed group, or indirect harm, as when the oppressor group exploits, marginalizes, or disempowers the oppressed group, or when the oppressed group is denied significant political, social, or economic advantages',[75] the fact that it benefits the oppressor group and is perpetrated chiefly if not solely for this reason is the distinctive hallmark of oppression. At the level of social, political, and economic organisation, oppression invariably operates by means of the creation and maintenance of *hierarchies*—that is, structured relationships in which political, social, economic, and so on, power is distributed unequally among those who are party to said relationships in a way that benefits some of them at the expense of others.

Anarchists recognise that political, social, and economic oppression exists in myriad forms ranging from 'the economic idea of capitalism' to 'the politics of government or of authority' to 'the theological idea of the Church'.[76] We have already

[74] Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, 38; cf. A. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 52.

[75] Jun, 'On Philosophical Anarchism', 559; cf. Cudd, *Analyzing Oppression*, 25, 50, 52.

[76] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What is Property?* (London: William Reeves, 1969), 43.

or government, is both possible and desirable'[16]). Many such definitions treat 'anti-statism' as a generic descriptor for any kind of principled skepticism of, or disapproval for, the state whether or not this 'entails a moral obligation or duty to oppose and … eliminate [it]'.[17]

From a purely historical vantage, there is no question that anti-statism—in the sense of actively endorsing, encouraging, and seeking to bring about the abolition of the state, rather than merely condemning or disapproving it—has been and continues to be a central element of anarchism. To this extent, at least, Eltzbacher's definition is a vast improvement over those which seek to reduce the anarchism to mere disapproval or the state or, worse, to abstract judgments or beliefs concerning its moral legitimacy or lack thereof. As countless scholars have noted, however, even this understanding of anarchism is grossly inadequate—not just because it is ahistorical, but because it 'fails some of the most basic requirements of a definition', such as the ability to 'effectively highlight[t] the distinguishing features of a given category … in a coherent fashion … [and] to differentiate that category from others, thereby organising knowledge as well as enabling effective analysis and research'.[18] In the first place, Eltzbacher's approach involves an

[16] G. Crowder, 'Anarchism', in E. Craig (Ed), *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (London: Routledge, 1998), 244.

[17] A. J. Simmons, 'Philosophical Anarchism', in J. Sanders and J. Narveson (Eds.), *For and Against the State* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996), 22. The literature on 'philosophical anarchism' of this sort is extensive. For a general overview, see Benjamin Franks, 'Anarchism and Analytic Philosophy', in Ruth Kinna (Ed), *The Continuum Companion to Anarchism* (London: Continuum, 2012), 50–71; and Nathan Jun, 'On Philosophical Anarchism', *Radical Philosophy Review* 19:3 (2016), 551–567.

[18] Schmidt and van der Walt, *Black Flame*, 43. See also S. Clark, *Living Without Domination: The Possibility of an Anarchist Utopia* (London: Routledge, 2016), 9–10; Paul McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism* (London: Routledge, 2016), 27–28; David Weick, 'The Negativity of Anarchism', in Howard Ehrlich et al. (Eds), *Reinventing Anarchy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 139.

egregious fallacy of composition insofar as it defines anarchism as such in terms of a particular (if particularly significant) element of anarchism. Because anti-statism in this sense is by no means unique to anarchism, moreover, defining anarchism in terms of it renders the latter indistinguishable from all other ideologies that happen to share this element.

All of this being said, it is equally mistaken to define anarchism in terms of some other elemental concept or set of concepts. As Michael Freeden argues, ideologies are not distinguished by the particular concepts they contain so much as the particular ways they *decontest* these concepts, where this, in turn, is a function of how concepts are organised and arranged within their overall ideational structure.[19] What differentiates anarchism from other ideologies, accordingly, is not the concept of anti-statism (or any other concept) per se but the particular meanings and degrees of relative significance it assigns to concepts in relation to other concepts.[20] This process of decontestation gives rise to a distinctive understanding of the nature and function of the state which foregrounds distinctive normative critiques of the state as well as strategies for the dismantlement of the same.

