

# **From the Ashes of the Old**

**Anarchism Reborn in a Counterrevolutionary Age (1970s-1990s)**

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## Abstract

After almost a century of Marxist predominance, how did anarchism develop from a marginal phenomenon into a force at the centre of the anti-globalisation movement? This article explores how anarchism was reborn in a counterrevolutionary age. Part one investigates how the New Right's post-1960s counterrevolution defeated the New Left and remade US society, including by recuperating potentially liberatory elements of social movements. Part two examines how a new generation of radicals critiqued the failures of Marxism-Leninism and popularised the anarchist analysis and principles that provided the foundation for the anti-globalisation movement. The article discusses five examples of the development of anarchist theory and practice: Black/New Afrikan Anarchism, anarcho-feminism, eco-anarchism, punk anarchism, and revolutionary social anarchism. Ultimately, the article argues that anarchism was revitalised in the late twentieth century because it provided compelling answers to the new problems posed by the neoliberal counterrevolution and the crisis of state socialism.

Keywords: *Anarchism, counterrevolution, Marxism, neoliberalism*

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Anarchism exploded into public view in the 1999 Battle of Seattle. While the media focused on the spectacle of the black bloc smashing windows, they largely overlooked the role of anarchism behind the scenes where activists organised themselves in affinity groups and made decisions by consensus. Although self-identified anarchists remained a minority within it, the anti-globalisation movement became known for its embrace of 'common sense' anarchist values and practices.<sup>1</sup> Large segments of the movement operated along anarchist principles: decentralisation, horizontal organisational structures, militant street demonstrations, rejection of the state and capitalism, and advocacy of both individual freedom and worker control of production. After almost a century of Marxist predominance, how did anarchism develop from a marginal phenomenon into a force at the centre of the anti-globalisation movement?

This article explores the subterranean development of American anarchism in the late twentieth century. As a reactionary counterrevolution remade society, the New Left was decimated by violent repression, and the Soviet Union collapsed, many on the radical left re-evaluated the politics of the 1960s-1970s. A new generation of radicals – together with many '60s veterans – critiqued the failures of Marxism-Leninism and grappled with fundamental changes in social, political, and economic life. As the ruling class embraced neoliberalism and repressive law and order politics, much of the left turned away from both party building and an orientation towards capturing state power. Their analysis of social changes and the failures of state socialism led many militants to reject the state, and the late twentieth century was marked by a spread of anarchist politics throughout the radical left.

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the anti-globalisation movement and anarchism see Notes From Nowhere, *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anti-Capitalism* (London; New York: Verso, 2003), David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh; Oakland: AK Press, 2009), and Eddie Yuen, George Katsiaficas, and Daniel Burton Rose (eds.), *The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization* (Brooklyn: Soft Skull Press, 2001).

Part one of this article analyses the right-wing counterrevolution that defeated the radical currents of the 'long 1960s'. Drawing on Corey Robin and Paulo Virno's theories of conservatism and counterrevolution, I argue that we cannot see the New Right counterrevolution as a simple return to the past, but rather as the creation of a new social order that recuperated warped elements of the radicalism to which it reacted. In the United States, this took the form of neoliberal economics, masculine individualism articulated alongside a moral defence of the nuclear family, recuperation of elements of the feminist and civil rights movements, and a repressive law and order politics that embraced mass incarceration as a 'fix' for both the radical left and the economic crisis.

In part two, I explore the evolution of the radical left in this period in order to understand the growing shift from Marxist to anarchist common sense. After analysing the defeat of the Marxist-Leninist and national liberation movements of the long 1960s, I discuss five examples of the revitalisation of anarchism and its underground development in a variety of movement spaces: the birth of Black/ New Afrikan Anarchism from imprisoned ex-Black Panthers; the rise of anarchy-feminism in the women's liberation movement; the growth of eco-anarchism; the role of punk in popularising anarchism; and the foundation of nation-wide revolutionary social anarchist organisations like Love and Rage. Through these five cases – each of which warrants an extended treatment beyond this article's scope – I analyse a shift in the radical left towards an anarchistic politics which decentres and disavows the state in favour of grassroots dual power, direct self-determination, mutual aid, and non-hierarchical organisation. This reorientation can only be understood by situating it in the context of the broad historical transformations of the post-1960s counterrevolution. I ultimately argue that anarchism was revitalised in the late twentieth century because it provided compelling, non-state-oriented answers to the new problems posed by the counterrevolution and the crisis of state socialism.

## Part One: Post-1960s Counterrevolution

It is telling that Ronald Reagan's presidency (1981–89) is often referred to as the 'Reagan Revolution'. This phrase recognises that the reaction to the radical fervour of the long 1960s did not simply return the United States to a pre-'60s past; rather, it fundamentally reshaped society. As historian of the New Right Lisa McGirr argues, the movement was not merely conservative or reactionary but was rather 'a strange mixture of traditionalism and modernity' and 'both a reactive and a proactive force'.<sup>2</sup> Yet McGirr is perhaps not quite bold enough in her analysis. The ascendancy of the New Right and its transformation of US society are better understood as a *counterrevolution* in response to the *potential* revolution of the long 1960s. Beginning with Nixon's election in 1968 and peaking during the Reagan years, the counterrevolution violently destroyed the organised left and incorporated perverted versions of some its demands into the forging of the new society.

