Chapter One

Anarchism and Just War Theory

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INTRODUCTION

Given that anarchism is a political ideology that categorically repudiates and actively seeks to abolish political authority in all its forms,[1] it comes as no surprise that anarchists have had comparatively little to say about traditional just war theory.[2] The latter, after all, is founded on two basic assumptions that anarchism rejects: first, that sovereign political authorities are (or at least can be) morally legitimate and, second, that the right to declare and wage war *justly* is the exclusive purview of morally legitimate political authorities.[3] Because anarchism maintains that all political authorities "by their nature, by all their conditions, and by the supreme aim and end of their existence . . . are completely the opposite of liberty, morality, and human justice,"[4] the question of whether and under what conditions their conduct qualifies as "just" is moot. If there is no such thing as "good, just, or virtuous" (i.e., morally legitimate) political authorities,[5] then *anything* and *everything* that issues from such authorities is unjust by definition.

As Andrew Robinson points out, it is more than a little ironic that anarchists have been routinely stereotyped as "bomb-throwers," whereas states and other political authorities are "generally viewed as a source of social peace" whose absence is "associated indissolubly with war."[6] The latter, after all, have been the foremost perpetrators of large-scale bloodshed in the history of the world, whereas the former have been among the most consistent and indefatigable critics of said bloodshed.[7] None of this is to say, however, that anarchism is inherently pacifistic, let alone that anarchists *qua* anarchists reject the presumed distinction between "just" and "unjust" forms of warfare. As Robinson notes, on the contrary:

> In general, anarchists identify the state [and other political authorities] as *inherently* violent and as a source of violence, and seek to end (or, failing this, to moderate) its violence through exercises of counter-power. Such counter-power is necessarily exercised by social movements or ethically-oriented individuals, not by states or other hierarchies, and can take the form of either nonviolent counter-power or of "popular defense."[8]

In other words, while "some anarchists are entirely nonviolent," anarchism itself has been consistently willing to "justify the use of force as means to defend against the oppressive violence of the state."[9]

All of this by way of saying that anarchist attitudes toward war—no less than their engagement with traditional theories of, and justifications for, warfare—are extremely multifarious and complex. Because providing an exhaustive overview and analysis of these attitudes would greatly exceed the scope of this chapter, I will instead attempt to highlight a few of the more significant themes that have featured in anarchist discussions of war since the nineteenth century as well as the various ways these themes have been expressed in anarchist political practice. Following a brief synopsis of traditional just war theory in the first section, the second section will discuss a range of general anarchist commitments that are especially salient to understanding its relationship to the former. This relationship is elucidated most clearly in the third section, which examines anarchist perspectives on war and violence in light of these commitments as well as representative examples of how they have been put into action.

TRADITIONAL JUST WAR THEORY

Although the term "war" is frequently used in reference to "any serious strife, struggle, or campaign," traditional legal, political, and sociological analyses have tended to define it more narrowly as a specific *kind* of armed conflict or violent altercation involving ostensibly sovereign political authorities.[10] In Oppenheim's classic formulation, for example, war is described as "a contention between two or more States through their armed forces for the purpose of overpowering each other and imposing such conditions of peace as the victor pleases."[11] This is more or less the prevailing understanding within so-called "just war theories," the common objectives of which have been (a) to determine when and under what conditions sovereign political authorities are morally justified in declaring and waging war (*jus ad bellum*) and (b) to identify the sorts of conduct that are morally permissible in the context of just warfare (*jus in bello*).[12]

Political authority in general involves the exercise of de facto power (i.e., the actionable capacity to compel or prevent behavior) on the basis of a presumed *right* to issue and enforce "binding" directives.[13] A directive is

said to be "binding" when those subject to it have a "content-independent" duty or obligation to comply, where this, in turn, is a matter of their having reasons to do so independently of who or what issued the directive in the first place.[14] In this respect, a distinction is typically drawn between de facto political authority—which "consists merely in claiming, exercising, or being generally *believed* (by those subject to the authority)" to possess the right to issue and enforce "binding" directives—or to de jure authority, which consists in *actually* possessing it.[15]

Political authorities (i.e., governments) are entities that exercise de facto power over particular populations within specific bounded geographic areas and claim an exclusive right to do so. This right—which is generally referred to as "sovereignty"—entitles them to monopolize the exercise of de facto power within the scope of their own jurisdictions while simultaneously shielding them from interference by external entities.[16] Although all governments possess some degree of de facto authority in virtue of claiming and exercising sovereignty, this does not necessarily mean that they actually *are* sovereign. In other words, not all de facto political authorities possess de jure authority. Those that do are typically referred to as "legitimate."[17]