Regrettably, far more attention has been given to establishing that anarchism is 'more than anti-statism'[21] than to clarifying in what sense, and to what extent, anarchism *is* anti-statist. As a result, there is a great deal of confusion regarding how the concept of 'the state' has been understood within the broad anarchist tradition, how this understanding has in-

[19] Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 77, 88; Michael Freeden, *Liberalism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 54, 59, 76–77.

[20] Michael Freeden, 'The Morphological Analysis of Ideology', in Michael Freeden et al. (Eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 124–125.

[21] Wieck, 'The Negativity of Anarchism', 139.

them into machines themselves.[69] In this sense, it represents 'the triumph of the machine over the spirit, the rationalization of all thought, action, and feeling according to the fixed norms of authority, and consequently the end of all intellectual culture'.[70] Along the same lines, the notion that individual nation-states are only legitimate insofar as they are 'sovereign'—that is, recognised by other nation-states—has facilitated the emergence of a global political framework within which all polities are, or aspire to be, nation-states. As a result, the concept of ethno-cultural identity or 'peoplehood'—which Kropotkin describes as 'the union between the people and the territory it occupies, from which territory it receives its national character and on which it impresses its own stamp, so as to make an indivisible whole of both men and territory'[71]—has been universally subsumed under the concept of 'nationality', a form of collective identity that is primarily defined by affiliation with a nation-state.[72] In practice, this has led nation-states consistently to oppose ethnic, racial, cultural, and religious diversity in favor of homogeneous conceptions of national identity and to reject the right of minority ethnic and religious groups both at home and abroad 'to develop along the lines [they] wished' independently of the global nation-state system.[73]

[69] Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 33.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Peter Kropotkin, 'Finland: A Rising Nationality', *The Nineteenth Century* 27:97 (Mar. 1885), 530.

[72] Cf. Emma Goldman, 'Patriotism: A Menace to Liberty', in *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 1910), 127–144; Leo Tolstoy, 'Patriotism and Government', in *Government Is Violence: Essays on Anarchism and Pacifism*, ed. D. Stephens (London: Phoenix Press, 1990), 77–92.

[73] Kropotkin, Quoted in Jean Caroline Cahm, 'Kropotkin and the Anarchist Movement', in E. Cahm and V. C. Fišera (Eds), *Socialism and Nationalism*, vol. 1 (Nottingham, UK: Spokesman, 1978), 56.

> tomb, it strangles us in its arms… It regulates our actions. It accumulates mountains of laws and ordinances in which the shrewdest lawyer is lost… It creates an army of employees, spiders with hooked fingers, who know the universe only through the dirty windows of their offices, or by their obscure, absurd, illegible old papers.[64]

Domination of this sort presupposes that the dominated are not (or, at least, should not be treated as) *autonomous*—that is, competent to deal with the management of their own affairs[65]—which means that the State opposes both collective aspirations toward self-determination as well as individual persons' ability to think and act for themselves. In practice, this means turning everything into a 'means of exploitation' or a 'police measure … to hold people in check', either by 'brute force, that is, physical violence … by depriving [people] of the means of subsistence and thus reducing them to helplessness'[66] or by shackling the human mind with 'dead dogma' that destroys its ability to think on its own.[67]

Because the State is both antagonistic toward individual and collective autonomy as well as fundamentally 'conservative, static, intolerant of change and opposed to it',[68] its foremost aim is to relegate the many to the one, the different to the same, the specific to the general, the particular to the universal, and the concrete to the abstract. In pursuing this aim, the 'mechanical order of the State 'sets its stamp' on every individual it encounters by 'render[ing] them stupid and brutal', divesting them of 'all human feeling', and, ultimately, transforming

[64] Peter Kropotkin, 'Words of a Rebel' [1881], in *No Gods, No Masters*, 301.