My analysis of counterrevolution draws on two main theoretical frameworks. First, political theorist Corey Robin argues that conservative ideology is not truly opposed to change but in fact always calls for far-reaching transformations of society in response to radical movements. Robin analyses this tendency throughout American history and concludes that:

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<sup>2</sup> Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p8, 19.

in the face of a revolutionary challenge, American counterrevolutionaries don't move from left to right. They move from right to left. Though opposed to the project of political egalitarianism, of using state power to create a more just society, they advance their opposition through the tropes of liberal democracy. *They adopt and adapt its culture and discourse, wielding the language of rights and reform for the sake of regress and reaction.*<sup>3</sup> [Emphasis added]

This is a useful starting point to understand the post-1960s counterrevolution in the United States. The right seized power and cloaked its neoliberal counterrevolution in the framework of liberal democracy, freedom, and equality. We can go a step further with the help of the Italian Autonomist Marxist Paulo Virno, who argues that counterrevolution is not only the creation of something new, but that it is itself indelibly shaped by the contours of the revolutionary movement which it opposes. In his words: 'Counterrevolution is literally *revolution in reverse*. [...] It actively makes its own "new order", forging new mentalities, cultural habits, tastes, and customs' and crucially, 'it occupies and colonizes the territory of the adversary; it gives different responses to the *same* questions'.<sup>4</sup> Virno goes on to argue that 'the counterrevolution inverts the very mass practices that seemed to refer to the withering of State power and the immanence of radical self-government [...] This is why a critical historiography [...] must try to recognize, in every step and every aspect of the counterrevolution, the silhouette, the contents, and the qualities of a potential revolution'.<sup>5</sup> In order to understand the revitalisation of anarchism in this era, it is thus useful to identify the main contours of the state's transformation of progressive goals into counterrevolutionary politics.

Each salient aspect of the US counterrevolution began in some way as a perverted shadow of the radicalism of the long 1960s. Although much of the counterrevolution can be located in specific changes to the state and capitalism, it infused every aspect of society and reshaped everything from the organisation of factory work to individual subjectivity. It included a violent suppression of the left and national liberation movements, but it was also located in neoliberal economics, championed masculine individualism in the context of the nuclear family, recuperated aspects of the civil rights movement, and constructed a massive prison system that Ruth Wilson Gilmore calls the 'golden gulag'.<sup>6</sup> To be clear, much of what I describe as 'counterrevolution' fits into our general understanding of neoliberalism, which was hardly limited to the United States. But this is exactly the point: neoliberalism was a global counterrevolution against the revolutionary possibilities of the 1960s. Neoliberalism was always *both* an attempted restoration of an imagined age of *laissez-faire* capitalism *and* the creation of a new society marked by a co-articulation of free market fundamentalism and massive state violence in the name of law and order.

The neoliberal economics of the counterrevolution perverted the liberatory impulses of the left wing of the labour movement. Across the United States, much of the radicalism of the 1960s

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<sup>3</sup> Corey Robin, 'You Say You Want a Counterrevolution', in Greg Grandin and Gilbert M. Joseph (eds.), *A Century of Revolution: Insurgent and Counterinsurgent Violence During Latin America's Long Cold War* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), p377.

<sup>4</sup> Paolo Virno, 'Do You Remember Counterrevolution?' in Paolo Virno and Michael Hardt (eds.), *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), p241.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p241-242.

<sup>6</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

was driven by workers who attempted to exercise control over their working conditions. They protested the impersonal mass work of the Fordist factory system and disrupted the inhuman rhythms of the assembly line. Dissident workers fought for dignity and democratic control over the workplace. This worker resistance was intimately tied to racial justice struggle as unions provided material support for the movement and Black workers advocated for civil and economic rights at work.<sup>7</sup> The counterrevolution outflanked the workers' demands from the right. Capital was all too willing to dismantle the Fordist factory, for it was able to realise greater profits through outsourcing and changes in production. Crucially, the character of production itself was reshaped to incorporate distorted versions of workers' demands. Black workers achieved formal legal equality in the workplace while being locked out from the possibility of real power. Production was decentralised and shifted towards smaller 'team' based work while retaining its overall hierarchical and anti-democratic character.<sup>8</sup> Above all, the power of organised labour was decimated. Reagan's infamous breaking of the air traffic control strike in 1981 was symptomatic of a broader shift in power relations. These economic changes and the historic defeat of organised labour provided the bedrock for the broader counterrevolution.

The social core of the counterrevolution was the reassertion of a neoliberal masculine individualism coupled with a moral defence of the 'traditional' nuclear family as the bulwark against the evils of communism, feminism, and sexual liberation. This, too, recuperated elements of '60s radicalism. Individual rebellion against the alienation of post-war mass consumerism was widespread as students and workers alike rejected their social roles. The popularisation of the early 'humanist' Marx by Herbert Marcuse and others helped to explain the depths of alienation under capitalism, while anarchists like Paul Goodman explored the problem of 'growing up absurd' in post-war society.<sup>9</sup> Sixties radicals, especially in the 'anarchistic' counterculture, fought to reclaim their individual humanity from capitalist labour, state bureaucracy, and the stifling containment of the nuclear family.<sup>10</sup> But the counterrevolution took up and twisted the radical individualism of the long '60s and re-inscribed the reactionary role of the family. Individual rebellion was first subsumed into the narcissistic 'me decade' of the 1970s and then the neoliberal '*homo economicus*' of the 1980s.<sup>11</sup> This rugged individualism was coded as intrinsically masculine and held up against the feminised and racialised figure of the recipient of welfare and other social programmes (the infamous 'welfare queen' who refused to provide for herself).<sup>12</sup> Individual rights – coded as white

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<sup>7</sup> See Nelson Lichtenstein and Robert Korstad, 'Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement', *Journal of American History*, 75, 3 (1988): 786–811, and Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (New York: R. Sage & Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006). See also Jefferson Cowie's excellent book on the labour movement and working-class experience in these years, *Stayin' Alive: The 1970s and the Last Days of the Working Class* (New York: New Press, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> See Paulo Virno's excellent analysis of this process in the aforementioned 'Do You Remember Counterrevolution?' (1996). See also Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's analysis of these economic changes in *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000) as well as David Harvey's *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> See Richard King, *The Party of Eros: Radical Social Thought and the Realm of Freedom* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

<sup>10</sup> See Theodore Roszak, *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society & Its Youthful Opposition* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books [Doubleday], 1969).

<sup>11</sup> See Bruce Schulman's *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> For an incisive feminist analysis of this process, see Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics: From Welfare Reform to Foreclosure to Trump* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2017).

and male – were promoted at the same time as social and economic rights were rejected. This was also inseparably connected to the veneration of the nuclear family in a masculine ideology of ‘breadwinner conservatism’ (in which the husband/father could provide for his family through hard work), which was seen as a bulwark against the supposed feminist assault on Christian morality.<sup>13</sup> The perversion of individual liberation and re-inscription of the nuclear family were key to the social transformation of the counterrevolution.

