

**Decentering Anarchism:
Governmentality and Anti-Authoritarian Social Movements in Twentieth-Century Spain**

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List of Abbreviations

CNT	<i>Confederación Nacional del Trabajo</i> (National Confederation of Labor, a predominantly anarcho-syndicalist labor union)
FAI	<i>Federación Anarquista Iberica</i> (Iberian Anarchist Federation, affiliated with the CNT)
FRE	<i>Federación Regional de España</i> (Spanish Regional Federation (of the IWMA))
IWMA	International Workingmen's Association
PCE	<i>Partido Comunista de España</i> (Spanish Communist Party)
UGT	<i>Unión General de Trabajadores</i> (General Workers' Union – affiliated with the PSOE, or Socialist Workers' Party)

Introduction

A large dirt road leads up a relatively steep hill on the outskirts of Cartagena, an old industrial city on the Mediterranean coast of the Spanish province of Murcia.¹ Climbing out of the working-class housing developments on the western edge of the city, the road winds its way up a dry slope, sparsely covered with brush and small trees. After several kilometers— during which the view of the city becomes increasingly spectacular – one comes across a rather surreal sight: a huge, crumbling old building, with several colorful banners attached, and surrounded by about two acres of beautifully terraced gardens. Old men, taking a break from tending their plots, sit around a giant old water cistern at the north end of the property; chatting about politics, they greet the visitor with a nod. Proceeding to the front door, one finds a tall, ramshackle fence, enclosing a small courtyard in front of the building; this fence is not for protection against theft, but rather against the police, who have tried on multiple occasions to forcibly clear the house of its inhabitants. The building is a former hospital, and the land that it stands on belongs to the provincial government of Murcia. This is *La Base*, one of the largest and most well-known ‘rurban’ squats in Spain.²

In 1999, a radical environmentalist conference was being planned in Cartagena. The organizers – experienced activists from Holland, Sweden, and other European countries – visited the city several months before the conference was scheduled to be held, and convened a planning meeting with local activists in order to find a suitable location. The participants at this meeting decided that a group of local activists, supported by more experienced European squatters, would occupy an old, abandoned lepers’ hospital on the outskirts of town, and use this

¹ All names of people and places have been changed to protect the identity of those involved.

² There are a series of Spanish squats that are often referred to as *rurbano*, or ‘rurban’: located just outside of cities, these squats have access to the urban squat community, and thus aren’t as isolated as the many strictly rural Spanish squats are; however, these communities also live on large plots of land, and their subsistence is based in part on such projects as growing food and collecting rainwater.

building for the conference; afterwards, local squatters and foreign conference participants alike would be invited to continue squatting in the building. After several months of preparations, this coalition of activists occupied the building in December 1999 – rapidly building barricades, stockpiling food, and orchestrating a media spectacle that drew not only local television reporters, but also hundreds of supporters and sympathizers (who camped out on the grass outside). Several weeks after the building was occupied, the radical environmentalist conference was held; people came from all over Europe to participate in an array of workshops, lectures, and social activities. After the conference had ended, a core group of activists remained in the building, and prepared for the police’s inevitable attempt to evict the squat.

Four months later, in early May, the police raided *La Base* in full force. Dozens of officers entered the house from the ground floor, but were slowed by a series of barricades that the squatters had constructed. This delay gave eleven people enough time to grab small amounts of food and water, and climb onto a series of well-constructed mechanisms of nonviolent occupation: five-meter-high tripods, chairs mounted on walls, and something referred to ominously as a “death plank” (with my limited Spanish, I was unable to understand exactly what this was). The police were unable to get these eleven nonviolent resisters down; they called in the fire department, who – unsympathetic to the police’s goal of removing squatters from city property – flatly refused to forcibly remove the eleven squatters. Thus began a grueling three-day siege, at the end of which seven of the eleven people still remained in their positions. Exposed to sun and to cold, enduring substantial physical discomfort, and denied access to food by the police, the seven remaining squatters began to suffer from heat exhaustion, dehydration, and malnutrition. The news media, camped out in front of the house, turned the police siege into a media circus; more importantly, independent health monitors determined that the squatters were indeed suffering from serious medical problems. On the fourth day of the standoff, a district

judge – pressured by media reports about the deteriorating health conditions of the seven squatters – ordered the police off the property. Since that date, there have been several minor confrontations with the police, but at no point since has the survival of the community been similarly threatened. (Interview 2)

In the years since then, *La Base* has grown into a unique example of the rural Spanish squat community. In 2006, there were thirty-two people living at *La Base* – the ratio of men to women was about two to one, and one couple had a three-month-old baby that was the only child in the house. Activism is still central to community life: several days before I arrived, three residents were arrested for attempting to block the construction of a new maximum-security immigrant detention center in a nearby city. The house is ‘governed’ through a biweekly *asamblea*, at which house members reach decisions through a painstaking process of consensus. The community has no formal rules or disciplinary measures whatsoever, and there is no formal work-system for dividing chores; several people are understood to be responsible for particular responsibilities (the workshop, the electricity, etc.), but in general, house members take on work as they see fit. Out of the two acres of magnificently terraced gardens, about two-thirds is divided into plots that are distributed to community members (usually the elderly), and the remainder is the community’s plot – again, tended on a volunteer basis, with two of the more agriculturally-experienced residents working as garden coördinators, and another member tending the dozen or so chickens that live next to the composting toilet. Electricity is stolen from the city grid, and rainwater is funneled from a huge catch-basin on the roof into a series of large drinking- and cooking-water cisterns around the house. Elaborate greywater and blackwater systems ensure that as much water is reused as possible; the solar-heated outdoor shower, located in the garden at the edge of a terrace, is quite private while at the same time offering a spectacular view of the city of Cartagena.

The example of *La Base* illustrates several key points about the contemporary Spanish anarchist movement – a movement which, following other anarchist theorists, I will characterize as ‘post-leftist.’ First, contemporary Spanish anarchists are above all focused on autonomy: their main political project is to create socioeconomic spaces that are as separate from state control and from the capitalist economy as possible. Second, contemporary anarchists focus on building sustainable alternatives to global capitalism: the residents of *La Base* spend a great deal of time working on systems to recycle wastewater, composting toilets, organic farming, etc. A third project of contemporary anarchists is the creation of horizontal, non-hierarchical structures of governance: the painstaking consensus-based *asambleas* and the explicitly anti-authoritarian structures of governance (to the point where *La Base* has no system for evicting problematic residents) are part of a larger political project of creating ‘anarchy’ in one’s own life and immediate environment. Fourth, the contemporary anarchist movement, like the 19th-century anarchist movement, is very much transnational: *La Base*, an old, run-down house on a little dirt road, is an important hub in several transnational networks of radical activists. These social and political practices of the squatters at *La Base* are in many ways very different from those of the historical, leftist anarchist movement.

As I traveled around Spain in the summer of 2006, I discovered that different groups of people articulated and practiced anti-authoritarian politics in very distinct ways. On the one hand, the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT) – the century-old anarcho-syndicalist labor union that has been the main institution of Spanish anarchism since the early 20th century – stubbornly continues to articulate its political project in terms of class war and proletarian social revolution. Founded in 1910, the CNT had 1.5 million members by the 1930’s, and was a powerful agent of social revolution during the Spanish Civil War. However, since its earliest

days, significant divisions have existed within the union: divisions between urban industrial workers and rural landless workers, and also divisions between radical anarchist ideologues (usually based in the *Federación Anarquista Iberica*, or FAI) and labor-unionist pragmatists (many of whom were expelled from the CNT in 1932, and formed the Syndicalist Party). After the nationalist victory in 1939, the surviving CNT militants went underground: some stayed in Spain and fought a guerrilla war against the regime, while others fled to France or Latin America. Following Franco's death in 1975, the CNT returned triumphantly to Spanish politics; however, its organizational power has greatly declined, and today it represents only a few thousand workers. In many ways, the CNT's political rhetoric and strategies have changed little since the 1930's: at its Eighth Confederational Congress in 1995, the CNT declared that its goals are

to foster the development of the spirit of association between workers, making them understand that only in this way can they improve their moral and material conditions within the current society, assume control of the means of production and consumption in a self-determining form, and introduce libertarian communism.
(CNT Statutes)

On the other hand, there are other, smaller, more marginal spaces of anti-authoritarian activism – such as *La Base*, or the Madrid bookstore *Traficantes de Sueños*, or the *Casas Viejas* squat and social center in Sevilla, or the Squatters' Assembly of Barcelona, or the '*Hackitectura*' collective in Málaga (Pickles & Cobarrubias 2006), or Radio Bronka in Barcelona (Interview 1). As I will discuss in the next section, these radical spaces and networks – many of which emerged out of the punk/squatters' movement – are based on political practices that are very distinct in important ways from those of older anarchist groups, such as the CNT. Indeed, as I spoke to some of the participants in these groups, I discovered that many of them refer to themselves as 'autonomists.'