[65] Goldman, 'The Individual, Society, and the State', 98; cf. Bakunin, 'Revolutionary Catechism' [1866], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 76.

[66] Malatesta, *Anarchy*, 10, 15.

[67] Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 33.

[68] Goldman, 'The Individual, Society, and the State', 115.

formed anarchist critiques of the state, and how these critiques have informed anarchist strategies for resisting, opposing, and, ultimately, abolishing the state.[22] Insofar as it is impossible to address satisfactorily all three of these issues in a single chapter, the discussion to follow will focus primarily on the first. Its principal aim in so doing is to provide a general overview of prevailing anarchist conceptions of the state that may serve as a foundation for subsequent explorations of the normative and strategic dimensions of anarchist anti-statism and, by extension, of the extent to which the latter distinguish anarchism from competing ideologies—especially those, like Marxism, to which it is especially close.

Government and Authority

Anarchism regards the state as a paradigmatic instance of *government* (or *political authority*), the basic nature and function of which it invariably identifies with the morally illegitimate exercise of power over human beings. At the highest level of generality, the term 'power' refers to a hypothetical or actual capacity to act in some particular way ('power to').[23] To say that Jones has the power to learn the violin, for example, means that Jones has the hypothetical capacity to perform a particular kind of action under certain conditions—or, what comes to the same, that it is possible for Jones to acquire a particular kind of ability that will enable her to perform a particular kind of action. To say that Jones has the power to play violin, in contrast, means that Jones has the actual ability to

[22] All of these questions involve certain fundamental concepts, the precise meanings of which is a matter of considerable dispute. This chapter makes no pretense toward settling such disputes, and any definitions it assigns to these concepts are merely stipulated for the sake of facilitating the investigation to follow.

[23] Dennis Hume Wong, *Power: Its Forms, Bases, and Use* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1980), 1.

perform a particular kind of action right now, under existing conditions. (For our purposes, let us refer to the former sort of 'power to' as *potential power to* and the latter sort as de facto *power to*.) Now, when Jones has the de facto power to compel Smith to act (or refrain from acting) in some particular way, we say that Jones has 'power over' Smith.[24] In many cases, this involves the ability to compel Smith to obey a directive regardless of whether she herself wishes to do so or not. In other cases, it entails nothing more than the ability to ensure Smith's voluntary compliance with said directive. Either way, Jones' 'power over' Smith involves an actionable capacity to direct (or 'govern') Smith's behaviour in various ways regardless of whether it is morally justifiable for her to do so.

Now, the mere fact that Jones has de facto power over Smith scarcely implies that this power is 'binding'—that is, that Jones has (or claims to have) 'a special right to command' Smith or that Smith is (or takes herself to be) 'obliged or duty-bound' to comply with Jones' commandments.[25] Nor does it entail that such commandments are 'content-independent'—that is, that Smith has a reason to obey them independently of their being issued by Jones. On the contrary, 'all that [Jones] demands from [Smith] is that [her] command is taken for what it is and obeyed'.[26] This is in marked contrast with the concept of de jure authority, according to which Jones not only has the de facto power but the presumed right to compel Smith to act (or refrain from acting) in some particular way, where this, in turn, implies that Smith has a duty or obligation to do (or refrain from doing) whatever Jones tells her to do (or not do).[27] In other words, it is not the content of Jones' commandments

[24] Ibid., 2–5.

[25] McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 56.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid. Cf. Richard De George, *The Nature and Limits of Authority* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1985), 19–20; A. John Simmons, *Boundaries of Authority* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 16.

> the latter refers to an abstract corporate person—a 'body politic' or 'commonwealth'—that encompasses the entire citizenry (i.e., 'the people') as well as entire apparatus of government but exists separately from, and independently of, all particular individuals and institutions.