Since classical antiquity, Western political thinkers have proposed various theories of *normative* legitimacy, the common aim of which has been to determine the conditions for having an actual right to rule over others, which implies a correlative obligation on their part to obey. Although legitimate authorities tend to meet certain conditions for having de facto authority—for example, "popular support and representation of a people," "monopoly of violence and effective control of a people," "adherence to international legal standards," and "predisposition to strive for a lasting peace"[18]—this does not necessarily mean that they have de jure (i.e., legitimate) authority. Most of the aforesaid theories contend that legitimacy involves altogether distinct conditions related to the normative justification of political authority as such, though the nature and scope of this justification is itself a matter of considerable dispute. For some, legitimacy is a matter of fulfilling certain ends, bringing about certain consequences, or meeting certain responsibilities, as when Aquinas claims that political authorities exist for the sake of protecting the "common weal" of the "city, kingdom, or province subject to them."[19] For others—most notably social contract theories—legitimacy is a function of the voluntary consent of the governed.[20]

However legitimacy is defined and justified, legitimate political authorities are taken to have an exclusive right to exercise power within their own jurisdictions and defend themselves against real or imagined aggression. As we have already seen, the principal aim of just war theory is precisely to determine when and under what conditions warfare is a morally justifiable means of doing so. This presupposes that legitimate authority is a necessary (though not sufficient) condition for war to be declared and waged *justly*. As

Heinze and Steele note, the long-standing and deeply entrenched notion that nation-states alone have "legitimate" authority—and, by extension, a monopoly on the "legitimate" use of force—has proven difficult to sustain "in an era in which non-state actors are playing an increasingly prominent role in armed conflict."[21] From extremist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS to private military contractors like Blackwater, the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, attacks has witnessed the emergence of a wide variety of actors that not only "operate largely independent of the sovereign jurisdiction of a state" but also "demonstrate[e] a striking array of state-like military capabilities and judicative capacities."[22] Notwithstanding their contemporary geopolitical significance—particularly in the context of the global "War on Terror"—such actors are difficult to accommodate within "prevailing normative frameworks" whose "moral vocabulary regarding war is primarily equipped to apply to the conduct of states."[23]

While nonstate actors have obviously employed violent means in pursuit of political, social, and religious objectives throughout human history, it was not until the nineteenth century that violence of this sort gained widespread attention from authorities and the general public alike in the form of politically motivated uprisings, riots, assassinations, and bombings. Then, as now, such acts were regularly described as "terrorism"[24]—a term that has tended to function less as a clear analytical category with a "precise, concrete, and truly explanatory definition" than a generic descriptor for any form of political violence perceived as morally illegitimate.[25] In response to the perceived inadequacies of this definition, Bruce Hoffman has proposed that terrorism is better understood as actual or threatened violence that is

> ineluctably political in aims and motives . . . designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target . . . conducted by an organization with an identifiable chain of command or conspiratorial cell structure (whose members wear no uniform or identifying insignia) . . . [and] perpetrated by a subnational group or non-state entity.[26]

Despite its pretenses toward greater precision, Hoffman's definition remains clearly indebted to the traditional notion that morally legitimate violence is the exclusive purview of the state. Hoffman would scarcely deny that state-sponsored violence is "political in aims and motives" and not infrequently "designed to have far-reaching psychological repercussions beyond the immediate victim or target," but this is ultimately immaterial as concerns its moral legitimacy. Whether legitimate or not, all such violence is "warfare" when it is perpetrated by states. When this same violence is perpetrated by a "subnational group or non-state entity," in contrast, it is considered "terrorism," the moral illegitimacy of which is invariably assumed regardless of its character or underlying motivations. This invites the problematic implication

that there are no morally significant differences between different *kinds* of terrorism—in which case, "terroristic" acts marshaled in the service of Islamist "jihad" (e.g., the September 11 attacks) are morally indistinguishable from those employed in revolutionary struggles against an unjust oppressor (e.g., the American War for Independence).[27]

To circumvent this problem, some just war theorists have argued that traditional just war principles can and should be applied to "armed conflicts that involve non-state actors."[28] Of particular relevance here is the principle of discrimination (or distinction), which differentiates the moral evaluation of acts within war from their underlying causes. This principle is reflected, for example, in Article 4 of the Third Geneva Convention (1949), which allows for the protection of non-state actors, such as

> [m]embers of . . . militias and members of other volunteer corps, including those of organized resistance movements . . . provided that they fulfill the following conditions: (a) that of being commanded by a person responsible for his subordinates; (b) that of having a fixed distinctive sign recognizable at a distance; (c) that of carrying arms openly; (d) that of conducting their operations in accordance with the laws and customs of war.[29]

In these and similar cases, the fact that *all* combatants are considered equally beholden to the moral criteria of *jus in bello* is taken to imply that just war theory is applicable in principle to the conduct of state and nonstate actors alike.