The liberal wing of the feminist movement was also largely co-opted and defeated by neoliberalism. Although liberal feminists managed to win smallscale battles, they lost the broader war. Even before Reagan, the radical wing of the feminist movement had given way to more apolitical cultural feminism that rejected revolutionary, Marxist-influenced radical feminism in favour of separatist cultural institutions.<sup>14</sup> The defeat of the Equal Rights Amendment in 1982 both reflected and presaged the broader movement defeat. Mainstream feminists in groups like the National Organization for Women and the National Women’s Political Caucus professionalised and institutionalised their organisations as they integrated into the reformist world of the Democratic Party. Responding to new social and political constraints, these largely middle-class white liberal feminists attempted to advance women’s interests – whether through non-profits or working within Fortune 500 companies to craft policies against sexual harassment – without challenging the overall capitalist patriarchal structure.<sup>15</sup> As feminist historian Laura Briggs describes, the transformative vision of the women’s liberation movement was lost and the neoliberal ‘time/wages/ reproductive labor crisis’ that came out of the 1980s ‘represent[ed] the defeat of a particular vision of feminist and racial justice politics’.<sup>16</sup> Mainstream feminists fought a series of rearguard battles to mitigate the worst effects of this transformation, but they largely accepted the framing constraints of the era and abandoned hope of radical transformation.

The counterrevolution’s flexibility is highlighted in its response to the civil rights and national liberation movements. Legal civil rights were relatively easily recuperated. While they presented a fundamental challenge to the apartheid of the South, civil rights did not necessarily challenge the functioning of racial capitalism itself. Indeed, even by the 1950s it was growing clear that legal inequality presented barriers to both the smooth functioning of capitalism and the global anti-communist crusade of the United States.<sup>17</sup> While dismantling the formal apartheid system of Jim Crow was a major victory, white supremacy was preserved in the counterrevolution. Nixon’s embrace of ‘Black capitalism’ as a response to Black Power was a cunning redirection of the impulse of Black self-determination which provided cover for the dismantling of welfare and other social programmes.<sup>18</sup> Formal legal equality was granted in the workplace while challenges

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<sup>13</sup> See Robert Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2012). For an analysis of the constructed ideological character of the supposedly ‘traditional’ post-war nuclear family, see Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2008).

<sup>14</sup> See Alice Echols, *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America 1967–1975, Thirtieth Anniversary Edition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

<sup>15</sup> See Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017) and Bradford Martin, *The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2011).

<sup>16</sup> Laura Briggs, *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics* (2017), p11.

<sup>17</sup> See Mary Dudziak *Cold War Civil Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) and Thomas Borstelmann *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> See Bruce Schulman’s *The Seventies: The Great Shift in American Culture, Society, and Politics* (New York: Free Press, 2001).

to the actual power dynamics between boss and workers were repressed.<sup>19</sup> In this way, the state was able to recuperate a less radical wing of the civil rights movement and separate it from the more radical wing fighting for national liberation, which it set out to destroy completely. Thus, the state was able to take up certain elements of the racial justice movements of the long 1960s, defang and incorporate them under the guise of formal legal equality and individual rights, and pivot to repress and destroy the most dangerous challenges. To re-emphasise Corey Robin's point: counterrevolution 'wield[s] the language of rights and reform for the sake of regress and reaction'.<sup>20</sup>

While in some areas the counterrevolution perverted liberatory demands, it complemented limited recuperation with a renewed politics of law and order that made the United States into the world's leading prison society. The enormous growth of prisons beginning in the late 1970s was both a direct response to the radicalism of the long '60s as well as a broader 'fix' for a political-economic crisis. As Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues, it is a mistake to view the prison as a marginal, 'edge' space; in fact, she says, the "prison" is actually in the middle of the muddle' of contemporary society.<sup>21</sup> The state expanded the prison system to solve three historic 'problems'. First, the growth in prisons was central to the state's crackdown on the movements of the long 1960s. As more sectors of the left embraced guerrilla tactics in the 1970s, imprisoning radicals became a pressing priority. Second, the transformation of the prison came in response to the increasing radicalism of prisoners themselves, particularly Black Nationalists and other revolutionaries. The growth in prisons was accompanied by their limited reform and internal reworking to isolate and neutralise Black radicals.<sup>22</sup> Finally, prisons were used to address a crisis of capitalism. Prison was considered the best option to absorb a surplus of 'people, land, capital, and state capacity' that had been created by the post-1960s political-economic crisis.<sup>23</sup> A massive expansion of the prison system provided a profitable return on capital investment while simultaneously dealing with an increasingly desperate unemployed population resulting from neoliberalism's offshoring of jobs.<sup>24</sup> To emphasise the point: the growth of the prison state was a central element of the counterrevolution, for it both contained the left *and* provided a solution to the capitalist crisis of the 1970s-1980s.<sup>25</sup>

In short, the New Right's neoliberal counterrevolution dramatically reshaped American society. Neoliberal economics remade the system of production and decimated the labour movement, in part by recuperating struggles against the Fordist factory. Reactionary masculine individualism was re-inscribed as the welfare system was attacked and the liberal wing of the women's movement was absorbed into the capitalist system. Formal legal equality was granted to Black people while the radical wings of the civil rights and national liberation movements were violently repressed. Finally, the expansion of the prison system served both to contain the radical

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<sup>19</sup> Nancy MacLean, *Freedom is Not Enough: The Opening of the American Workplace* (2008).

<sup>20</sup> Corey Robin, 'You Say You Want a Counterrevolution', p377.

<sup>21</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), pp10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

<sup>23</sup> Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag*, p26-27.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> The US state has of course long relied on a racist prison system to repress Black people, but the neoliberal counterrevolution greatly expanded this system and employed it as a central response to the broader social and economic crisis. See also Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003).



left and to address an economic crisis. This counterrevolution set the stage upon which much of the radical left moved towards anarchism in the late twentieth century.