Although anarchism rejects the nation-state for the same general reasons it rejects all states, it also recognises it as importantly distinct. Anarchist critiques of the nation-state, accordingly, are focused primarily on the foregoing characteristics, especially the third and the fourth.

At the heart of such critiques is the notion that 'the State'—understood as an 'abstract entity' that embodies the general or collective will of 'the people' but is 'not identical with either the rulers or the ruled'[58]—is a 'lie, an illusion, a Utopia, never realized and never realizable',[59] a fiction that 'has no more existence than gods and devils have' and which is 'equally the reflex and creation of man [sic]'.[60] In reality, the State is merely a 'condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour' that ultimately reflects human 'ignorance and fear'.[61] The nature of this condition or relationship is reflected most clearly in the centralised and bureaucratised apparatus of the modern nation-state—an unthinking, unfeeling machine that 'interferes with all the activities of men [sic]'[62] and 'forc[es] every manifestation of life into the straitjacket of its laws'.[63] As Kropotkin writes:

> Today, the State has succeeded in meddling in every aspect of our lives. From the cradle to the

[58] van Crevald, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, 1.

[59] Malatesta, *Anarchy*, 11.

[60] Goldman, 'The Individual, Society, and the State', 113.

[61] Gustav Landauer, 'Weak Statesmen, Weaker People' [1910] in *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, ed. and trans. Gabriel Kuhn (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), 214.

[62] Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture*, 35.

[63] Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism*, 33.

ancestral line. Membership in the Greek 'nation', accordingly, had nothing to do with being a citizen of a particular polity. (A similar situation prevailed in the Roman Empire, many of whose citizens were themselves non-Roman.) The citizens or subjects of a given nation-state, in contrast, are taken to share a common national identity that is rooted in the particular territory (or territories) they inhabit. This national identity, moreover, is co-extensive with their political status within said nation-state and plays a prominent role in legitimating the latter's system of government.

2. *Sovereignty*. Strictly speaking, a polity endures so long as it maintains de facto power over their subjects and the territories they inhabit. Although this is much easier to accomplish when the polity's government is recognised as legitimate by (most of) the people it governs, no less than by other polities, its status *as* a polity does not depend on such recognition. By contrast, a polity is not generally regarded as a nation-state unless other nation-states recognise its 'sovereignty'—that is, the de jure authority of its government to exercise a monopoly of force over the populations and territories it claims.

3. *The Centralisation and Expansion of Political Power*. In exercising this monopoly, nation-states tend to consolidate the various operations of government within centralised bureaucratic apparatuses; more than this, they radically expand the scope of political power by exercising control over aspects of life that had previously been regarded as 'private'.

4. *The Hypostasisation of Political Power*. The ideology of the nation-state reifies or 'hypostasises' political power by drawing a real (and not merely conceptual) distinction between 'the government' and 'the State', where

that makes them authoritative but rather her presumed right to issue such commandments in the first place.[28]

De jure authority of this sort, which Richard Sylvan has described as 'opaque' or 'closed' authority, 'simply stand[s] on [its] position or station … [or] appeal[s] to a conventional rule or procedure ("that is how things are done" or "have always been done") without being able to step beyond some rule book … which has been enacted (for reasons not open to, or bearing, examination) by a further substantially opaque authority'.[29] Authority of this sort involves a presumed right to issue binding, content-independent directives and, as such, does not *depend* on the voluntary compliance over those over whom it is exercised. On the contrary, the presumed right to exercise de facto power over others presupposes the right to coerce them into obeying against their own will. What Sylvan refers to as 'transparent' or 'open' authority, by contrast, is capable of justifying its claims or directives 'by appeal to a further range of assessable evidence…'[30]—that is, by demonstrating that there are content-dependent reasons to assent to these claims or directives. Assuming such reasons exist, this at most implies that the authority in question is worthy of voluntary deference. It does not imply that otherwise reasonable people are categorically obliged to assent to open authorities or that the latter have a right to compel their assent. If an otherwise reasonable person fails to recognise that she has content-dependent reasons to defer to such an authority—whether or not this is primarily the authority's fault—she is at worst guilty of a transgression against reason. The same is true if she fails to defer to an authority which she herself recognises as (ceteris paribus) worthy of deference.