The autonomist movement emerged out of the anarchist movement during the cultural and political revolutions of 1968; a decade later, many participants in the emerging punk/squatters'

movements adopted autonomist politics – first in Germany, and then in other European countries (Katsiaficas 2006, 88-97). Autonomists express an ideological commitment to “anti-authoritarianism, independence from existing political parties, decentralized organizational forms, emphasis on direct action, and a combination of culture and politics as a means for the creation of a new person and new forms for living through the transformation of everyday life.” (Ibid, 3-4)

Within the Spanish anarchist movement, there is an uneasy coexistence of these two very different ways of theorizing and practicing anarchist politics (in the following section, I will describe these two different anarchisms as ‘leftist’ and ‘post-leftist’). When I asked David – a resident of *La Base* – about the difference between political practices of the squat movement and the CNT, he argued that, ultimately,

the squat movement comes out of the punk movement. It’s really a response, [a way of] saying [that] there is no hope, there is no future, there’s no ability to fight, so we’re going to merely direct our rage into a type of social struggle which is completely a dead end. Even though we know it’s a dead end... It’s the same as throwing rocks at the police. If we were really interested in fighting the police, we wouldn’t pick up rocks, we would pick up guns. But... of course that’s not an option... of course it’s a disaster waiting to happen. And so, when you begin to realize that, you know that it’s all a game. At that point, you say to yourself, ‘okay, we’re going to participate in a violent movement, because we want to be alive, and we want to maintain the idea of resistance.’ But it’s only an idea that we’re maintaining. We are not really resisting. (Interview 2)

Here, David is simultaneously trying to articulate two very distinct understandings of social action, and the incompatibility of these two discourses leaves David expressing his argument in fundamentally conflicted and ambiguous terms. This thesis explores these theoretical tensions existing within David’s statement, which reflect a larger conflict over the identity of anarchism in contemporary Spain. My project in this thesis is to outline a genealogy of Spanish anarchism, and in doing so to demonstrate how anarchist political discourse came to be framed in these two very different ways.

Over the past thirty years, critical scholars and social theorists have focused on deconstructing the binary categories that Cartesian philosophers use as a means of ordering, categorizing, and appropriating the world. For instance, Bruno Latour (1993) problematizes the separation of the ‘social’ and ‘natural’ realms; Arturo Escobar (1995) deconstructs the distinction between ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ societies; and Judith Butler (1990) challenges the prevailing binary distinction between ‘male’ and ‘female’ gendered positions. However, the binary distinction between ‘power’ and ‘resistance’ continues to be a fundamental component of the work of many social movements scholars and social theorists, as well as of the political discourses of movements themselves. Basing their epistemologies on this power/resistance binary, social movement researchers often essentialize the movements that they study, framing them as fundamentally ontologically separate from the institutions they oppose (Esteva 1987; Escobar 2003; Bevington & Dixon 2005). In many ways, this understanding of social movements was originally articulated by Georg Wilhelm Hegel, through his theorization of the dialectical conflict between master and slave as the motor force of human history. Building on Hegel’s conception of social conflict, Karl Marx recast Hegel’s distinction in more purely oppositional (and less dialectical) terms, arguing famously that

the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Freeman and slave, patrician and plebeian, lord and serf, guild-master and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed, stood in constant opposition to one another, carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden, now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Marx & Engels 1978, 473-74)

It is difficult to understate the extent to which this Marxian understanding of social movements – in which the latter is understood as being engaged with the state or ruling class in a relationship of pure opposition and conflict – has influenced contemporary social movements research, and contemporary social thought in general. This aspect of

Marxian philosophy has also profoundly influenced anarchist theory, as I will discuss in more detail in the following section, as well as in the conclusion.

However, as Sherry Ortner (1995) points out, recent researchers have decentered this Marxian understanding of the social movement, by demonstrating how social movements are profoundly co-constructed alongside the institutions that they frame themselves in opposition to. Thus, Sidney Tarrow argues that “rather than seeing social movements as expressions of extremism, violence, and deprivation, they are better defined as collective challenges... in *sustained interaction with elites, opponents, and authorities.*” (Tarrow 1994, 3-4; emphasis added)

Likewise, Ortner, suggesting that “resistance studies are thin because they are ethnographically thin,” argues that a greater focus on ethnographic methods by social movements researchers would

reveal the ambivalences and ambiguities of resistance itself... [which] emerge from the intricate webs of articulations and disarticulations that always exist between dominant and dominated. For the politics of external domination and the politics within a subordinated group may link up with, as well as repel, one another (Ortner 1995, 190)

Furthermore, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out that the actions of social movements influence the development of the state, as well as vice versa; thus, in *Empire*, they argue that the struggles of “the revolutionary multitude... have produced Empire as an inversion of its own image” (Hardt & Negri 2000, 394).

As Ortner points out, many of these new perspectives in social movement research have drawn on the work of Michel Foucault, who “drew attention to less institutionalized, more pervasive, and more everyday forms of power.” (Ortner 1995, 175) Thus, in *History of Sexuality* (1978), Foucault asserts that

resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power... [The] existence [of power relationships] depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance: these play the role of adversary, target, support, or handle in power relations... Resistances... are the odd term in relations of power; they are inscribed in the latter as an irreducible opposite. (Foucault 1978, 95-6)

This theoretical argument, undermining the purely oppositional conception of the distinction between ‘power’ and ‘resistance,’ is part of a larger focus of Foucault’s work on the micropolitical aspects of power. As Ortner points out, Foucault’s theorizations of micropolitics have been incredibly central to the work of many contemporary social movements theorists.

However, the recent publication of two series of Foucault’s lectures at the *Collège de France* – in which Foucault, in an interesting departure from most of his previously published work, examines and theorizes the functioning of the *macropolitical* realm of social and political conflict – opens a space for social movement researchers to use Foucauldian theory in a radically different way. In *Society Must Be Defended* (2003) (which I largely will not use in this paper, but which nonetheless bears mentioning due to its strong potential for social movements theory), Foucault describes how discourses of ‘racism’ – in which a social war against an external ‘enemy’ is presented as vital for the protection of society – was first articulated as an oppositional discourse in 17th century England. However, Foucault argues that this oppositional ‘racism’ was recoded into a discourse of biopolitical “state racism in the late 18th century;” furthermore, this biopolitical discourse was in turn was appropriated by socialist and anarchist social movements in the late 19th century. Thus, Foucault contends that the ‘racist’ function of class war in these movements is rooted in a discourse that is genealogically derived from both state and anti-state structures – and that examining this complex genealogical history of sustained interaction and mutual constitution gives us a powerful tool to challenge the “function of racism” as it exists in contemporary social movements. Much like Ortner and Tarrow, Foucault, in *Society Must Be Defended*, profoundly challenges the prevailing conception of social and political conflict, in which social movements are understood as being somehow ontologically distinct from institutions of power; unlike Ortner, however, Foucault focuses his attention in this work on the

macropolitical engagements between power and resistance, an interesting departure from the micropolitical studies with which he is typically associated.

This macropolitical project of de-essentializing social conflict is further and more deeply explored – with more relevance for the study of anarchist social movements – in *Security, Territory, Population* (2007); in this work, Foucault de-essentializes the state, through an examination of governmentality as a modality of power. In *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault argues that the development of contemporary anti-systemic resistance movements – which Foucault refers to as “counter-conducts” – is inseparable from the development of the governmentalized state. To Foucault,

what is at stake in the counter-conducts that develop in correlation with modern governmentality are the same elements as for that governmentality... [T]he history of the governmental *ratio*, and the history of the counter-conducts opposed to it, are inseparable from each other. (Foucault 2007, 355-57)

Throughout this paper, I will base my arguments on Foucault’s theorization of governmentality in *Security, Territory, Population*, and I will argue that the framework of governmentality allows us to further decenter and de-essentialize our understandings of social movements. In this paper, I will use Foucault’s framework to theorize both the contemporary Spanish state and the contemporary Spanish anarchist movement within the framework of governmentality, and to describe how the history of governmental technologies of power is closely interrelated with the specific histories of both state and anti-state action in the Spanish historical context.

Following the arguments of contemporary social movements researchers such as Ortner, Tarrow, and Tilly, my goal in this paper is to demonstrate the ways in which the Spanish anarchist movement, and the Spanish state that it ideologically opposes itself to, are mutually constitutive: they have evolved together and mutually produced each other through a complex, dialectical process of engagement and opposition. I will make three sub-arguments about the Spanish anarchist movement, on the basis of which I will construct my overall argument. First, I

will argue that the development of historical, leftist Spanish anarchism is inseparable from the history of governmentality as a Spanish state technology of power. Second, I will contend that the development of contemporary, post-leftist Spanish anarchism is inseparable from the 20th-century shift towards new forms of governmentality (Foucault 2007, 49). However, the historical anarchist movement should not be understood as a singular entity: thus, my third point is that a powerful yet subaltern anarchist movement of agrarian landless workers – based on a fundamentally different discourse of anarchism – profoundly challenged the predominant ideologies and practices of the CNT during the Spanish Civil War.