## Part Two: From Marxism-Leninism to Anarchism

The shifting terrain of late twentieth century society produced a crisis for the left that destabilised Marxism-Leninism and gave rise to an anti-state socialist politics. Crisis came in two primary forms. First, the state launched an all-out assault on radical organisations and revolutionary fighters. From FBI infiltration and disruption to long term imprisonment and even outright assassination, the state reacted violently to the threat that it perceived from revolutionary forces. By the late 1970s, the state had essentially defeated the revolutionary wing of the New Left, from the Black Panthers to the Weather Underground. Alongside this frontal assault, the changing nature of capitalist production and state power destabilised the analysis and programme of the Marxist-Leninist left. Offshoring production to the global south decimated the industrial working-class base of the Old Left while repression disoriented the national liberation movements that had provided the locus of struggle for anti-imperialists in the long 1960s. Traditional approaches to organising factory workers under the direction of a communist party no longer appeared viable to many militants. Further, capturing the state no longer appeared to be a sufficient condition for building socialism – and was increasingly seen as undesirable in the first place, echoing the critique of the state formulated by earlier generations of anarchists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> The decline and fall of the Soviet Union, the capitalist turn of post-Maoist China, the ‘betrayal’ of the French Socialist President François Mitterrand’s 1983 ‘turn to austerity’, the electoral defeat of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua in 1990, and the failure of national liberation movements to build socialism in the decolonising world all contributed to a global re-evaluation of the state-centric mode of politics.

A new generation of radicals critiqued the failures of Marxism-Leninism and turned towards anarchism. Marxism-Leninism certainly did not disappear, but anarchism grew more quickly and recaptured the imagination of the radical left and broader social movements. This was driven both by the neoliberal counterrevolution’s decimation of the Marxist left and the development of new theory and practice in the anarchist movement. As Andrew Cornell shows in his history of US anarchism, anarchists had begun to rethink and rework classical anarchist politics in the mid-twentieth century, but they were a small and decidedly marginal part of the broader left.<sup>27</sup> Yet as the Marxist historian Max Elbaum argues in his groundbreaking history of the post-’60s New Communist Movement, by the end of the twentieth century anarchism had eclipsed Marxism-Leninism’s influence in popular movements.<sup>28</sup> After decades of subterranean development, the turn-of-the-century global justice/anti-globalisation movement marked the renaissance of anarchist politics. Beyond the formal anarchist ideologies and organisations that I discuss below, an anarchist ethos had spread across the radical left. As David Graeber put it in 2010, ‘for ac-

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<sup>26</sup> For an excellent analysis of how the shifting economic and political world of neoliberalism led to a sea change in left organising away from state-oriented vanguard parties towards horizontalist and territory based struggles, see Raúl Zibechi, *Territories in Resistance: A Cartography of Latin American Social Movements* (Oakland: AK Press, 2012). For a classic anarchist critique of the state see Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State* (New York: Dover, 1970).

<sup>27</sup> See Andy Cornell, *Unruly Equality: U.S. Anarchism in the Twentieth Century* (Oakland: UC Press, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals turn to Lenin, Mao and Che* (London; New York: Verso, 2006), p111.

tivists, “anarchist process” has become synonymous with the basic principles of how one facilitates a meeting or organises street actions’.<sup>29</sup> This anarchist process includes consensus-based decision making, organising in horizontal and non-hierarchical fashions, coalescing in networks and bottom-up federations rather than democratic centralist parties, and a commitment to direct action in many forms.<sup>30</sup> How did the anarchist movement grow from a marginal force to a leading element of radical ‘common sense’ in social movements at the turn of the century?

The late twentieth century was a time of re-evaluation of radical praxis and of the production of new theory to analyse the changing nature of capitalism and the state. I end this article by analysing five political tendencies that helped revitalise anarchism and that exemplify the general turn towards anarchism within various segments of the radical left. First, I discuss the theorisation of Black/New Afrikan Anarchism by several ex-Black Panther political prisoners who synthesised anarchism and Black Nationalism.<sup>31</sup> Second, anarcho-feminism gained traction within the women’s liberation movement in the 1970s as their critique widened to encompass an analysis of the state as an inherently patriarchal structure that must be dismantled rather than captured. Third, ecological anarchism emerged at the heart of the radical environmental movement, where it was much more influential than was Marxism. Fourth, anarchism was incubated and further developed within punk subculture, itself a reaction to the changing social conditions of the post-’60s counterrevolution. Finally, I address the rise of continental social anarchist federations, primarily Love and Rage, which operated at a scale unseen since the early twentieth century.

I conclude by reflecting on how counterrevolution provided the conditions for a resurgence of anarchist politics. Some Marxist-Leninists like Jodi Dean dismiss the resurgence of anarchism as little more than a mirror image of neoliberalism for discontented young people. Referring to Occupy Wall Street, she makes a general claim that ‘anarchist emphases on individual autonomy appealed to people who had grown up under neoliberalism, who had been taught to celebrate their own uniqueness’.<sup>32</sup> I argue that this critique does not adequately explain anarchism’s growth and continued appeal on the revolutionary left. Rather, anarchism was reborn because it provided compelling answers to the new problems posed by the counterrevolution and the crisis of state socialism in a way that Marxism-Leninism could not. Late twentieth century anarchists laid the foundation for the renaissance of anarchism in the anti-globalisation movement.

## 1. Black/New Afrikan Anarchism

Black/New Afrikan Anarchism was born at the heart of the counterrevolution: the prison system. As previously discussed, the burgeoning prison system was central to the right-wing counterrevolution. Imprisoning numerous revolutionaries helped to tear apart radical organisations, while more broadly the birth of mass incarceration emerged as a solution to capitalist crisis. But prisons were also central to the Black radical tradition. As Dan Berger argues in *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (2014), the prison was a crucial site

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<sup>29</sup> David Graeber, ‘The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America, 1957–2007’, *Historia Actual Online*, 21 (2010): 123.

<sup>30</sup> See also David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009).

<sup>31</sup> A note on terminology: the terms ‘Black Anarchism’ and ‘New Afrikan Anarchism’ are contested within this tradition. Some self-identify as one or the other, while others reject these labels entirely. Keeping these disagreements in mind, I still believe it helpful to identify this as a distinct ideological tendency that is distinguished from much of the largely white anarchist movement and have chosen to refer to it as ‘Black/New Afrikan Anarchism’.