[28] McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 56.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Richard Sylvan, 'Anarchism', in Robert Goodin and Philip Petit (Eds), *A Companion to Contemporary Political Philosophy* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1993), 221.

For any particular organisation defined by particular ends, the government of that organisation is just the particular group of individuals that is responsible for ensuring these ends are met, where this, in turn, involves directing the behaviour of other individuals within said organisation.[31] For example, the government (or 'administration') of a university refers to the particular group of individuals (chancellors, provosts, deans, and so forth) that is responsible for ensuring that the university in question meets its particular institutional objectives. In practice, this involves directing the behaviour of other individuals within the university (the faculty, staff, and students) through the enactment and enforcement of rules, policies, and procedures.

Although governments of all sorts typically function as closed or opaque authorities that exercise varying degrees of de facto power over those who are subject to them and claim to do so by right, they are importantly distinct from the explicitly political entities known as *polities*. Like 'universities, trade unions, and churches, *inter alia*', a polity is a 'corporation [or organization] in the sense that it possesses a legal *persona* of its own, which means that it has rights and duties and may engage in various activities *as if* it were a real, flesh-and-blood, living individual'.[32] A polity is distinguished from other corporations by the fact that it 'authorizes them all but is itself authorized (recognized) solely by others of its own kind … that certain functions (known collectively as the attributes of sovereignty) are reserved for it alone … [and] that it exercises those functions over a certain territory inside which its jurisdiction is both exclusive and all-embracing'.[33]

[31] Crispin Sartwell, *Against the State: An Introduction to Anarchist Political Theory* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 25–28.

[32] Martin van Crevald, *The Rise and Decline of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 1.

[33] Ibid.

> human justice, deserve a thousand times the gallows or penal servitude.[56]

The Nation-State

Further along in the same passage, Bakunin claims that 'there is no terror, cruelty, sacrilege, perjury, imposture, infamous transaction, cynical theft, brazen robbery, or foul treason which has not been and is still not being committed daily by representatives of the State'.[57] Here, as in the previous quotation, the term 'state' is a proxy for 'polity' or, more generally, for any and all organised systems of government. Although this convention is common in anarchist writings, anarchists, like others, also use the term 'state' in reference to a particular *kind* of polity (the modern 'nation-state') that first emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century and is generally distinguished from city-states, empires, feudal kingdoms, and other early political systems by four general characteristics:

1. *The Conflation of Political Identity with National Identity.* The modern nation-state combines the concept of political identity and the concept of national identity into a single entity. Whereas the concept of 'polity' is purely political in nature, the concept of 'nationhood' is primarily sociological insofar as it refers to a community of people who share, or take themselves to share, a common culture or lineage. Historically, identification with a nation was altogether separate from identification with a polity. In Ancient Greece, for example, the term *Hellas* referred to the collection of individuals who spoke Greek, shared a common Greek culture, and saw themselves as descended from a (real or imagined) common

[56] Bakunin, 'Federalism, Socialism, and Anti-Theologism', in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 134.

[57] Ibid.

of society',[50] it is unclear how any government can be (or at least remain) legitimate in practice.

Hence anarchists' insistence that 'all governments resemble one another and are worth the same',[51] that their 'essential function … in all times and in all places' has unfailingly been 'that of oppressing and exploiting the masses' for the sake of 'defending the oppressors and exploiters'.[52] Regardless of their particular 'form, character, or color'—whether 'absolute or constitutional, monarchy or republic, fascist, Nazi, or Bolshevik'[53]—all governments are in practice 'ranged on the side of the most enlightened and richest class against the poorest and most numerous'[54] and are 'capable only of protecting old privileges and creating new ones'.[55] This explains why

> the political world has always been and continues to be the stage for high knavery and unsurpassed brigandage … why all the history of ancient and modern states is nothing more than series of revolting crimes; why present and past kings and ministers of all times and countries—statesmen, diplomats, bureaucrats, and warriors—if judged from the point of view of simple morality and

[50] Bakunin, 'Statism and Anarchy' [1873], in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 249.