This analysis of Spanish anarchism allows me engage with three different fields of scholarship. First, I position my argument alongside new theoretical approaches to social movements research. Social movements researchers often describe social movements as if they emerged from some sort of impossibly autonomous, ontologically distinct Outside (Wilson & Wolford 2006); however, numerous contemporary social movements theorists have focused on the project of de-essentializing, decentering, and contextualizing the analytical category of the social movement. For instance, Charles Tilly argues that we should examine “repertoires of contention” within social movements – thus emphasizing the influence of ‘outside’ cultural, social, and political practices on movement participants’ actions (Tilly 1993). Doug McAdam et al problematize the static, individual-based understanding of social movements, theorizing movements in dynamic and relational terms (McAdam et al 2001). Likewise, Wendy Wolford draws attention to the discrepancy between movement ideology and participants’ particular socioeconomic situations (Wolford 2003, 2005, 2006).

In the same way that Wolford calls on social movement researchers to use ethnography as a means of “embed[ding] actors in their particular material and symbolic environments” (Wolford 2003, 202), I argue that by historically analyzing the genealogical development of anti-state social

movements, we can better understand the specific structural positions within which those movements are embedded. Specifically, we can better understand how social movements – especially leftist, working class-based social movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries – are in many ways similar creatures to the institutions in opposition to which they have ideologically framed themselves. Thus, historical analysis helps us de-essentialize our analyses of social movements, by allowing us to examine the ways in which the movement’s “Official Genesis Story” was historically constructed (Wolford 2003, 202); furthermore, historical analysis also allows us to emphasize the ways in which political discourses and practices move fluidly between social movements and state institutions.

Second, this paper engages with the historiography of the Spanish anarchist movement. I will discuss this particular historical school in more detail at the beginning of section two; there, I will argue that the three existing schools of Spanish anarchist historiography are, to varying extents, all problematic. On the one hand, the first two schools of Spanish anarchist history – particular schools of anarchist and Marxist historians – both construct flawed arguments about Spanish anarchism, based on their particular understandings of social action; on the other hand, social historians, while much more academically sophisticated, fail to address the specificity of the mid-19th century Spanish anarchist movement. In contrast, I argue that the emergence of the Spanish anarchist movement cannot be understood separately from the emergence of the Spanish governmentalized state – which, in turn, is inseparable from the history of Spanish coloniality.

Third, this paper makes an argument about research on anarchism in contemporary Spanish and European societies. I agree with Casas-Cortés et al’s argument that social movements – rather than being mere objects of study – are themselves knowledge-producers, and that movements’ ‘knowledge-practices’ ought to be incorporated into our theoretical frameworks.

“Instead of detached, academic knowledge about movements that operate ‘out there,’ we argue for the value of seeing the continuous generation, circulation, and networked nature of heterogeneous knowledges, which in themselves work to make different futures possible” (Casas-Cortés et al 2006, 21). Drawing on their argument, I would critique many academic researchers of contemporary anarchist social movements for framing anarchism ‘metaphysically’ (in the Foucauldian sense): citing texts written by anarchist authors who have been dead for a hundred years, they reflexively adopt the historical, leftist anarchist movement’s ideological discourse, frame the struggle between anarchists and state institutions in highly Marxian, oppositional terms, and fail to acknowledge the multiplicity of different understandings of anarchism that are being articulated in many different contemporary societies. In contrast, a Foucauldian approach, by situating and contextualizing these anarchist movements, enables the researcher to engage with anarchist “knowledge-practices” on their own terms.

Furthermore, Casas-Cortés et al’s argument undermines the very possibility of abstractly and metaphysically defining the anarchist movement; the obvious alternative would be to situate anarchist movements by studying them ethnographically, using ethnographic accounts of those movements’ “knowledge-practices” as tools to undermine singular, epistemological definitions of anarchism. Personally, I believe that historical and ethnographic methods are inseparable, that the historian’s deconstruction of metaphysical unity and theoretical abstraction should necessarily be tied to the ethnographer’s attentiveness to context and fragmentation (Ortner 1995; Wolford 2006). While I have been limited to historical analysis in this paper, I plan to conduct a detailed ethnographic study of contemporary Spanish rural anarchist communities in preparation for my dissertation.

In the first section of this paper, using anarchist texts, I explore the different ways in which the term ‘anarchism’ has been theoretically framed, outlining the distinction between leftist and post-leftist anarchist discourse. In the second section – using Foucault’s theory of governmentality, together with Modernity/Coloniality theory – I depart from these theoretical articulations of anarchism, and analyze the conditions of possibility of the Spanish anarchist movement, by examining the historical development of the modern Spanish state. In the third section, I describe the agrarian anarchist collectivization movement that arose during the Spanish Civil War, outline the particular models of socioeconomic organization that those collectives created, and focus on the tensions existing within the anarchist movement. In the fourth section, I use Foucault’s understanding of ‘freedom’ to discuss the distinction between historical, leftist and contemporary, post-leftist anarchism. Finally, in the conclusion, I discuss the relevance of this paper for contemporary anarchist movements.

Section One: The Signification of Anarchism

*Ever reviled, accursed, ne'er understood,
Thou art the grisly terror of our age.
"Wreck of all order," cry the multitude,
"Art thou, and war and murder's endless rage."
O, let them cry. To them that ne'er have striven
The truth that lies behind a word to find,
To them the word's right meaning was not given.
But thou, O word, so clear, so strong, so pure,
Thou sayest all which I for goal have taken.
I give thee to the future! Thine secure
When each at last unto himself shall waken...*

-John Henry Mackay

In this section, I will outline and analyze a number of different ways in which ‘anarchism’ has been framed as a theoretical concept. I will also draw a distinction between leftist and post-leftist anarchist discourse, allowing me to destabilize the argument – often posited by anarchists, as well as by social movements researchers – that ‘anarchism’ is a singular, static discourse of social revolution. Then, in the remainder of this paper, I will situate these varying “interpretations” of anarchism in the context of the history of the development of the Spanish anarchist movement.

What does the term ‘anarchism’ signify? As Mackay points out, the most common signification of ‘anarchy’ in popular discourse is the equation of anarchy with chaos, or with the death of society – a signification which was first expressed by classical liberal philosophers. In *Leviathan*, Thomas Hobbes argues that the state is “the public soul, giving life and motion to the commonwealth; which expiring, the members are governed by it no more than the carcase of a

man by his departed though immortal soul.” (Hobbes 1958, 261) Likewise, to John Locke, when we

reduce all to Anarchy, and so effectually dissolve the Government... the People become a confused Multitude, without Order or Connexion.... [A] Government without Laws is, I suppose, a Mystery in Politicks, unconceivable to humane Capacity, and inconsistent with humane Society.” (Locke 1960, 429)

This argument has deep roots in liberal political discourse, and continues to be an incredibly common way of discursively positioning ‘anarchy.’

However, we can decenter this understanding of ‘anarchy’ by describing two particular structural functions that this particular definition performs. First, this liberal characterization of ‘anarchy’ is an integral discursive component of statist philosophy, through which the state is positioned as the only possible source of order in a modern, complex, industrialized society. As Malatesta puts it, “since it was thought that government was necessary and that without government there could only be disorder and confusion, it was natural and logical that anarchy, which means absence of government, should sound like absence of order.” (Malatesta 1995, 16) The liberal equation of the death of the state with the death of society is one of the many ways in which ‘the state’ is continually being discursively (re)constructed. In Foucault’s words, “is it not precisely those who talk of the state, of its history, development, and claims, ...who develop the ontology of this thing that would be the state?” (Foucault 2007, 248)

In one particular expression of this liberal, statist discourse, existing stateless societies are framed as ‘primitive’, as lacking the political sophistication and intellectual capacity necessary to construct modern political institutions; thus, for instance, the term ‘anarchy’ is often used to describe African societies in contemporary political discourse. Jeremy Bentham articulates this liberal argument particularly fittingly:

We know what it is for men to live without government, for we see instances of such a way of life... in many savage nations, or rather races of mankind; for instance, among the savages of New South Wales, whose way of living is so well known to us: ...no

government, and thence no laws – no laws, and thence no such things as rights... no property... [and] security not more than belongs to beasts (Bentham 1839, 500-1).