The problem with this argument, as I see it, is that it assumes (if not explicitly asserts) that parties to armed conflicts must be sufficiently akin to state actors in their overall demeanor and conduct to qualify as "lawful" combatants. To this extent, it merely reinforces the presumption that state actors (and political authorities more generally) exercise a de facto monopoly over the "legitimate" use of force as well as over the right to morally evaluate the conduct of other actors.[30] The notion that such authorities (or the international legal bodies to which they belong) can and should apply just war principles to the conduct of nonstate actors is obviously compatible with the perpetuation of their already existing monopoly over the *right* to moral evaluation in general. Unless and until this right is extended to nonstate actors in a genuinely actionable way, merely broadening the scope of moral evaluation available to state actors fails to pose any real challenge to the state-centric framework.

Furthermore, the notion that just war principles can be neutrally applied to state and nonstate actors alike obscures the significant normative and conceptual differences between them. Inasmuch as these differences are presupposed in the very normative criteria that traditional just war theory seeks to articulate (i.e., criteria for morally evaluating the conduct of *state actors*), it is not clear how just war principles can be applied to the conduct of

nonstate actors without presupposing that the latter act, or ought to act, like states via the principle of *discrimination*. This, of course, is precisely what traditional just war theory denies.

In fairness, the seemingly intractable association between sovereign political authorities and warfare comes as no surprise given the track record mentioned at the outset of this chapter. The same is true of our long-standing insistence—despite all evidence to the contrary—that this association is contingent rather than necessary (i.e., that war is something that particular authorities in particular circumstances *happen* to do from time to time as opposed to a constitutive element of political authority as such). After all, the notion that political authority is *founded* on pervasive, seemingly unending violence invites the uncomfortable prospect that this violence—no less than the entities that perpetrate it—is altogether irredeemable from the standpoint of morality.

Anarchism, for its part, has never had such misgivings. As we will see in the next section, this is a direct consequence of its traditional analysis of the nature and operation of political authority as such, the very essence of which it identifies as "war within and war without."[31] For anarchists, all political authority is compelled by necessity to seek "the augmentation of its power";[32] for this reason, Mikhail Bakunin writes, "it must be armed and ceaselessly on guard against both domestic and foreign enemies . . . [and] . . . is bound to regard all, both within and outside its borders, as enemies."[33] The fundamental problem for anarchists is that the acquisition and deployment of such power—including by means of war—is based on a presumed right to do so that does not and cannot exist.[34] Inasmuch as the moral legitimacy of political authority depends on such a right and the ability to acquire and deploy power *justly* depends on such legitimacy, it follows that *all* warfare prosecuted by political authorities is unjust by definition.

ANARCHISM AND POLITICAL AUTHORITY

Notwithstanding its considerable internal diversity, anarchism has consistently affirmed freedom and equality as its most fundamental and unassailable values. As I have argued at length elsewhere,[35] the prevailing understanding of these values within the broad anarchist tradition rests on four basic claims: first, that freedom is "a *state* or *condition* marked by the achievement of maximal human development or flourishing";[36] second, that the individual achievement of maximal human development or flourishing requires an actionable capacity for self-determined action (i.e., autonomy);[37] third, that the capacity for autonomous action is "inexorably social" insofar as it depends on political, social, and economic conditions that facilitate it;[38] and fourth,

that the political, social, and economic conditions that facilitate autonomy are necessarily conditions of *equality*.[39]