[51] Peter Kropotkin, 'Declaration of the Anarchists Arraigned Before the Criminal Court in Lyon' [1883], in Daniel Guérin (Ed), *No Gods, No Masters: An Anthology of Anarchism*, *Book One* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 1989), 299.

[52] Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy* [1891], ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1974), 14.

[53] Emma Goldman, 'The Individual, Society, and the State' [1940], in *Red Emma Speaks: An Emma Goldman Reader*, ed. A. K. Shulman (Albany, NY: Humanity Books, 1998), 115.

[54] Proudhon, *The General Idea of Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, 108.

[55] Rudolf Rocker, *Anarcho-Syndicalism: Theory and Practice* [1938] (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004), 13.

Polities as such are defined by the exercise of de facto power over particular populations within particular bounded geographic areas, regardless of the particular systems of government—that is, the particular individual or group of individuals (kings, presidents, prime ministers lawmakers, judges, police, etc.), institutions(legislative assemblies, courts, armies, etc.), and procedures (making and enforcing laws, levying taxes, imprisoning criminals, etc.)—through which they do so. As explicitly *political* entities, moreover, they are directed toward a broad range of exceedingly general ends, all or most of which reflect fundamental aspects of human social organisation (e.g., the satisfaction of basic needs, the protection of life and property, the distribution of valuable resources, etc.).

The Illegitimacy of Authority

As noted previously, anarchists invariably understand government in terms of *domination*,[34] which Iris Marion Young defines as 'institutional conditions which inhibit or prevent people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions'.[35] As Proudhon famously writes, for example:

[34] See, for example, Mikhail Bakunin, 'The Bear of Berne and the Bear of St. Petersburg' [1870] in Sam Dolgoff (Ed), *Bakunin on Anarchism* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2002), 221; Mikhail Bakunin, *Marx, Freedom, and the State*, ed. and trans. K. J. Kenafick (London: Freedom Press, 1950), 33; Alexander Berkman, *What is Anarchism?* [1928] (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2003), 205; Alexander Berkman, *The Life of an Anarchist: The Alexander Berkman Reader*, ed. Gene Fellner (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2005), 273, 300; Peter Kropotkin, 'The State: Its Historic Role', in George Woodcock (Ed), *Fugitive Writings* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1993), 200–201; Errico Malatesta, *Life and Ideas*, ed. and trans. Vernon Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1965), 47, 135, 186.

[35] Iris Marion Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 38.

> To be governed is to be watched over, inspected, spied on, directed, legislated at, regulated, docketed, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, assessed, weighed, censored, ordered about, by men who have neither the right, nor the knowledge, nor the virtue… To be governed is to be at every operation, at every transaction, noted, registered, enrolled, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under the pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be placed under contribution, trained, ransomed, exploited, monopolized, extorted, squeezed, mystified, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, despised, harassed, tracked, abused, clubbed, disarmed, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and, to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.[36]

Although the notion that government is ultimately a matter of forcing people to submit to the commands of others is a fundamental and recurrent anarchist theme, it is scarcely unique to anarchism. Indeed, the entire liberal tradition is founded on the assumption that exercising power over others in this way is at odds with individual freedom, which means that in the absence of de jure authority government is nothing more than tyranny. All liberal political theories, accordingly, attempt to establish the conditions for possessing and exercising such

[36] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century* [1851], trans. J. B. Robinson (London: Freedom Press, 1923), 294.