Pierre Clastres attacks this particular argument, asserting that ‘primitive’ societies – rather than having failed to develop ‘modern’ political institutions – have in fact constructed political mechanisms to prevent the concentration of political power that would lead to the development of a centralized state. To Clastres,

each one of us carries within himself [*sic*], internalized like the believer’s faith, the certitude that society exists for the state. How, then, can one conceive of the very existence of primitive societies if not as the rejects of universal history? (Clastres 1987, 189)

Second, this framing of ‘anarchy’ as the destruction of social order also performs an important structural function within Marxist discourse. As a theory of social revolution, Marxism has been discursively constructed in opposition to anarchism ever since the split between Marx and Bakunin in the First International (Thomas 1980)³. With notable exceptions, Marxists typically base their political projects on the capture of state power, whether through democratic elections or proletarian revolution. Thus, many Marxists legitimate their statist political practice by arguing that anarchists lack the organizational discipline necessary either to manage a post-revolutionary economic system, or to defend revolutionary gains against the counterrevolutionary bourgeoisie. For instance, Friedrich Engels wonders “how these people propose to run a factory, operate a railway or steer a ship without having in the last resort one deciding will, without single management” (Marx & Engels 1978, 729). Similarly, Eric Hobsbawm argues that anarchists’ proposed

solution in terms of direct democracy and small self-governing groups... [is not] either very valuable or very fully thought out... [B]oth the nature of the modern social economy and of modern scientific technology raise problems of considerable complexity for those who see the future as a world of self-governing small groups. (Hobsbawm 1973, 88)

³ Likewise, a *great* many anarchist theorists construct anarchism in opposition to Marxism. Indeed, I’m doing so right now.

There is clearly something powerful at stake for Marxist theorists in framing anarchism as an impossible project. Importantly, each of these Marxist critiques is based on a concept of revolutionary politics that is both *totalizing* and *teleological* – in which revolution is understood as a total, all-encompassing reorganization of space, actualized at a singular point in time. This leftist revolutionary discourse is characteristic of both historical Marxist and anarchist political ideology, as I will discuss in more detail below.

A second possibility would be to draw on abstract, theoretical definitions of anarchism, as articulated by participants in the anarchist movement. Many academic researchers of anarchist social movements draw on anarchists' self-theorizations to define anarchism; however, they tend to use texts written by late-19th and early-20th century 'leftist' anarchist activists in order to frame their understandings of what 'anarchism' signifies. However, as we will see, contemporary 'post-leftist' anarchist theorists have produced a very different discourse of anarchism, one which most academic researchers either ignore or only briefly acknowledge.

Historically, anarchist theory is typically classified into several traditional subtheories, which were clearly demarcated by the Black International in the 1880's: *individualist* anarchism, *collectivist/syndicalist* anarchism, and *communist* anarchism. Individualist anarchists (e.g., William Godwin and Max Stirner) argue for the replacement of capitalism and the state with an anti-authoritarian, market-based system of production, in which workers would own their own means of production; individualist anarchism is based on the premise that the state's enforcement of monopolies and property rights causes the oppressiveness of the capitalist system (Infoshop). Anarcho-syndicalists (e.g., Mikhail Bakunin and Rudolf Rocker) assert the centrality of syndicates (revolutionary labor unions of free producers, similar to the Russian *soviets* or the workers' councils of the German Left Communists) as the basic units of anarchist

pre- and post-revolutionary socioeconomic organization; according to anarcho-syndicalism, syndicalist organization allows resources to be efficiently allocated throughout a complex industrial socioeconomic system, while avoiding centralization and the concentration of political power (Rocker 2004, 54-88). Finally, anarcho-communists (e.g., Peter Kropotkin) demand the communal control of production and consumption as well as the abolition of money and property, and generally oppose any institutions of political or economic organization. (Infoshop) In 1930's Spain, as we will see, anarcho-syndicalist ideology was widespread among the urban working classes as well as among rural petty bourgeois producers; anarcho-communist theories were widespread among landless workers in the south of the country; and individualist anarchist ideology played a marginal role within the movement. During the Spanish Civil War, these differing ideological visions of post-revolutionary society were correlated with a very real and divisive factional struggle within the Spanish anarchist movement.

However, each of these various 19th- and early-20th-century anarchist political discourses shares in common a profoundly *leftist* understanding of anarchism, in which anti-statist politics takes primacy over all other political goals. In many ways, historical anarchist theory should be viewed as both emerging out of the same political context as historical Marxist philosophy: namely, the First International, which famously gave birth to these two fratricidal sets of leftist social movements. Thus, like 19th-century Marxists, who framed their political projects overwhelmingly in terms of the irreconcilable class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, historical anarchist theorists tended to fundamentally define the anarchist movement as existing in a relationship of pure opposition and conflict with the state, and (most importantly) to subordinate all other potential understandings of anarchist political practice to the master signifier of anti-statism.

Following other anarchist theorists such as Jason McQuinn (2002), Bob Black (1997), and John Zerzan (1994), I characterize the oppositional and reductionist terms in which historical anarchist discourse has been constructed – in which state and anti-state movement are portrayed as fundamentally distinct and irreconcilably opposed, and in which this opposition is framed as the central and overriding aspect of anarchist theory and practice – as *leftist anarchism*. The leftist anarchist political framework, while discursively framed as fundamentally opposing Marxism, is in many ways fundamentally Marxian: historical anarchists’ characterization of the pure, fundamental, and irreconcilable opposition that underpins their political framework bears strong similarities with the political philosophy of Karl Marx (and, through Marx, of Hegel).

On the one hand, historical Marxists construct a fundamentally totalizing political project, based on the dangerously facile argument that the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie is a sufficient condition for a national or global shift towards a socialist society; likewise, historical anarchists construct an equally leftist and totalizing political project, based on the dangerously facile argument that the destruction of ‘the state’ is a sufficient condition for the construction of an anti-authoritarian society on a national or global scale. On the other hand, leftist theorists – whether Marxist or anarchist – overwhelmingly focus on the ‘negative’ aspects of their utopian political projects (the destruction of the state and/or capitalism), and undertheorize the ‘positive,’ constructive aspects of their projects (creating the actual systems of political, social, and cultural relations that would constitute a revolutionary society). In both movements, utopian statements about these future societies thus tend to be overly abstract and philosophical, and largely fail to strategically consider what concrete social and political transformations the construction of such a society would actually necessitate. (The tragic effects of this undertheorization are apparent, for instance, in the statement of V.I. Lenin in 1920, that “Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the whole country” (Lenin, quoted in:

Viola 1996, 20). Having constructed a revolutionary discourse that focused solely on overthrowing the Russian state and the power of the capitalist class, the Bolsheviks failed to construct a truly revolutionary theory of revolution, and thus opened the political space for Stalin's bureaucratic perversion of the Soviet revolutionary state.)

Such leftist articulations of revolution – in which ‘anarchism’ simply signifies anti-statist politics – dominate the texts of late-19th and early-20th century anarchist theorists. Peter Kropotkin famously defines anarchism as “a principle or theory of life and conduct under which society is conceived without government” (Kropotkin 2002, 284). Mikhail Bakunin argues that “only when the State has ceased to exist [will] humanity... obtain its freedom, and the true interests of society... find their real satisfaction.” (Bakunin 1953, 299) Likewise, Errico Malatesta argues that “anarchy... signifies without government, the conditions of a people governing itself without benefit of constituted authority.” (Malatesta, in: Guérin 2, 1998, 6)

Furthermore, this leftist, fundamentally anti-statist definition of anarchism also predominates among contemporary academic researchers of anarchist movements, who tend to use texts by Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Proudhon to theoretically frame their discussions of anarchism. (This is akin to assuming that nothing worthwhile has been written by Marxists since Marx, Kautsky, and Lenin.) Indeed, even many contemporary *anarchist* academic researchers base their arguments on these same historical anarchist theorists: Todd May's description of anarchism in *The Political Philosophy of Poststructuralist Anarchism* is based the writings of Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Proudhon, while Saul Newman uses Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Stirner to frame his discussion of anarchism in *From Bakunin to Lacan* (May 1994, 45-66; Newman 2001, 37-74).

As Jason McQuinn points out, this tendency of academic anarchists is due in part to the historical circumstances that have led to the current shift towards anti-authoritarian political theories among many academics: namely, the rapid decline of authoritarian state socialism.

As the anarchist milieu has mushroomed in the last decade... a significant minority of [its] growth has come from former [Marxist] leftists... Most of the former leftists entering the anarchist milieu bring with them the conscious and unconscious leftist attitudes, prejudices, habits, and assumptions that structured their old political milieu... Part of the problem is that many former leftists tend to misunderstand anarchism only as a form of anti-statist leftism... Many simply don't understand the huge divide between a self-organizing movement *seeking to abolish every form of social alienation* and a merely political movement seeking to reorganize production in a more egalitarian form (McQuinn 2002, 2, emphasis added).

McQuinn contrasts this leftist understanding of anarchist politics with what he calls *post-leftist anarchism*, which I will now discuss in more detail.