<sup>32</sup> Jodi Dean, ‘Occupy Wall Street: after the anarchist moment’, *Socialist Register* 49 (2013): 55.

of the development of Black movement politics, stretching from the reconceptualisation of the Southern prison as a movement space in the 1950s civil rights campaigns to Black Nationalist organising in the 1970s.<sup>33</sup> Berger provides a gripping account of the rise and fall of Black prison politics encompassing a range of ideological tendencies. Yet in a puzzling omission, he never mentions the development of Black/New Afrikan Anarchism within prisons, even though he often references and quotes Ashanti Alston, who is one of the best-known Black Anarchists. Ex-Black Panthers including Alston, Kuwasi Balagoon, and Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin theorised Black/New Afrikan Anarchism as a new political ideology for revolutionary Black struggle in the late twentieth century.

Black/New Afrikan Anarchists criticised what they perceived to be shortcomings of the Black Panthers, synthesised anarchism with Black Nationalism, and theorised the Black Commune as the revolutionary form of Black selfdetermination. While they lauded the Panthers as the leading organisation of the long 1960s, they criticised the party's authoritarianism and hierarchical and patriarchal tendencies. Their disillusionment with the Black Panthers led to a wider critique of the Marxist-Leninist approach to Black Nationalism that informed their turn towards anarchism.<sup>34</sup> The Black/New Afrikan Anarchist synthesis of Black Nationalism and anarchism upheld an anti-state nationalism. They contend that Black Americans are an oppressed nation, but that national liberation can and must take place without establishing a new nationstate. Ashanti Alston argues that revolutionaries must go 'beyond nationalism, but not without it'. As he remarks, revolutionary Black Nationalists in the Panthers had perhaps the most advanced politics of the era. However, Alston emphasises that we must learn from their mistakes and articulate national selfdetermination in a non-hierarchical manner so that it does not get captured in the state.<sup>35</sup> In *Anarchism and the Black Revolution*, first written from prison in 1979 as a series of pamphlets, Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin lays out a programme for a 'Black Commune' consisting of local community control coordinated through federations of nested communes (the classic anarchist 'commune of communes' with a focus on Black Liberation).<sup>36</sup> After his release from prison, Ervin promoted a new edition of the book on a 1993 speaking tour coordinated by the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, which also featured excerpts of the book in its newspaper.<sup>37</sup> Although he soon broke from Love and Rage, Ervin remained active in the anarchist movement and his work provided a major foundation for the Anarchist People of Color organisation and tendency.<sup>38</sup> It is striking that each of the leading theorists of Black Anarchism were ex-Black Panthers who critiqued the hierarchies of Black Nationalist and Marxist-Leninist parties from

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<sup>33</sup> Dan Berger, *Captive Nation*.

<sup>34</sup> For a representative case, see Kuwasi Balagoon, *A Soldier's Story: Writings by a Revolutionary New Afrikan Anarchist* (Oakland: Kersplebedeb and PM Press, 2019). Balagoon was perhaps the most influential New Afrikan Anarchist, though he died in prison from AIDS-related illness in 1986.

<sup>35</sup> Ashanti Alston, 'Beyond Nationalism, But Not Without It', *Anarchist Panther*, 1, 1 (1999).

<sup>36</sup> See Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin, *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2021).

<sup>37</sup> Ervin's relationship with Love and Rage ended acrimoniously soon after this tour; see Ervin's 'Proposal for a New Love and Rage Initiative on Race and Color', in *Disco Bull: The Discussion Bulletin of Love and Rage* (1994), pp3-6 and his later reflections in 'The Progressive Plantation: Racism Inside White Radical Social Change Groups' (2011), retrieved from <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/lorenzo-kom-boa-erwin-the-progressive-plantation-racism-inside-white-radical-social-change-groups>.

<sup>38</sup> See Ernesto Aguilar's discussion of Anarchist People of Color, including the importance of Ervin's work, in his interview with *The Female Species*, 'Interview with Ernesto Aguilar of the Anarchist People of Color (APOC)', *Colours of Resistance* (June 2003). Ervin's influence has also recently been recognised with a new edition of *Anarchism and the Black Revolution* (London: Pluto Press, 2021).

within prison walls. Black/New Afrikan Anarchism arose as a product of the counterrevolution and the struggle against it. Although they were quite marginal within Black social movements in the late twentieth century, Black/New Afrikan Anarchist theorists in this era laid some of the groundwork (alongside larger tendencies like Black Feminism and Black Marxism) for the recent popularisation of Black Anarchism and abolitionism.<sup>39</sup>

## 2. Anarcha-Feminism

Although anarchists have long fought against all forms of oppression and hierarchy, anarcha-feminism as such was first developed as an explicit political tendency within the women's liberation movement of the 1970s.<sup>40</sup> Anarchists within the movement expanded the critiques of patriarchy advanced by both liberal feminists like Betty Friedan as well as radical feminists like Shulamith Firestone into a sweeping rejection of all forms of hierarchy and oppression. In addition to critiquing overt male dominance, they argued that capitalism and the state were both inherently hierarchical and patriarchal systems. Women's liberation, it followed, necessitated their destruction. Beyond self-identified anarchists, the women's liberation movement more broadly practiced what Helen Ellenbogen called an 'intuitive anarchism'.<sup>41</sup> Feminists were suspicious of received social tradition, wary of centralised political power, and opposed to all forms of oppression and hierarchy. In practice, the movement was decentralised, non-hierarchical, and primarily operated through consensus-based decision making. As Lynne Farrow wrote in the feminist magazine *Aurora* in 1974, 'feminism practices what anarchism preaches'.<sup>42</sup>

The anarchist wing of the women's liberation movement operated predominantly through decentralised small groups like the Ithaca Tiamat Collective. Tiamat (1975–78) functioned as both a consciousness-raising group and an outward-facing political organisation. They put out an issue of the national newsletter called *Anarcha-Feminist Notes* and organised an anarcha-feminist conference in 1978 in Ithaca, NY. This conference brought together anarcha-feminist collectives from across the country to develop their theory and practice, form personal relationships, and coordinate the movement. Although the conference was criticised by some women for its predominantly white and middle-class attendance, it was an important milestone for the anarcha-feminist movement.<sup>43</sup> Looking back, however, it marked the beginning of the end of anarcha-feminism within the broader women's liberation movement. The counterrevolutionary backlash that would usher in Reagan's attack on women was beginning, and the feminist movement faced a historic defeat that transformed the character of both feminism and the left.