According to the first of these claims, "true liberty" consists in "the liberty of actual and active opportunity"[40]—in other words, the "liberty to be, to do,"[41] to "grow to [one's] full stature . . . [to] learn to think and move, to give the very best of [oneself],"[42] to actualize the full range of one's latent "material, intellectual, and moral powers,"[43] to achieve "the all-around development and full enjoyment of [one's] physical, intellectual, and moral faculties."[44] While liberty of this sort obviously requires a capacity for autonomous action, such a capacity is actionable only in the absence of *domination* (i.e., a form of power that "inhibits or prevents people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions").[45] Inasmuch as domination is exercised by one group (or set of groups) over another group (or set of groups) in a way that "limits [the latter's] freedoms, choices, and abilities"[46] to the advantage of the former, it "invariably operates by means of the creation and maintenance of hierarchies—that is, structured relationships in which political, social, economic, etc. power is distributed unequally among those who are party to said relationships"[47] in a way that benefits some and harms others. In practice, the dominant groups within such hierarchies acquire, maintain, and augment their power over the subordinate groups through various kinds of coercion, violence, and repression as well as the denial of "significant political, social, or economic advantages."[48] Understood in this way, domination is necessarily incompatible with the conditions of possibility for the "full development of [individual] powers, capacities, and talents"[49] and, for this reason, is morally illegitimate by definition.

That anarchism regards political authority as a paradigmatic form of domination, as is made especially clear by the following well-known passage from Pierre-Joseph Proudhon's *The General Idea of Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*:

> 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, dishonored. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.[50]

Given the prevalence of such ideas in anarchist literature, it comes as no surprise that anarchism has frequently been identified with antistatism. Anarchism's opposition to the state, however, is simply an extension of its rejection of domination more generally, and it is this, more so than anything else, that most clearly distinguishes it from other ideologies. For anarchists, political authority—no less than capitalism, sexism, racism, and homophobia—is simply one of the "multiple and mutually irreducible forms" that domination takes.[51] The state, accordingly, is simply "a particular (if particularly important) and unjustifiable instance of a more widespread social phenomenon."[52]

Inasmuch as domination in general involves a fundamental logic—the nature of which we will discuss in greater detail in the next section—it comes as no surprise that otherwise distinct instances of domination frequently operate in conjunction (or, better, *collusion*) with each other.[53] For anarchists, however, different forms of domination have different "qualities, interests, and dynamics"; unlike Marxists, they deny that all such forms are merely "consequences of 'relations of production' or, what comes to the same, that all [domination] is ultimately reducible to economic exploitation."[54] Political authorities, accordingly, are not just "committee[s] for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie"[55] or "organ[s] of class rule."[56] Their principal interest is not the perpetuation of class domination so much as the "the preservation of [their] exclusive governmental advantages and . . . personnel"[57]—chief among them, their monopoly over the exercise of de facto power. As noted previously, the principal function of de jure authority is precisely to justify and rationalize this monopoly.

Because the de jure authority that governments claim for themselves "does not *depend* on the voluntary compliance of those over whom it is exercised,"[58] the presumed right to issue binding, content-independent directives is, in practice, a right to command others as well as to compel their obedience through force if necessary. Anarchists reject such authority insofar as it implies an obligation or duty on the part of autonomous persons to surrender their private judgment and obey governmental directives regardless of what they themselves happen to think or desire. A truly autonomous person—a person who has both the ability and the right to decide what she will do or refrain from doing on the basis of her own private judgment—cannot possibly be obligated or duty bound in this way; thus, the very notion of de jure authority is fundamentally incompatible with autonomy and, by extension, with the fundamental values of freedom and equality.[59]

ANARCHISM AND CONVENTIONAL WARFARE

Anarchists are quick to point out that governments can and do exercise de facto power over their subjects regardless of whether the latter recognize their de jure authority to do so. This is because all governments—whether independently or in collusion with other dominating entities—are inexorably driven to acquire, maintain, and augment their power by seeking "ever greater control of territories and people."[60] Regardless of their particular "form, character, or color"—whether "absolute or constitutional, monarchy or republic, fascist, Nazi, or Bolshevik"[61]—they are "essentially based on domination . . . that is upon despotism"[62] and 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."[63] This suggests that the concept of legitimacy itself is little more than a "garment" with which governments "cove[r] themselves" to rationalize their behavior while simultaneously concealing the true nature and purpose of that behavior.[64] At the end of the day, anarchists contend, governments acquire and exercise their power to dominate people *in spite of* their claims to legitimacy—not *because* of it.