Many contemporary anarchist theorists – often, but not always, describing themselves as ‘post-leftist anarchists’ – have broadened anarchist theory beyond simple anti-statism, and towards a more comprehensive anti-oppressive conception of anarchist political theory and practice. For instance, David Graeber defines anarchism as “an attitude, or perhaps one might even say a faith: the rejection of certain types of social relations, the confidence that others would be much better” (Graeber 2004, 4). Peggy Kornegger argues that “anarchists call for the dissolution (rather than the seizure) of power – of human over human, [as well as] of state over community.” (Kornegger 2002, 22) Likewise, to David Wieck,

anarchism can be understood as the generic social and political idea that expresses negation of all power, sovereignty, domination, and hierarchical division, and a will to their dissolution; and expresses rejection of all dichotomizing concepts that on the grounds of nature, reason, history, God, divide people into those dominant and those justly subordinated. Anarchism is therefore more than anti-statism. (Wieck 1979, 139)

Post-leftist anarchists are drawing on these definitions when they argue that anarchism is “a self-organizing movement seeking to abolish every form of social alienation.” (McQuinn 2002, 2)

Thus, post-leftist anarchists seek to replace the fundamentally anti-statist discourse of leftist anarchists – ultimately based in Marxian philosophy – with a political discourse in which relations of hierarchy and authority are rejected in a more total and encompassing sense. In

contemporary anarchist discourse, critiques of a particular manifestation of power or oppression – colonialism, or racism, or even ‘logocentrism’ or ‘modernity’ – are only fully radical if they abandon the reductionism of leftist social movements, and acknowledge the fundamental interconnection and inseparability of all forms of oppression, and the impossibility of challenging one such manifestation of power in isolation from all others. As Wieck puts it, “anarchism can be understood as the... *negation of all power*” (Ibid, 139, emphasis added).

However, Foucault’s theory of power would appear to contradict this post-leftist anarchist struggle against power in its totality. In a Spinozist reading of Nietzsche that has strongly influenced contemporary philosophy, Foucault interprets Nietzsche’s concept of the ‘will to power’ not as a philosophical argument, but rather as a description of the ontological condition of the world. “The world viewed from inside, the world defined and determined according to its ‘intelligible character’ – it would be ‘will to power’ and nothing else.” (Nietzsche 2000, 238) In his reading of Nietzsche, Foucault argues the world should be understood as the constant interaction of these ‘wills to power;’ basing his arguments on this Nietzschean conception of power, Foucault asserts that

power must be understood in the first instance as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization... Power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere. (Foucault 1978, 92-3)

Foucault’s conclusion is thus that there is no outside to power – and thus, from a Foucauldian perspective, if anarchism is framed as the unconditional rejection of power, then the anarchist political project is by definition impossible.

However, the latter critique of post-leftist anarchism is based on several assumptions about what exactly the anarchist project is; by problematizing these assumptions, we can better theorize the distinction between leftist and post-leftist anarchism. Unlike left-anarchism, post-

leftist anarchism is both *anti-teleological* and *anti-totalizing*; as we will see, post-leftist anarchists critique and attack power in its totality, but they do not base their political strategies on the totalizing, teleological, and impossible project of totally overthrowing and eliminating all social relations of power and oppression.

First, rather than being teleological, post-leftist anarchist discourse can be defined as ‘ontological.’ As David Graeber argues, anarchists “presume no inevitable course of history” – unlike the Marxist theory of historical materialism, which frames Revolution as the necessary outcome of history (Graeber 2004, 11). Likewise, Hakim Bey rejects “all eschatology and metaphysics of removal, all bleary nostalgia and strident futurismo, in favor of a paroxysm or seizure of *presence*... [T]he goals of ontological anarchism appear in its flowering.” (Bey 2003, 23) Post-leftist anarchism can be understood as a critique of the political perspective articulated by statements such as ‘Another World Is Possible’: to post-leftist anarchists, such statements draw emphasis away from the ‘other worlds’ that are always-already being created, contested, and re-formed, in a constant “multiplicity of points of resistance” (Foucault 1978, 95). Thus,

‘Revolution’ is not understood as a singular point in time, at which an entire society will be completely transformed; rather, revolution is a *process*, and even the eradication of coercive institutions will not automatically create a liberatory society. (Ehrlich et al 1979, 15)

This post-leftist anarchist perspective is derived above all from the Situationists, who transformed Trotsky’s concept of ‘limited permanent revolution’ into an ultimatum for a “generalized permanent revolution.” (Knabb 1981, 65) Emphasizing the ontological aspects of their revolutionary project, the Situationists famously argued that “people who talk about revolution and class struggle without referring explicitly to everyday life, without understanding what is subversive about love and what is positive in the refusal of constraints – such people

have corpses in their mouths.” (Vaneigem 2003, 26) Deliberately echoing the Situationists, Hakim Bey asks:

Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom? Logic and emotion unite to condemn such a supposition. Reason demands that one cannot struggle for what one does not know (Bey 2003, 96).

While historical, leftist anarchist movements (e.g., the leadership of the Spanish CNT) emphasize the teleological project of planning and pre-determining the politico-economic structure of post-revolutionary society, post-leftist anarchists work at *creating* anarchist ‘autonomous zones’ (infoshops, squat networks, activist convergences, etc.) that are living experiments in horizontal, anti-authoritarian social relations.

Second, contemporary, post-leftist anarchists are *anti-totalizing*: in this way as well, they are distinct from leftist anarchists, who (like historical Marxists) are fundamentally politically oriented towards a revolutionary project of transforming socio-economic structures on a global scale, and dehumanize all opponents to this project by framing them as “bourgeois” or “counter-revolutionary.” Post-leftist anarchists’ anti-totalizing understandings of resistance bear strong similarities to Foucault’s argument that

resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power... [P]oints of resistance are present everywhere in the power network. Hence there is no single locus of great Refusal, no soul of revolt, source of all rebellions, or pure law of the revolutionary. Instead there is a plurality of resistances, each of them a special case. (Foucault 1978, 95-6)

It is important to point out that anti-totalizing countercurrents did exist within earlier anarchist movements, especially in the writings of feminist anarchists such as Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre, as well as in the theoretical proclamations of the Spanish anarcho-feminist group *Mujeres Libres*. Thus, to Goldman, “the methods of anarchism do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances... Anarchism does not stand for

military drill and uniformity; it does, however, stand for the spirit of revolt, in whatever form” (Goldman 1998, 74). Likewise, Errico Malatesta cautions that

one may prefer communism, or individualism, or collectivism, or any other kind of system imaginable, and work by propaganda and example for the triumph of one’s ideas, but it is necessary to beware, on pain of inevitable disaster, of affirming that one’s own system is the only one, the infallible one, good for all men, in all places, and at all times, and that it should be made to triumph by other means than by persuasion. (Malatesta, quoted in: Bolloten 1991, 77)

However, such arguments were assigned a subaltern position within the historical anarchist movement (as was the anarcho-feminist movement more generally); anarchist political institutions, such as the CNT, were fundamentally organized around precisely that totalizing conception of anarchism that Goldman and Malatesta are arguing against.

Critiquing these political practices of leftist social movements, post-leftist anarchist theorists argue that totalizing discourses of revolution have frequently been used to support and justify totalitarian revolutionary political institutions. Hakim Bey illustrates this point when he rhetorically asks: “What of the anarchist dream, the Stateless state, the Commune, the autonomous zone with *duration*, a free society, a free *culture*?” To which he responds that

revolution has never yet resulted in achieving this dream. The vision comes to life in the moment of uprising – but as soon as ‘the Revolution’ triumphs and the State returns, the dream [is] already betrayed... Realism demands not only that we give up *waiting* for ‘the Revolution’ but also that we give up *wanting* it. (Bey 2003, 98-9)

Likewise, Raoul Vaneigem argues that “a community which is not built on individual demands and their dialectic can only reinforce the oppressive violence of power.” (Vaneigem 2003, 49)

Such arguments illustrate the claim of many historical anarchists that contemporary anarchist discourse has shifted in important ways closer to the individualist anarchism of Max Stirner and Federica Montseny, and away from the ‘social anarchism’ of anarcho-syndicalists and anarcho-communists. This discursive shift corresponds to a transformation in contemporary anarchist political practice: while continuing (almost alone amongst social movements in the global North) to advocate and practice violent anti-state resistance, contemporary anarchists tend to devote

their resources more towards building revolutionary communities in the margins of capitalist society. However, this increased emphasis on projects of autonomy (Wolford & Wilson 2006) – largely absent from earlier anarchist discourses, including that of the CNT – has often been denounced by an older generation of anarchists. In a highly polemical article on contemporary “lifestyle anarchists,” Murray Bookchin argues that their

preoccupations with the ego and its uniqueness and its polymorphous concepts of resistance are steadily eroding the socialistic character of the libertarian tradition... [M]any lifestyle anarchists articulate Michel Foucault's approach of ‘personal insurrection’ rather than social revolution, premised as it is on an ambiguous and cosmic critique of power as such rather than on a demand for the institutionalized empowerment of the oppressed in popular assemblies, councils, and/or confederations. (Bookchin 1995, 10)

Bookchin’s tone aside, it would be difficult to characterize this non-totalizing aspect of contemporary anarchism better than he has done: post-leftist anarchists reject the problematic and totalizing project of “institutionalized empowerment” – a project which found tragic expression in the history of the Spanish anarchist movement (as I will describe in section three).