Anarchists fought to keep feminism alive in a counterrevolutionary era. Unlike liberal feminists who began to professionalise their activism, anarchafeminists continued to operate within

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<sup>39</sup> See in particular William C. Anderson, *The Nation on No Map: Black Anarchism and Abolition* (Chico: AK Press, 2021).

<sup>40</sup> See Julia Tanenbaum 'To Destroy Domination in All Forms: Anarcha-Feminist Theory, Organization, and Action, 1970–1978'. *Perspectives on Anarchist Theory* 29 (2016): 13–32.

<sup>41</sup> Helen Ellenbogen, 'Feminism: The Anarchist Impulse Comes Alive', p6. In *Emma's Daughters* (Unpublished, 1977), *Anarchy Archives*, cited in Julia Tanenbaum, 'To Destroy Domination In All Forms'.

<sup>42</sup> Lynne Farrow, 'Feminism as Anarchism,' *Aurora* (1974). See also Cathy Levine's articulation of the anarchist nature of feminist practice in 'The Tyranny of Tyranny', (1974), which was framed as a critique of Jo Freeman's influential essay 'The Tyranny of Structurelessness' (1971). Each of these classic essays can be found in Dark Star's *Quiet Rumours: An Anarcha-Feminist Reader, Third Edition* (Oakland: AK Press/Dark Star, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> See Julia Tanenbaum's discussion of Tiamat and the anarcha-feminist conference in 'To Destroy Domination in All Forms'.

radical movements. At the end of the 1970s, many anarcho-feminists joined the anti-nuclear and other ecological movements, notably participating in the Clamshell Alliance, which opposed the construction of a nuclear power plant in New Hampshire and helped spark the anti-nuclear movement. Together with anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin, anarcho-feminists spread the decentralised, consensus-based affinity group structures that defined this movement (although Bookchin was very critical of consensus politics).<sup>44</sup> More broadly, anarcho-feminists participated in the diverse leftist struggles of the 1980s, including Central America solidarity work and the reproductive freedom movement. They continued to work in and volunteer at women's health clinics, domestic violence shelters, and other women's infrastructure. They formed the cutting edge of the non-violent, revolutionary direct action movement and helped shape the character of oppositional social movements after the defeat of the New Left.<sup>45</sup> Scholars and activists alike have argued that (anarcho-)feminist practice provided much of the basis for the development of anarchist praxis in the late twentieth century, from affinity group organisation to consensus-based decision making.<sup>46</sup> Anarcho-feminists' theoretical and practical innovations transformed the character of the anarchist movement. They also popularised anarchist analysis and practices within broader 'new social movements' that were increasingly receptive to anarcho-feminist analysis of domination and hierarchy in the 1980s-1990s.

### 3. Eco-Anarchism

The core of the radical environmental movement that developed in the 1960s-1990s largely embraced anarchist thought and practice. Radical environmentalists criticised Marxists for their support of rampant industrialisation and their propensity to delay environmental action until 'after the revolution'. Eco-anarchists like prominent Earth First!er Judi Bari argued that the environmentally destructive practices of socialist countries reflected both a failure of Marxism and the fact that all states privilege economic growth and stability above the health of the environment.<sup>47</sup> The theorisation of eco-anarchism was a central component of the broader attempt to revise anarchist politics for the new era. Anarchism's ecological focus also expanded its appeal to a new generation of environmental activists who saw the pressing need for radical change. As Marxists downplayed the importance of environmental struggle and even championed the industrial policy of socialist states, anarchists began to fight back against the catastrophic damage being done to the earth.

A variety of anarchist positions competed for leadership of the radical environmental movement. Beginning in the 1960s, Murray Bookchin theorised 'social ecology' as a synthesis of social anarchism with ecological thought and advocated for decentralised political action to build an ecological society.<sup>48</sup> Opposed to Bookchin's social ecology was an ecologically-motivated 'anar-

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<sup>44</sup> Julia Tanenbaum, 'To Destroy Domination in All Forms'.

<sup>45</sup> See Barbara Epstein's *Political Protest & Cultural Revolution: Nonviolent Direct Action in the 1970s and 1980s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

<sup>46</sup> See Julia Tanenbaum 'To Destroy Domination in All Forms' (2016) and David Graeber, 'The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America, 1957-2007' (2010).

<sup>47</sup> See Judi Bari's influential essay 'Revolutionary Ecology: Biocentrism & Deep Ecology' (1995), found at <http://www.judibari.org/revolutionary-ecology.html>. For a broad history of the radical environmental movement, see Keith Woodhouse, *The Ecocentrists: A History of Radical Environmentalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

<sup>48</sup> Murray Bookchin, *Our Synthetic Environment* (New York: Knopf, 1962) and *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy* (Palo Alto: Cheshire Books, 1982).

choprimitivism', centred around the *Fifth Estate* newspaper, which went beyond the New Left's anti-capitalism and anti-imperialism to critique industrial civilisation itself. Both tendencies were influential in the aforementioned anti-nuclear movement, as was anarcha-feminism. Later organisations like Earth First! and the Earth Liberation Front would take up aspects of the critique of industrial civilisation in their growing commitment to Deep Ecology.<sup>49</sup> Many anarchists also embraced veganism and animal liberation in this era, in part for environmental reasons, and went on to develop an intersectional vision of 'total liberation'.<sup>50</sup> The eco-anarchist tendency took centre stage in the 1990s in the actions of the Earth Liberation Front as well as the much-celebrated alliance of 'Teamsters and Turtles' (labour unions and environmentalists) in the 1999 Seattle demonstration against the World Trade Organization. Anarchism's ecological focus helps explain its increasing appeal in an era of growing environmental consciousness.

#### 4. Anarchism and Punk

Punk was a crucial conduit for the growth of anarchism in the counterrevolutionary period of the late 1970s-1990s. According to sociologist Dick Hebdige in his classic book on British subculture, punk was in many ways born out of the defeat of 1960s social movements and the ensuing counterrevolution.<sup>51</sup> The punk scene inculcated rebellion, alternative culture, and radical politics in a generation of disaffected young people. Of course, not all punk was anarchist – far from it. Its expression of anger and alienation attracted people of all kinds, including apolitical youth and Nazi skinheads. It must also be admitted that many anarcho-punks were more interested in anti-social posturing than they were in building a revolutionary movement. Yet anarchists worked within the subculture to spread a DIY anti-authoritarian ethos beyond the world of the organised radical left.