Like all forms of domination, the state is a "permanent conspiracy on the part of the minority against the majority," which "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 [their] real needs and aspirations."[65] As a result, "warlike relations often pertain between states and social forces inside societies. Indeed, in a state-controlled society, there is something like a situation of permanent social war."[66] Anarchists, accordingly, "refuse the division between external and internal, or the framing of war as a phenomenon occurring between already formed states."[67]

The same "inherent logic" that engenders "intrastate repression and violence" is the foremost cause of interstate warfare.[68] "By its very essence and by the goals which it fixes," Bakunin writes, "the modern state is necessarily a military state, and a military state is bound no less obligatorily to becoming a conquering state."[69] This is because every state, no matter its character, "must strive, under penalty of utter ruin, to become the most powerful of states . . . to devour others in order to not be devoured in turn."[70] In this respect, political domination is no different from economic domination or, indeed, any other form thereof:

> Just as capitalist production and banking speculation—which in the long run swallows up that production—must, under the threat of bankruptcy, ceaselessly expand at the expense of the small financial and productive enterprises that they absorb, and become universal monopolistic enterprises extending all over the world—so this modern and necessarily military state is driven by an irrepressible urge to become a universal state.[71]

A similar point is made by Errico Malatesta:

> There is, then, the dominating class only that counts; and this class, owing to its desire to conserve and to enlarge its power, even its prejudices and its own ideas, may find it convenient to excite racial ambitions and hatred, and send its nation, its flock, against "foreign" countries, with a view to releasing them from their present oppressors, and submitting them to its own political economical domination.[72]

Whatever sort of power they seek to acquire, maintain, and augment, all dominating entities "must be . . . ceaselessly on guard against both domestic and foreign adversaries . . . and . . . in a state of conspiracy against all of them."[73]

This reinforces a point made earlier, namely, that all conventional warfare—whether it is directed at foreign conquest or domestic repression—is ultimately an expression of the logic of domination. Anarchism obviously opposes warfare of this sort for the same reasons it opposes domination more generally.[74] More than this, it supports resistance on the part of those against whom such warfare is waged as well as proactive efforts to eradicate its source. That said, anarchists have often been divided over whether and to what extent violent means should be taken in pursuit of these ends. As Uri Gordon notes:

> When anarchists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century talked about political violence, they were typically referring to one of two scenarios: mass armed insurrection, or assassinations of heads of state and capitalist bosses. Today, in contrast, the primary context for discussion is the use of non-lethal violence during protests: scenes of property destruction and confrontations with police on the streets, in particular during demonstrations against summits of government leaders and international economic organizations.[75]

Insofar as anarchism *qua* anarchism does not have a single settled conviction on the morality of violence as such, let alone a uniform understanding of what violence *is*, it comes as no surprise that anarchists have disagreed over the use of such means. While some anarchists have categorically rejected them, the broad anarchist tradition itself has generally been accommodating of and receptive to violence—at least in certain circumstances.

ANARCHISM AND VIOLENCE

As a revolutionary ideology, anarchism seeks to abolish existing political, social, economic, ethical, and cultural institutions and replace them with something different.[76] Given that the institutions in question were created by the powerful for the sake of maintaining and augmenting their power—

usually over the course of centuries—it is naïve to expect that the defenders and beneficiaries of these institutions "will recognize the injustice of, the harm caused by" them, let alone "voluntarily renounce" the power they serve.[77] Although anarchists recognize that domination cannot be eradicated without struggle (violent or otherwise) and that this is not a realistic aspiration in the absence of mass counter-power, they have expressed a variety of ideas on how to build and mobilize this counter-power in practice, all of which seek to maintain fidelity to certain general and interrelated commitments.

The first of these commitments is to *prefiguration*. "[I]n its most general form," Benjamin Franks writes, prefiguration "denotes an identity between (anti-)political methods and (anti-)political goals or ends."[78] Anarchists "explicitly distance themselves from the position that the end justifies the means," demanding instead that the latter must be morally and politically consistent with the former. In other words, the means taken in the present must "prefigure" the very ends they hope to bring about in the future.

The second commitment, which follows from the first, is to *direct action*. Insofar as anarchism seeks to eradicate domination and to maximize individual autonomy, it is vitally important that those who share these aims strive to achieve them by and for themselves—that is, *autonomously*—rather than appeal to others to do so on their behalf. This lack of mediation "distinguishes direct action from . . . political strategies such as voting, lobbying, or rallying—which are activities that pursue certain results through one or more intermediaries."[79]

The third commitment is the *rejection of vanguards*, that is, "particular group[s] with claims to either superior knowledge or more fortunate location in the political terrain . . . which can take strategic priority and win battles for others (and often speak *on behalf of* the client group)."[80] As Peter Kropotkin writes:

> No handful of people, however energetic and talented, can evoke a popular insurrection, if the people themselves, through their own best representatives, do not achieve the realization that they have no other way out of a position with which they are dissatisfied except insurrection. Consequently, the business of any revolutionary party is not to call for insurrection but only to pave the way for the success of the imminent insurrection.[81]