As McQuinn puts it,

[o]ne of the most fundamental principles of anarchism is that social organization must serve free individuals and free groups, not vice versa. Anarchy cannot exist when individuals or social groups are dominated – whether that domination is facilitated and enforced by outside forces, or by their own organization. (McQuinn 2002, 4)

In addition, post-leftist anarchism is *anti-ideological*. McQuinn defines ideology as forms of “consciousness in which people no longer see themselves directly as subjects in their relation to the world.” (McQuinn 2002, 7) Through ideology, leftist political movements – like the increasingly institutional capitalist political systems which they often come to resemble – create a politics of mediation that allows revolutionary politics to be institutionalized, and robbed of all self-emancipatory aspects.

This critique of ideology also draws strongly on both Situationist and structuralist theory. To Vaneigem,

[w]ords serve Power... more faithfully than most men do, and more scrupulously than other mediations... For all transcendence depends on language and is developed through a system of signs and symbols... [L]anguage swoops down on living experience, ties it hand and foot, robs it of its substance, *abstracts* it. It always has categories ready to condemn anything which [Power] cannot contain, to summon into existence-for-Power that which slumbers in nothingness because it has not place as yet in the system of Order. The repetition of familiar signs is the basis of ideology. (Vaneigem 2003, 101)

This understanding of language – as a central point of mediation between power and the subject – clearly bears strong similarities to many theories that have emerged out of French structuralism, especially those of Foucault and Claude Lévi-Strauss. Foucault, however, does not speak of “Power” in the singular terms in which Vaneigem defines it, but rather considers the role of the ideological position of the knowledge-producer (who Foucault refers to as the “author”) in limiting the autonomous production of meaning:

The author allows a limitation of the cancerous and dangerous proliferation of significations within a world where one is thrifty not only with one’s resources and riches, but also with one’s discourses and their significations... [The author] is a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes, and chooses; in short, by which one impedes the free circulation, the free manipulation, the free composition, decomposition, and recomposition of fiction... The author is therefore the ideological figure by which one marks the manner in which we fear the proliferation of meaning. (Foucault 1984, 118-19)

Leftist social movements – whether organized into Leninist political parties or anarcho-syndicalist labor unions – rely fundamentally on the systematic centralization, categorization, and control of meaning through systems of ideology, through the structural function of the ‘author,’ or theorist (whether Mao or Durruti).

Whether the abstraction is God, the State, the Party, the Organization, Technology, the Family, Humanity, Peace, Ecology, Nature, Work, Love, or even Freedom; if it is conceived and presented as if it is an active subject with a being of its own which makes demands of us, then it is the center of an ideology... Leftism, as the reification and mediation of social rebellion, is always ideological because it always demands that people conceive of themselves first of all in terms of their

roles within and relationships to leftist organizations (McQuinn 2002, 7-8)

However, post-leftists reject ideology as a mediated, representational, and ultimately oppressive process by which social struggle transformed into a signifier: “Post-leftist anarchists reject all ideologies in favor of the individual and communal construction of self-theory.” (Ibid, 8) Here, McQuinn references “communal” construction of self-theory in order to emphasize that anarchists do not reject the collective construction of meaning; rather, McQuinn emphasizes group decision-making as a process by which both the group and the individuals that compose it are acknowledged as subjects – and, indeed, that the subjectivity of the group and the subjectivity of the individual are mutually constitutive.

In this thesis, I employ post-leftist anarchist discourse not only as an object of study, but also as an epistemological framework, which – together with Foucauldian theory – allows me to challenge the leftist (i.e., totalizing, teleological, and ideological) terms in which the political projects of social movements are often described. Specifically, I argue that the anti-totalizing aspect of post-leftist anarchism can be used to deconstruct the leftist ideological separation between ‘power’ and ‘resistance’ – between the social movement, and the institutions that it opposes – that characterizes the work of many social movements researchers. Contemporary post-leftist anarchism is a social movement that adopts a perspective of skepticism and critique towards its own political practice, by critically examining the ways in which apparatuses of oppression (racism, sexism, etc.) function within the anarchist movement itself. (Once again, post-leftist anarchists differ in this respect from leftist anarchists, who – like historical Marxists – discursively construct the anarchist movement as a transcendental position of pure exteriority and radicalism; thus, even many historical anarcho-feminists, such as Emma Goldman and Voltairine de Cleyre, fail to apply their feminist critiques to the anarchist movement itself.)

Thus, we could argue that this post-leftist anarchist critique of ideology demands that we reject the possibility of assigning a singular, abstract identity to the multitude of anarchist movements. Likewise, if anarchism is defined ontologically, this would seem to preclude any possibility of an *a priori*, epistemological definition of anarchism. (In a very similar, more general argument, Maribel Casas-Cortés et al emphasize “the continuous generation, circulation, and networked nature of heterogeneous knowledges” through social movements’ “knowledge-practices” (Casas-Cortés et al 2006, 21).) From this perspective there is no singular, theoretically-defined ‘anarchism,’ but rather that there are only people who, identifying themselves as anarchists, continually (re)create anarchist theory through their discourses and practices of resistance. (We saw this in the introduction: to the residents of La Base, anarchism is not primarily a set of beliefs about the nature of social action, or about the distinction between totalizing and non-totalizing political discourse; rather, it is a particular set of ways of living in the world, which unceasingly evolve through their practice in a multiplicity of social movements.)

In this paper, I follow Woford (2003) in arguing that we cannot simply try to understand ‘anarchism’ by reading its definition off of the movement’s ideological construction of itself; rather, we should construct our understandings of a particular anarchist movement based on a situated examination of the historical and geographical context in which that movement arose. In the next section of this paper, I will situate the historical Spanish anarchist movement by examining that movement in the context of 16th-19th century Spanish historical development – specifically, in the context of the historical development of the Spanish state.

Section Two: Anarchism, Governmentality, and the Coloniality of Power

If the genealogist refuses to extend his [sic] faith in metaphysics, if he [sic] listens to history, he [sic] finds that there is 'something altogether different' behind things: not a timeless and essential secret, but the secret that they have no essence or that their essence was fabricated in a piecemeal fashion from alien forms.

- Michel Foucault

Nietzsche, Genealogy, History (1977)

In the previous section, I theorized the distinction between leftist and post-leftist anarchism; now, through an analysis of the history of the Spanish state, I will outline the historical conditions of the historical Spanish anarchist movement. Doing so will enable me to undermine the ideological and totalizing – i.e., leftist – discourse which the historical Spanish anarchist movement used to frame itself. I will do this by examining the powerful division that existed within the movement throughout its history, between the dominant anarcho-syndicalist political project of urban working classes and rural petit bourgeois, and the subaltern anarcho-communist political project of rural landless workers. This discussion will frame the following section, in which I will consider the impact of this division between rural and urban anarchism on a particular historical case study: the agrarian anarchist collectivization movement during the Spanish Civil War.

As Walther Bernecker points out (Bernecker 1982, 94-7), the existing literature on the history of Spanish anarchism largely falls into three categories: anarchist historians, Marxist ‘millenarianists,’ and new social historians. The first two of these three schools of historiography construct anarchism based on a conspicuously leftist conception of social movements: both theorize ‘resistance’ as a transcendental position, and frame anti-systemic social movements in naturalizing terms. The social history school avoids similarly essentializing anarchism by radically

contextualizing and situating the movement, and by critically unpacking the ideological terms in which the movement has framed itself; however, these historians' relatively contemporary focus prevents them from exploring in greater depth the historical context within which the Spanish anarchist movement emerged.

The first school of Spanish anarchist historiography consists of anarchist researchers and activists who, during the Spanish Civil War, studied the CNT from within the organization. In this category fall researchers such as Gaston Leval, Augustin Souchy, and José Peirats, all of whom wrote extensive accounts of agrarian collectivization; to this group, one should add writers such as Sam Dolgoff, Murray Bookchin, or Robert Alexander, who – while writing long after the war, primarily in the 1960's and 70's – were highly sympathetic to the CNT, and who largely base their histories of the CNT collectives on the first-hand accounts of earlier anarchist writers such as Leval and Peirats. Their descriptions of the collectivization process are invaluable for the wealth of information that they provide, and any research on anarchist collectivization must necessarily rely heavily on them.