After the early stylistic rebellion of groups like the Sex Pistols, the scene developed in a more explicitly political direction in the 1980s. Bands like Crass, Nausea, and Reagan Youth featured anarchist lyrics, interspersed songs with political speeches, and distributed radical literature at shows. Punk's do-it-yourself ethos was also inherently anarchist. Unlike the mainstream music world, punk was self-organised and operated without corporate record labels. Bands recorded and distributed their own music, booked their own shows, and slept on living room floors at collective houses. At its best, punk functioned as what anarchist theorist Jesse Cohn calls an 'anarchist resistance culture' that '*prefigure[d]* a world of freedom and equality' in the face of 'a world from which [anarchists] are *fundamentally alienated*'.<sup>52</sup> But despite its liberatory potential, Afro-Punk founder James Spooner stresses that punk in the United States was 'very, very white';

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<sup>49</sup> See again Judi Bari, 'Revolutionary Ecology'.

<sup>50</sup> See Brian Dominick, 'Animal Liberation and Social Revolution: A Vegan Perspective on Anarchism or an Anarchist Perspective on Veganism' (a widely distributed pamphlet written in 1997, which can be found at <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/brian-a-dominick-animal-liberation-and-socialrevolution>). See also David Pellow, *Total Liberation: The Power and Promise of Animal Rights and the Radical Earth Movement* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014).

<sup>51</sup> See the classic book on punk's birth in Britain, Dick Hebdige's *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (London; New York: Routledge, 1979).

<sup>52</sup> Jesse Cohn, *Underground Passages: Anarchist Resistance Culture, 1848–2011*, (Oakland: AK Press), pp15-17 (emphasis in original).

exceptions like Bad Brains and Los Crudos only proved the rule.<sup>53</sup> This limited punk's capacity to anchor a broad-based revolutionary movement.

Against apolitical and reactionary currents, anarchists cultivated the radical form and content of the punk world. The Minneapolis-based zine *Profane Existence* was a key catalyst of a revitalisation of political punk that began in the late '80s and early '90s. The editorial collective explained in a piece called 'Anarchy, Punk, and Utopia', that 'we fully believe the punk ethic of Do-It-Yourself is a revolutionary ethic. If you want a free society, you have to DIY'. This means forming collectives 'that are voluntary, nonhierarchical, egalitarian, directly democratic, encourage the full participation of all collective members, and engage in acts of mutual aid with other revolutionary collectives'.<sup>54</sup> *Profane Existence* editor, Pissed drummer, and future Love and Rager Joel Olson encouraged punks to embrace revolutionary politics and build coalitions with oppressed peoples. Olson's 'A New Punk Manifesto', published in *Profane Existence* in 1992, was a seminal document in the development of anarchist punk politics. He describes how punk, which grew 'out of the waste heap of middle class values', has 'allowed us to survive the postindustrial world while at the same time salvaging some semblance of our independence, freedom, creativity, and human integrity'.<sup>55</sup> Punks prefigured a future non-commodified world by building radical networks, spreading oppositional culture, and popularising an anarchist do-it-yourself ethos. Punk and anarchism became even more intertwined through what Jim Donaghey terms the 'punk anarchisms' of Class War (in the UK) and CrimethInc. (in the US), which provided organisational form and propaganda for punk-inflected anarchism.<sup>56</sup> The development of anarchism within punk sub-culture had an important influence on the broader evolution of anarchism and the radical left, which continues today.<sup>57</sup>

## 5. Revolutionary Social Anarchism

Anarchists rebuilt a coordinated national movement in the depths of Reagan's presidency. The 1986 Chicago Anarchist Gathering, held to commemorate the centennial of the Chicago Haymarket Affair (in which several anarchists were framed and executed for throwing dynamite at a labour demonstration for the eight-hour work day, prompting global outrage), sparked a series of annual convergences in Minneapolis, Toronto, and San Francisco that popularised a new current of revolutionary social anarchism.<sup>58</sup> The gatherings culminated in 1989 in the foundation of a continental anarchist newspaper called *Love and Rage*. This developed into an informal network

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<sup>53</sup> James Spooner, foreword to Stephen Duncombe & Maxwell Tremblay (eds.), *White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race* (New York: Verso, 2011), ppxiixvii.

<sup>54</sup> Profane Existence Collective, 'Anarchy, Punk, and Utopia', *Profane Existence*, 19–20 (1993): 3.

<sup>55</sup> Joel Olson, 'A New Punk Manifesto', *Profane Existence*, 13 (1992): 6.

<sup>56</sup> Jim Donaghey, 'The "punk anarchisms" of Class War and CrimethInc.', *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 25, 2 (2020): 113–138.

<sup>57</sup> For an excellent account of the relationship between anarchism and punk, see CrimethInc. 'Music as a Weapon: The Contentious Symbiosis of Punk Rock and Anarchism,' *Rolling Thunder*, 7 (Spring 2009): 69–74. See also David Pearson, *Rebel Music in the Triumphant Empire: Punk Rock in the 1990s United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

<sup>58</sup> For the distinction between social anarchism vs lifestyle and individualist anarchism, see Murray Bookchin's classic polemic *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm* (San Francisco: AK Press, 1995). For an examination of these annual gatherings, see Lesley Wood, 'Anarchist Gatherings 1986–2017', *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 18, 4 (2019): 892–908. For a history of the Haymarket Affair see Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

which became a membershipbased federation in 1993. Love and Rage, which dissolved in 1998, had branches across the United States, Canada, and Mexico. It was the most significant revolutionary anarchist organisation of the late twentieth century and it indelibly shaped the trajectory of contemporary anarchism. It is interesting to note here that a sizeable contingent of Love and Rage members were veterans of the Revolutionary Socialist League, which turned from Trotskyism to anarchism in the 1980s.<sup>59</sup> This epitomised the ongoing shift from Marxism-Leninism to anarchism in this period.