Anarchists "do not want to liberate the people [from domination]" as much as they "want the people to liberate themselves."[82] They do not presume to know the people's interests or claim any right to act on behalf of those interests. Their principal task, accordingly, is that of "'pushing' [them] to demand and to seize all the freedom they can and to make themselves responsible for their own needs without waiting for orders from any kind of authority."[83] In practice, this is a matter of "demonstrating the uselessness

and harmfulness of [domination], of encouraging and provoking by propaganda and action all kinds of individual and collective initiatives."[84]

The fourth and final commitment is to *revolution*, which Kropotkin defines as "a rapid modification of outgrown economic and political institutions, an overthrow of the injustices accumulated by centuries past, [and] a displacement of wealth and political power."[85] Revolutionary action, accordingly, is "radical rather than moderate, rapid rather than gradual, and emerges from without as-against dominant social arrangements rather than from within and in cooperation with them."[86] As proponents of such action, anarchists reject reformist strategies that seek to bring about "incremental change . . . through the provisions of existing power structures."[87] This includes everything from "constitutional [or] regulatory change driven by one or more branches of government" to "petitions for legislation or court action, the promotion of electoral candidates, and engagement between organized labor and employers."[88]

Taken together, these shared commitments constitute the foundation of anarchist practice and serve as the general framework within which ideas about anarchist practice are formulated and evaluated. It is in relation to this framework, accordingly, that anarchist attitudes toward violence must be understood. If we stipulate that violence in general refers to "any action or structural arrangement that results in physical or nonphysical harm to one or more persons"—including threats of harm that generate an "embodied sense of attack or deliberate endangerment in its recipient"[89]—it is trivially true that anarchists reject violence thus defined whenever it is employed as a means to domination and other morally illegitimate ends. Some have gone a step further, however, by rejecting the use of violent means in pursuit of the political aims of anarchism itself.

Here, a distinction must be drawn between those who reject (some or all) violent means on the grounds that violence as such is inherently wrong (i.e., pacifists) and those who do so because they consider such means to be inconsistent or otherwise at odds with the commitments enumerated above. It is true that certain notable anarchists have been pacifists and that anarchism itself has always contained pacifist currents.[90] For the most part, however, those anarchists who have opposed the use of violence have principally done so on the grounds that (some or all) violent means are incompatible with prefiguration. According to this view:

> [Anarchists] cannot say that violence, on whatever level, would be justified just because it helps achieve a free society. Rather, they believe that means and ends should always be of the same substance. The argument thus tends to take the following, straightforward form: "Anarchists want a non-violent society. Anarchists also believe that the revolutionary movement should prefigure the desired society in its means and ways. Therefore, anarchists cannot use violence to achieve a non-violent society."[91]

In response, some have argued that anarchism *qua* anarchism is not committed to eradicating violence per se (either because doing so is impossible or merely undesirable) as much as a particular form of violence (i.e., domination). It considers the latter to be morally illegitimate, moreover, not because it is *violent*, but because it is contrary to various fundamental moral and political values, such as freedom and equality. The same does not appear to be true of violence—at least not in all cases—which is why most anarchists have denied that the use of violent means is *necessarily* incompatible with anarchism in general or its commitment to prefiguration in particular.

However violence is defined, the prevailing view within the broad anarchist tradition is that "violence is justifiable when it is necessary to defend oneself and others from violence."[92] Inasmuch as domination in all its forms involves a kind of protracted warfare between those who dominate and those who are dominated, however, it follows that the latter are "always in a state of legitimate defense" and, consequently, that any violence they perpetrate against the former "is always justifiable and must be controlled only by such considerations as that the best and most economical use is being made of human efforts and human sufferings."[93] Being attacked themselves, "the oppressed . . . always have the right to attack the oppressors,"[94] to "react violently against [their] violence and to put lead against lead to crush [it]."[95] Indeed, such violence is not only justifiable but *necessary*: as Malatesta argues, it is "the only way to put an end to the far greater, the permanent, violence that keeps the majority of mankind in servitude."[96] Anarchism, after all, aspires to do more than *defend* people against the violence of domination; it seeks to eradicate domination altogether.

As Johann Most wrote in 1890, "It cannot and it shall be denied that most anarchists are convinced that the development of the present social order cannot be brought upon its right track by peaceable means. But that is a question of tactics which has nothing to do with principles."[97] Historically speaking, anarchists have tended to regard violence as a forgone conclusion in the revolutionary struggle against the state and other institutions that are themselves inherently violent. The main question, accordingly, has not been whether violence *as such* is a justifiable means of pursuing the goals of anarchism but whether particular kinds of violence that are otherwise consistent with fundamental anarchist commitments constitute an effective means of doing so.