However, these sources are predictably biased, especially when describing more problematic aspects of agrarian CNT collectivization. Indeed, this particular historical school has discursively created a conspicuously leftist ideological myth about the agrarian collectives, in which anarchist peasants are described as heroic subalterns, collectivization is portrayed as a totally grassroots-based and non-coercive process, and the presence of any power imbalances within the collectives (and between rural landless workers and the working-class-based CNT leadership) is erased from the historical record. Furthermore, in the works of these anarchist historians, the movement itself is naturalized: the rise of the Spanish anarchist movement is explained rather facilely as a 'natural' reaction to the oppression of rural elites. (This argument fails to explain why a specifically *anarchist* movement arose in response to this oppression.) This naturalization is

part of these anarchist historians' leftist, totalizing project of constructing anarchism as a metaphysically transcendental position of pure, natural opposition to socioeconomic oppression; Bookchin, while the most talented of these historians, exemplifies this totalizing discourse when he refers to "the enormous antiquity of anarchistic visions, their irrepressibility and continual reemergence in history" (Bookchin 1977, 17).

A second historical school, derived from the writings of Bernaldo de Quirós and Díaz del Moral, naturalizes anarchism in a somewhat different way. These historians explain agrarian anarchist politics as an expression of the particular "temperament" of the Spanish peasant, arguing that "anarchism as a dynamic mass movement with a social-revolutionary thrust had come together in Spain with the emotions underlying a traditional attitude to life, which it had only needed to stimulate." (Bernecker 1982, 94) This argument was later adapted into a Marxist framework by Gerald Brenan and Eric Hobsbawm, who argue that rural Spanish anarchism was an "archaic" social movement, and that rural anarchists were attempting to reinstate the "agrarian collectivism" that had been lost when the feudal system of land tenure was dismantled in the 19th century. Furthermore, they argue that rural Spanish anarchism was "millenarian": that the "epidemic" manner in which anarchist uprisings spread demonstrate the anarchist movement's cultural derivation from Christian millenarianism (Hobsbawm 1959, 89-90). From these arguments, Hobsbawm draws the conclusion that

classical anarchism is... a form of peasant movement almost incapable of effective adaptation to modern conditions, though it is their outcome. Had a different ideology penetrated the Andalucian countryside in the 1870's, it might have transformed the spontaneous and unstable rebelliousness of the peasants into something far more formidable [and] more disciplined (Ibid, 92).

This argument opens itself readily to several different critiques. First, as Temma Kaplan points out, Brenan and Hobsbawm's understanding of rural Spanish anarchists as a 'primitive'

movement of impoverished peasants is contradicted by the complex class politics on which the rural anarchist movement was based; above all, the agrarian anarchist movement was rooted in a class of landless, semi-proletarian agricultural workers, not in the traditional, landed peasantry that Hobsbawm and Brenan erroneously describe as its social base (Kaplan 1975, 1977). Second, post-leftist anarchists would argue that Hobsbawm's definition of revolutionary 'success' in the above passage is based on a highly leftist conception of social revolution as a total transformation of a particular society; certainly, there are other, less totalizing ways in which social movement agents could frame themselves as being successful.

Finally, drawing on the anti-essentialist perspectives of social movement researchers such as Ortner and Wolford, we can critique both the anarchist and the 'millenarian' schools of Spanish anarchist historiography for basing their arguments on theoretical essentializations of resistance. In different ways, researchers from both these schools, in framing resistance as a 'natural', 'organic' reaction to oppression and domination, are constructing resistance as a transcendental term. (For instance, Hobsbawm repeatedly refers to rebellions as "epidemics" – a problematic term to use when attempting to describe the complexities of human social relations (Hobsbawm 1959, 79).) Furthermore, both sets of researchers frame "resistance" as signifying "participation in traditionally leftist, anti-capitalist labor movements" – thus failing to consider the multitude of ways in which landless peasant anarchists practiced resistance against landed elites and agents of state power.

Beginning with Temma Kaplan's *Origenes sociales del anarquismo en Andalucía* (1977), a third school of social historians has given a far more theoretically nuanced treatment to the study of Spanish anarchism. While drawing on the works of earlier historians such as Hobsbawm and Brenan, Kaplan breaks with their work by interpreting anarchist strikes not as manifestations of

millenarian irrationality, but rather as expressions of the rational resistance strategies of anarchist peasants (Kaplan 1977). Kaplan unpacks the assumption that Andalusian peasant anarchists were invariably poor and landless, and draws on detailed archival research to demonstrate that the class composition of the anarchist movement in Andalucía was much more complex than prior researchers had realized. (According to Kaplan, while the rank-and-file of the peasant anarchist movement was largely comprised of rural landless laborers, the movement leadership consisted predominantly of middle landowners and skilled laborers.) (Kaplan 1975) The effect of Kaplan's work, combined with the fall of the Franco regime, has opened Spanish anarchist historiography up to a new generation of historians, who have brought much more theoretically sophisticated perspectives to this field of study (Bosch 1983; Casanova 1985, 1992; Esenwein 1989; Radcliff 1996; Uría 2005). Throughout this thesis, I draw heavily on the work of these social historians, who profoundly challenge prior understandings of Spanish anarchism in a wide variety of important ways.

However, Kaplan's perspective is problematic in two key ways. First, in arguing that the resistance practices of Spanish anarchists – rather than being “disorganized,” or expressions of “pre-anarchist forms of protest” – were expressions of “their rational belief in themselves and their cause,” (Kaplan 1975, 70), Kaplan is discursively framing these anarchist agrarian landless workers using particular concepts, such as ‘rationality’ and ‘organization,’ that are themselves based on what Wendy Wolford calls the “hypothetical ideal of rational, well-informed actors” that characterizes liberal social movements research (Wolford 2003, 204). Thus, in contrasting “rational” agrarian anarchism with the disorganized “pre-anarchist forms of protest,” Kaplan is echoing Hobsbawm's devaluation of these ‘disorganized’ and ‘pre-modern’ resistance practices. Both theorists are thus implicitly positioning modern, leftist social movements as the foundational articulations of true, meaningful resistance; these two theorists only disagree over

whether or not the anarchist movement of these 19th-century landless farmworkers should be understood as fitting into that category.

Second (and more centrally to my argument), an important focus of the first two schools of historical research – the question of exactly how it came about that the social struggles of specific groups in Spanish society were expressed in specifically *anarchist* terms – cannot adequately be answered using the arguments of Kaplan and other social historians. For example, when Kaplan argues that the economic depression in Jerez in 1863 led to the subsistence crises that drove petty producers and skilled workers into labor syndicates that later evolved into the anarchist *Federación Regional Española* (Kaplan 1975, 56-8), she is merely pushing the ‘black box’ of the emergence of the anarchist movement back to 1863; she fails to consider why that depression caused Andalusian petty producers and skilled workers to choose particularly *anarchist* repertoires of resistance, rather than any other repertoires available to them at the time. In the remainder of this section, I will approach this question by examining the historical conditions that made it possible for a set of political practices referred to as ‘anarchism’ to occupy the particular structural position that they did in the agrarian politics of late-19th and early-20th century Spain.

In the remainder of this section, I will examine the historical conditions of Spanish anarchism, by illustrating the interconnections between the history of the agrarian anarchist movement and the history of the late-19th-century Spanish state. I will do so by examining the impact of the colonial encounter of 1492 on both of these sets of actors. Examining the history of the Spanish state will allow me to decenter the Spanish anarchist movement, by demonstrating that the conflict that characterized the late-19th and early-20th century Spanish anarchist movement, rather than being an ideological dispute internal to the anarchist

movement, was itself inseparable from the uniquely complex and heterogeneous historical development of Spanish state technologies of power. In doing so, I will methodologically combine Michel Foucault's theory of governmentality (2007) with the concept of the 'coloniality of power' articulated by the Modernity/Coloniality school of Latin American historiography, especially Anibal Quijano (1993, 2000), Enrique Dussel (2000), and Carmen Medeiros (2005).

First, I base my argument on the central thesis of the Modernity/Coloniality school of historiography: that "coloniality," or "the persistence of colonial relations of oppression and domination in the process of nation-state building" in Latin America (Medeiros 27), is an inseparable yet undertheorized component of the construction of European modernity. To Quijano, the Modernity/Coloniality framework allows researchers to unpack and make sense of Latin Americans' fundamentally ambiguous relationship to 'modernity' – a term which, on the one hand, signifies a European intellectual project that has thoroughly colonized Latin American philosophy and thought, and, on the other hand, signifies the brutal, racialized exclusion of millions of Latin Americans from the modern European/American system of political, economic, and cultural power (Quijano 1993, 140-5).