Love and Rage sought to re-imagine revolutionary anarchism for the new era. The organisation's political statement, printed at the beginning of each newspaper, explains that 'we support the overthrow of all forms of authoritarian social relations and the creation of a society based on cooperation, solidarity and mutual aid'.<sup>60</sup> In this statement, they decry the authoritarianism and injustice of the state, capitalism, white supremacy, imperialism, and patriarchy. They also express support for the struggles of lesbians, bisexuals, gay people, and youth. Love and Rage was one of the few anarchist organisations to explicitly support national liberation struggles, which were often critiqued as hopelessly statist in major anarchist publications like *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed*. They built on the tradition of white anti-imperialism that came out of the sixties while reimagining it from an anarchist perspective. Although the organisation was overwhelmingly white, many members embraced race traitor politics – a revolutionary approach to race theorised by Noel Ignatiev and others that sought to undermine white privilege with the goal of abolishing whiteness as a social category.<sup>61</sup> They also foregrounded feminism, queer liberation, and anti-fascism. In their articulation of these struggles, Love and Rage formulated an intersectional anarchist communism. Yet despite their dedication to revolution, their vision of anarchism was not primarily oriented towards the working class. The neoliberal counterrevolution's decimation of the labour movement – and indeed its destruction of much of the industrial working class itself – led radicals to look elsewhere for a revolutionary base.

Anarchists in Love and Rage based their revolutionary strategy on building grassroots dual power. They rejected the anti-organisation individualism of leading anarchist publications like *Fifth Estate* and *Anarchy* and stressed the need to develop a coherent, disciplined strategy. In a 1998 article on the Mexican Zapatistas, federation co-founder Chris Day laid out a vision for building dual power in the United States. Although dual power is primarily associated with the Leninist tradition of the Russian Revolution – in which workers' soviets establish parallel power structures before seizing state power and establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat – Day re-imagines it through a Zapatista-tinted grassroots anarchism. Building anarchist dual power means establishing nonhierarchical institutions and organisations that combat and eventually supplant the state and capitalism.<sup>62</sup> It draws on the tradition of the Industrial Workers of the World's attempt to 'build the new world in the shell of the old': this nascent world would contest the hegemony of the state without attempting to conquer it. Love and Rage also drew heavily on the experience of the West German *Autonomen* and other anti-authoritarian Marxists in Western

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<sup>59</sup> See Wayne Price, 'From Shachtmanite Trotskyism to Anarchism', *The Utopian*, 15, 2 (2016).

<sup>60</sup> 'Love and Rage Political Statement', *Love and Rage*, 2, 4 (1991): 12.

<sup>61</sup> See Noel Ignatiev, *Treason to Whiteness is Loyalty to Humanity*, Geert Dhondt, Zhandarka Kurti, and Jarrod Shanahan (eds), (London; New York: Verso, 2022).

<sup>62</sup> Christopher Day, 'Dual Power in the Selva Lacandon' (1998), in Roy San Filippo (ed.), *A New World in our Hearts* (Oakland: AK Press, 2002), pp17-31.



Europe who built radical infrastructure like squats and infoshops rather than working within the declining labour movement.<sup>63</sup>

Love and Rage was part of a broader constellation of revolutionary social anarchists. Anti-Racist Action, which was associated with Love and Rage, developed an action-oriented anti-racist praxis that is the precursor to contemporary US antifascism.<sup>64</sup> The Black Autonomy Federation, heavily influenced by the previously discussed Black/New Afrikan Anarchism, was one of a growing number of anarchist organisations of colour in the 1990s which provided spaces for the development of an anarchist politics by and for people of colour who were alienated from mainstream white anarchism. Each organisation was also inspired by feminist theory that supported women's and queer liberation and critiqued male-dominated politics. Revolutionary social anarchism was central to the revitalisation of the left because it provided a meeting point for feminist, anti-racist, anti-state, and anticapitalist traditions which together produced a revolutionary intersectional politics for the late twentieth and twenty-first century.

## Conclusion

Why did anarchism grow in this era of counterrevolution? I conclude by emphasising the key developments that led to the rebirth of anarchism. First, violent repression destroyed both the Marxist-Leninist and national liberation movements, leaving room for anarchism to take root again in a way that it had not since the early twentieth century. Second, the state-oriented left was increasingly discredited on a global scale due to the failures of socialism in the USSR and beyond. Anarchists were seemingly proven correct in their critique of the state. On the one hand, the state was increasingly viewed as nothing but an authoritarian tool; on the other hand, it was increasingly decentered as the primary site of power and social reproduction. Just as importantly, the social, economic, and political changes of the global neoliberal counterrevolution set the stage for the rebirth of anarchism.

Anarchists survived the counterrevolution and produced new revolutionary theory and practice that addressed the evolving social conditions of the twentieth century. They provided compelling answers to the new problems posed by the counterrevolution while drawing lessons from the failures of both the Old and the New Left. Black/New Afrikan Anarchists critiqued the Black Panthers and created a new synthesis of Black Nationalism and anarchism that would later influence the Anarchist People of Color tendency as well as contemporary abolitionist politics. Anarcha-feminists linked patriarchy, capitalism, and the state as they popularised affinity group organising and consensus-based decision making. Ecologically oriented anarchists theorised social ecology and critiqued industrial civilisation – including the disastrous environmental legacy of socialist states – and sharpened the radical edge of the growing environmental movement. Punks developed do-it-yourself practices and oppositional networks that helped inculcate anarchist values in a generation of disaffected youth. Finally, revolutionary social anarchists, particularly in Love and Rage, organised on a continental level to develop a revolutionary intersectional anarchist movement. These five anarchist tendencies together formed the core of a new era of revitalised radicalism expressed in the anti-globalisation movement. As in the first age of glob-

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<sup>63</sup> See George Katsiaficas, *The Subversion of Politics: European Autonomous Social Movements and the Decolonization of Everyday Life* (Oakland: AK Press, 2006).

<sup>64</sup> See Mark Bray, *Antifa: The Anti-Fascist Handbook* (Brooklyn: Melville House, 2017).

alisation in the late nineteenth century, anarchism was once more a driving force on the radical left.

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