Anarchists have proposed various answers to this question that reflect differing ideas about the nature of (the) revolution itself. Although they have generally agreed that the latter "seeks to alter the whole character of society"[98] by decisively abolishing domination in all forms (as opposed to merely changing the rulers or altering the form of government), they have vacillated over what this means in practice. In the late nineteenth century, most anarchists tended to understand revolution as a kind of event that would

transpire rapidly and on a massive scale. Bakunin, for example, believed that it would take the form of a spontaneous uprising involving most or all members of the international working class and culminating in the total destruction of "all modern institutions," including "the state, church, courts, university, army, and police."[99] In practice, this would entail large-scale and extremely violent attacks on life and property that would continue indefinitely until the institutions in question were no longer able to defend themselves and thus were effectively overthrown.

Like other anarchists at this time, Bakunin rejected the "belief of the authoritarian communists . . . that a social revolution must be decreed and organized either by a dictatorship or by a constituent assembly emerging from a political revolution" and insisted that "revolution could neither be made nor brought to its full development except by the spontaneous and continued action of the masses, the groups and associations of the people."[100] As Uri Gordon notes, "By 'spontaneous' Bakunin does not mean impulsive, improvised, and undirected activity, but instead activity that is self-directed, voluntary, and therefore antagonistic to the imposition of artificial, pre-ordained structures."[101] Truly revolutionary activity is carried out "from the bottom up, by the free association or federation of workers"[102] and culminates in nothing less than "the immediate and direct actuation of full and complete social liquidation."[103]

The uprisings that precipitated the short-lived Paris Commune in the spring of 1871 are an oft-cited early example of the sort of revolutionary vision that Bakunin and other anarchists of his generation favored.[104] In the first place, the uprisings in question were large scale and all encompassing, resulting in the immediate (or nearly immediate) collapse of the existing order and corresponding transformation of virtually all aspects of life.[105] In the second place, they were almost entirely spontaneous and self-directed, erupting in a more or less spontaneous fashion following months of increasingly militant agitation by the Parisian working classes.[106] Although anarchists like Elisée Reclus and Louise Michel played important roles,[107] neither the uprisings themselves nor the particular forms they took were the work of any sort of ideologically motivated minority.[108]

All of this being said, because Bakunin and other anarchists had conflicting ideas about the failure of the Commune no less than the underlying causes that brought it about in the first place, they were naturally divided over its political implications. Given their belief that anarchism as such would never be consciously accepted by a majority of people, it seemed that revolution would necessarily be "the work of a conscious minority."[109] Because revolution cannot be *imposed*, however, such work would essentially be limited to "creat[ing] the conditions that make a rapid evolution toward anarchy possible."[110] As noted previously, this is principally achieved by "encourag[ing] the masses to act directly, to take possession of the means of

production, to occupy housing, to perform public services without waiting for resolutions or commands from higher-ranking authorities."[111] The role of anarchists, accordingly, is to rouse people to action and fight *alongside* them—not *for* them.

It is by no means clear, however, how a minority of political actors who are essentially limited to propagandizing could possibly instigate a spontaneous, large-scale uprising like the Paris Commune. For this reason, many anarchists gradually abandoned the notion that the revolution should (or could) be made rapidly and all at once. Instead of an event, they came to see it as a *process* to be carried out over time. In practice, this would entail both sustained, long-term initiatives and episodic attacks on a smaller and more narrowly defined scale, all of which would serve to radicalize the wider population and impel them little by little to revolt. The salient questions became: what sorts of (long- and short-term) efforts should be pursued in this regard, and what is the best way of pursuing them?

With the notable exceptions of the Makhnovist Uprisings in the Ukraine (1917–1921) and the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), anarchists have seldom participated directly in large-scale conventional warfare, presumably because modern military tactics, command structures, and the like are difficult to accommodate within anarchist political frameworks. In the aftermath of the Paris Commune, the anarchist movement gradually divided itself into two broad factions, the first of which favored sustained organizing and agitation within the wider labor movement and the second of which favored assassinations, bombings, and other forms of violent direct action, collectively known as "propaganda by the deed."[112] Many if not most of the representatives of the former faction—the so-called "anarcho-syndicalists"—had come to regard capitalism as the principal mechanism of domination in modern society. For this reason, they began to assert that the struggle to eradicate domination in general should be directed first and foremost against the major sources of capitalist power—hence, their emphasis on the use of various "method[s] of immediate warfare by the workers against their economic and political oppressors," including "the strike . . . the boycott; sabotage in its countless forms; anti-militarist propaganda; and in particularly critical cases . . . armed resistance of the people for the protection of life and liberty."[113] Many came to see the so-called general strike—an organized, all-encompassing refusal to work culminating in the expropriation of the means of production—as the chief means by which the revolution and its goals would be realized.