Although it is difficult if not impossible to determine the precise motivations of those who govern (or seek to govern) others, almost every government contains at least some individuals who are primarily driven by narrow self-interest or, worse, by the 'carnivorous, altogether bestial and savage instinct'[47] to exercise power over others for its own sake. The problem, according to anarchists, is that such an instinct brings with it an insatiable desire for ever *more* power and, to this extent, is ultimately 'animated by the wish to be the only power, because in the nature of its being [power] deems itself absolute and consequently opposes any bar which reminds it of the limits of its influence'.[48] In other words, the desire for power inevitably generates a corresponding will to destroy, or at least neutralise, anything and anyone that stands in the way of increasing power—in which case even a small handful of government officials who are motivated by such a desire will naturally tend to drive out their more high-minded colleagues. Indeed, just *having* power tends to have a 'corrupting effect on those in whose hands it is placed',[49] which means that even those who are motivated to seek power from ostensibly altruistic motives run a considerable risk of being corrupted when and if they actually wield it. Every concept of political legitimacy presupposes a distinction between just government and tyranny; but if tyranny denotes exploitation and oppression, and if the very possession of de facto power transforms people 'by the force of an immutable social law' into 'exploiter[s] and oppressor[s]

[47] Bakunin, 'The Program of the Alliance' [1871], in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 248.

[48] Rudolf Rocker, *Nationalism and Culture* [1937] (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1998), 63.

[49] Jura Federation of the First International, 'The Sonvillier Circular' [1871], quoted in E. H. Carr, *Michael Bakunin* (London: Macmillan, 1937), 427.

authority—that is, the conditions for political legitimacy—so as to demonstrate that government is (or at least can be) legitimate and, by extension, compatible with human freedom and other substantive moral ends.[37]

Because political legitimacy is a function of de jure authority, and because de jure authority is a function of exercising de facto power by right, there is nothing to prevent an otherwise 'open' or 'transparent' government or political authority from resorting to coercion when its legitimacy goes unrecognised, regardless of who or what is responsible for this lack of recognition. (Indeed, the same is true even if its legitimacy *is* recognised.) This invites the problematic notion that governments are or can be legitimate even when they are not recognised as such, and even if they themselves are responsible for this lack of recognition. Worse, it implies that governments are no less legitimate for compelling obedience through force or fraud rather than open and transparent attempts to justify their power—in which case the concept of legitimacy is no more than a disguise, a 'garment' with which governments 'cove[r] themselves' in order to conceal their true nature and purpose.[38]

In response, one might argue that a government's de facto power over its subjects is only legitimate if the latter (a) have content-dependent reasons to comply with the government's directives; (b) freely recognise that they have such reasons because the government has openly and transparently demonstrated them; and (c) voluntarily choose to comply with the government's directives pursuant to this recognition. This is tantamount to claiming that a government is only legitimate if its authority is open or transparent. As we have already seen, however, such authority 'has no force to back it' and so can neither 'compel [their] acceptance' nor 'prevent [their] rejec-

[37] McLaughlin, *Anarchism and Authority*, 36–37.

[38] Peter Kropotkin, 'Anarchist Morality' [1892], in Roger Baldwin (Ed), *Kropotkin's Revolutionary Pamphlets* (New York: Dover, 1970), 98.

'good, just, or virtuous'—in a word, *legitimate*—government.[44] On the contrary, 'all [governments]are bad' because 'by their nature, by all their conditions, and by the supreme aim and end of their existence they are completely the opposite of liberty, morality, and human justice.'[45] Indeed, the very concept of government denotes nothing more than arbitrary 'violence, oppression, exploitation, and injustice, raised into a system'.[46]

Even if there were such a thing as de jure authority, the fact that a particular government is taken to have such authority irrespective of the underlying motives of those actually doing the governing remains deeply problematic. If government in general is legitimate insofar as it protects the natural rights of the governed, for example, then any particular government is legitimate only to the extent that it achieves this end in practice; it is no less legitimate if it turns out that every single government agent is motivated by narrow self-interest, say, rather than concern for other peoples' natural rights. But since there is no such thing asa 'government' apart from the actual people who do the governing, it is reasonable to assume that the operation of the former will inevitably be effected by the motives of the latter. If these motives are fundamentally at odds with the 'legitimate' ends of government, moreover, this suggests that the actual process of governing will inevitably run afoul those ends, thereby rendering the government illegitimate in practice. In other words, the de facto legitimacy of any particular government would seem to require that those who govern are motivated primarily by a desire to achieve whatever substantive moral ends are taken to constitute that legitimacy in the first place.

[44] Mikhail Bakunin, 'Address to the League of Peace and Freedom' [1867], in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, ed. G. P. Maximoff (New York: Free Press, 1953), 224.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Bakunin, 'Federalism, Socialism, and Anti-Theologism', in *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, 221.

tion of it'.[39] Although an open authority is worthy of deference, this scarcely implies that it has a *right* to exercise power over its subjects—assuming that it has the ability to do so in the first place—let alone that these subjects have a special duty or obligation to assent to its claims or directives.

Anarchists are certainly not opposed to 'authority' of this sort. As Bakunin writes, for example:

> In the matter of boots, I refer to the authority of the bootmaker; concerning houses, canals, or railroads, I consult that of the architect or the engineer. For such or such special knowledge I apply to such or such a savant. But I allow neither the bootmaker nor the architect nor the savant to impose his authority upon me. I listen to them freely and with all the respect merited by their intelligence, their character, their knowledge, reserving always my incontestable right of criticism and censure. I do not content myself with consulting a single authority in any special branch; I consult several; I compare their opinions, and choose that which seems to me the soundest.[40]

For anarchists like Bakunin, deferring to an open authority is a matter of freely choosing to accept its judgments or comply with its directives precisely *because* one recognises that there are good reasons to do so. Again, the fact that such reasons exist entails nothing more than that the authority in question is worthy of deference, and reasonable people are obliged to

[39] Emma Goldman, 'Free Speech Suppressed in Barre, Vt.,' *Free Society* (March 5, 1899), 3.

[40] Mikhail Bakunin, 'God and the State' [1871], in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, 229–230; cf. Errico Malatesta, *Anarchy* [1891], ed. V. Richards (London: Freedom Press, 1974), 37; Uri Gordon, 'Power and Anarchy', in Nathan Jun and Shane Wahl (Eds), *New Perspectives on Anarchism* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009), 45.

exhibit such deference only insofar as they are obliged to act in accordance with reason more generally. As Bakunin says:

> If I bow before the authority of the specialists and avow my readiness to follow, to a certain extent and as long as may seem to me necessary, their indications and even their directions, it is because their authority is imposed on me by no one, neither by men nor by God… I bow before the authority of special men because it is imposed on me by my own reason. I am conscious of my own inability to grasp, in all its detail, and positive development, any very large portion of human knowledge. The greatest intelligence would not be equal to a comprehension of the whole. Thence results, for science as well as for industry, the necessity of the division and association of labour. I receive and I give—such is human life. Each directs and is directed in his turn.

The notion that otherwise reasonable people are categorically obliged to obey authorities or that authorities have a right to compel their obedience assumes that the authorities in question are 'infallible … fixed and constant'.[41] This assumption is not only false, Bakunin writes, but also 'fatal to my reason, to my liberty, and even to the success of my undertakings … transform[ing] me into a stupid slave, an instrument of the will and interests of others'.[42]

To reject this assumption, as anarchists do, is perforce to reject 'all legislation, all authority, and all privileged, licensed, official, and legal influence, even if it arises from universal suffrage'.[43] This, in turn, implies that there is no such thing as a

[41] Bakunin, 'God and the State', 230.

[42] Ibid., 229.

[43] Ibid., 230.