In a self-conscious effort "to create an atmosphere of struggle in which class enmities would sharpen and the workers would learn from experience the need for a revolutionary solution to the social problem,"[114] anarcho-syndicalists and other anarchists operating within the labor movement actively contributed to the explosion of militant labor activity that rocked Europe

and the United States during the last two decades of the nineteenth century.[115] By the first decade of the twentieth century, anarcho-syndicalism had emerged as the dominant tendency within the labor unions of several countries, including Argentina, Brazil, France, Portugal, and Spain. Anarcho-syndicalists were at the forefront of organized opposition to the First World War and played leading roles in several notable actions, such as the Italian factory occupations of 1919–1920 as well as general strikes in Mexico (1916), Spain (1917), Portugal (1918), and Argentina (1918–1919).

Representatives of the other faction—who are most often referred to as "insurrectionists"—insisted that revolutionary action must be directed at all modern institutions simultaneously in the form of "immediate, destructive attack[s] on the structures, individuals and organizations"[116] that comprise them. Attacks of this sort—which typically included bombings, assassinations, and other "spectacular displays" of violence—were intended to illustrate the weakness and vulnerability of such institutions and, in so doing, inspire mass resistance to them.[117] To this extent, acts of "propaganda by the deed" functioned chiefly as a kind of "demonstrative communication" rather than as "substantive methods of socio-political change."[118]

At their peak in the 1880s, 1890s, and early 1900s, insurrectionists were involved in a wide array of politically motivated criminal activities (e.g., bank robbery and burglary[119]) and were directly and indirectly responsible for several high-profile acts of violence. These include, among others, the assassinations of Tsar Alexander II of Russia (1881), French President Sadi Carnot (1894), Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas (1897), King Umberto I of Italy (1900), President William McKinley of the United States (1901), and King Carlos I of Portugal (1908) and the bombings of the Liceu Theater in Barcelona (1893), the French National Assembly (1893), and the Café Terminus in Paris (1894).[120] These actions provoked severe government repression in Europe and the United States that dramatically weakened the anarchist movement. In the United States alone, "the newspapers drove a massive anti-anarchist propaganda campaign that fomented outright hysteria within an already xenophobic population. Meanwhile Congress passed numerous anti-radical bills, such as the Sedition Act of 1918, which led to the arrest, imprisonment, and deportation of thousands of suspected anarchists and other radicals."[121]

The two factions differed not only over particular tactics but also the overall role that organization plays or ought to play in revolutionary action. Virtually all representatives of the former emphasized participation "in mass workers' organizations and social movements," and many advocated the creation of explicitly anarchist groups, "based on theoretical unity, tactical unity, collective responsibility, and federalism," whose chief function "prior to [the] revolutionary transitional period" would be to "create the fullest possible extent of communistic alternatives (cooperatives, schools, cultural

activities, etc.) and to fight to keep self-management at the centre of every political struggle."[122] Representatives of the latter, in contrast, endorsed a "strategy of informal and temporary organizations in affinity groups [as] base nuclei for . . . attacks on police stations, banks, and similar targets," abandoning organized "counter-hegemonic movement-building" in favor of episodic "riots and clandestine actions."[123] For the most part, these basic factional divisions have endured to the present and continue to express themselves in various ways within the contemporary anarchist movement.

CONCLUSION

Despite these and other internal disagreements, anarchism has always understood itself as a response to a perceived state of "ubiquitous 'social war.'" As I have taken pains to emphasize, anarchists of all stripes see themselves and the people they fight alongside as combatants in an ongoing struggle; for this reason, the means that they employ—whether violent or not—are ultimately *military* tactics that need to be evaluated in relation to this struggle and its aims. In a certain sense, this approximates just war theory, which involves a similar imperative because it concerns the behavior of state actors when waging war and their conduct during war. The crucial difference, as presented clearly in this chapter, is that, while the latter seeks to evaluate that behavior against the presumed moral justifiability of political authority itself, anarchism rejects that presumption on moral and political grounds of its own. It is these grounds, moreover, that serve as the ultimate standard by which anarchism evaluates its struggle against political authority and domination more generally.

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