However, I argue that we should apply the Modernity/Coloniality theoretical framework not only to Latin American history, but to European history as well: in doing so, we can decenter and de-essentialize our understandings of Europe, by focusing attention on the processes of brutal and violent exclusion – erased from European historiography and philosophy – that are inseparable components of modern European history, and especially of the construction of the modern European state. While Modernity/Coloniality researchers have largely neglected to systemically apply their framework to European history, both Quijano and Dussel have briefly outlined the influence of coloniality on the history of the Spanish state. To Quijano,

after the expulsion of the Muslims and Jews, Spain... became a conveyor belt for moving the resources of America to the emergent centers of financial and commercial

capital. At the same time, after the violent and successful attack against the autonomy of the rural communities and cities and villages, it remained trapped in a feudal-like seigneurial [*sic*] structure of power under the authority of a repressive and corrupt monarchy and church... All of the fights to force the controllers of power to allow or negotiate some democratization of society and the state were defeated, notably the liberal revolution of 1810-12. In this way the combined internal colonization and aristocratic patterns of political and social power proved to be fatal for the nationalization of Spanish society and state (Quijano 2000, 559).

Thus, the Modernity/Coloniality framework makes it possible to theorize the modern Spanish nation-state, and the anarchist movement that developed dialectically alongside that state, in terms of the fundamentally colonial history of Spanish state power – a coloniality which was developed as a means of subjugating Indigenous Americans, but soon became used against subaltern Spanish peasants as well.

In this section, I will combine this Modernity/Coloniality theoretical perspective with Foucault's theory of the state in *Security, Territory, Population* (2007). In this lecture series, Foucault outlines an anti-essentialist theory of the state, in which he describes "governmentality" as the quintessentially modern modality of power, distinct from the "disciplinary" forms of power that he describes in *Discipline and Punish* (1977a). Thus, Foucault defines three distinct "economies of power":

first, the state of justice [or sovereignty], born in a feudal type of territoriality and broadly corresponding to a society of customary and written law, with a whole interplay of commitments and litigations; second, the administrative [or disciplinary] state that corresponds to a society of regulations and disciplines; and finally, a state of government [or governmentality] that is no longer essentially defined by its territoriality, by the surface occupied, but by a mass: the mass of its population... This [third] state of government... essentially bears on the population and calls upon and employs economic knowledge as an instrument (Foucault 2007, 110).

Foucault explicitly points out that 'sovereignty,' 'discipline,' and 'governmentality' should not be understood as mutually exclusive, historically successive periods of state power; instead, he characterizes these three as "technologies of power," and argues that all three coexist in the modern state. Still, he does argue that one of these three technologies of power will predominate

in a particular society, at a particular point in history; thus, *Security, Territory, Population* is a genealogical study of the historical processes by which the medieval French “state of justice” was gradually “governmentalized,” as mechanisms of governmentality gradually assumed the pre-eminent position amongst French state technologies of power. Foucault’s fundamental message in this book is that the state should not be essentialized, but rather that the concrete technologies of state power should be critically distinguished and analyzed, and that the circulation of these political technologies into other social realms should also be examined.

Foucault’s anti-essentialist theory of the state is clearly highly relevant to the study of anarchism: both historical and contemporary discourse is typically based on the essentializing assumption that all power and oppression derives from ‘the state’ (a perspective which contradicts the Nietzschean/Foucauldian understanding of power as fundamentally productive, rather than repressive). In contrast with this anarchist essentialization of the state, Foucault argues that

we know the fascination that the love or horror of the state exercises today; we know our attachment to the birth of the state, to its history, advance, power, and abuses... [T]his reductive view of the relative importance of the state in comparison with something else nonetheless makes the state absolutely essential as the target to be attacked... But the state, doubtless no more today than in the past, does not have this unity, individuality, and rigorous functionality, nor, I would go so far as to say, this importance. (Ibid, 109)

In this section, drawing on Foucault’s theory of governmentality, I argue that the specificity of the Spanish state – a specificity which is powerfully interconnected with the fundamental coloniality of 19th-century Spanish society – is characterized in part by, first, the failure of the Spanish state to develop political technologies of governmentality until far later than other Western European states, and, second, the geographically uneven ways in which governmental political technologies were deployed in late-19th century Spain. This historical analysis of the Spanish state allows me to decenter historical, leftist anarchist ideology, by demonstrating that

the emergence of the Spanish anarchist movement was inseparably interconnected with the historical development of the very institution that it discursively constructed itself in opposition to. Specifically, I argue that the profound division within the late-19th century CNT – between, on the one hand, the anarcho-syndicalism of the working classes of Barcelona, and, on the other hand, the anarcho-communism of the landless farmworkers of Andalucía – is inseparable from the historical development of governmentality as a political technology of the Spanish state.

During the 16th century, the Spanish state constructed a vast apparatus of colonial domination and extraction, and the functioning of this apparatus would fundamentally transform political, economic, and social life on both sides of the Atlantic. Between 1540 and 1700, the Spanish colonial apparatus oversaw the extraction of 50,000 tons of silver from the Spanish New World, thus doubling existing European silver reserves (Kamen 2003, 286). The large-scale extraction of silver bullion from Bolivia and Mexico began in the mid-16th century, and American silver comprised roughly 35% of total Spanish state revenues by the early 1550's; by the 1590's, the value of annual imports of American bullion was equivalent to roughly 5% of Spanish economic output. This vast influx of silver inevitably drove up prices, initiating a historically unprecedented period of inflation that revolutionized Spanish society, enriching the Crown and domestic and foreign merchants at the expense of the general population. The consequent immiseration of the peasantry resulted in the emigration of a quarter million peasants to America during the 16th century (Casey 1999, 25-6, 68; Kamen 2005, 95-102).

However – lacking the institutional framework (or the incentive) to build apparatuses of power aimed towards constructing a modern, capitalist socioeconomic system – the Spanish state instead spent huge sums constructing a massive European and colonial military apparatus. Continuing to pursue the “claim of universal monarchy” that characterized the medieval

European sovereign state system, the Spanish state massively increased military expenditures beginning in the early 17th century, spending its vast American silver revenues on imperial projects of European domination (Kamen 2005, 228). This unprecedented, silver-fuelled boom in military spending left the Spanish state enormously indebted, with interest payments sucking up a rapidly growing proportion of its vast colonial silver remittances.⁴

Consequently, towards the end of the 16th century, the balance of power in Spain shifted away from the increasingly indebted state, and towards the ascendant Spanish social classes of merchants and financiers. Eventually spreading to England and Holland as well, this merchant class was the primary agent of economic change in early modern Europe – using the influx of American bullion to construct the economic foundations of a modern, global capitalist economy, increasingly based on manufacturing and trade of American agricultural commodities and natural resources, as well as on the African slave trade. Large numbers of American silver mines fell into private ownership, and, after the introduction of a royal silver levy in the 1590's, the illegal trade in silver expanded dramatically. Within Spain, the merchant class used its silver-fueled wealth to undermine the socially rigid *Reconquista* feudal system; this enabled merchants to modernize and centralize agricultural production, which further undermined both feudal productive relations and food security. After the enforcement of traditional Christian anti-usury laws was relaxed in the late 16th century, a newly powerful financial elite assumed unprecedented power over the Spanish economy (Kamen 2005, 105-17; Casey 70-74).

However, the Spanish state also lacked the means to constrain these flows of capital within its borders. Beginning in the early 17th century, English, French, and Dutch financiers began intervening directly into the Spanish-American trading network, and the Spanish economy gradually became dominated by foreign finance, growing increasingly subservient to the

⁴ This structural position of 17th-century Spain thus bears interesting similarities to that of the 21st-century United States.

developing capitalist world-system (Kamen 2005, 181; Kamen 2003, 294-5). Seville, once the economic center of Europe, declined in economic importance, while financiers and traders in London and Amsterdam grew increasingly powerful. This silver-funded transnational network of provincial elites and traders rapidly became the true foundation of the Spanish imperial regime, and the Crown gradually came to rely on international bankers to fund most of its imperial operations (Kamen 2003, 287-8). Thus, this ‘privatization’ should not be understood as distinct from the Spanish state; rather, foreign and Spanish financiers increasingly formed an inseparable part of the structure of the Spanish state apparatus.

Thus, at a time when, as Foucault points out, other European states were developing political apparatuses of ‘governmentality’ (political apparatuses of economic development and demographic management, aimed at constructing and managing a modern, capitalist economy), the fundamentally colonial Spanish state continued to rely on hyper-militarized political technologies of ‘sovereignty’ (political apparatuses of military domination and economic extraction, aimed at maximizing the immediate political power of the state). As James Casey points out, the Spanish state’s overwhelming emphasis on protecting imperial trade – together with the inability of the inefficient, corrupt royal bureaucracy to establish any kind of national tax collection infrastructure, and the unwillingness of the nobility to cede privileges of direct taxation to the vastly bloated, highly corrupt colonial state – led to the establishment in the early 17th century of a highly inefficient, corrupt, and decentralized system of indirect taxation. Casey refers to this system as a “bastard feudalism”: the Crown – by significantly devolving authority to a variety of smaller-scale polities, and ultimately retaining little more than military powers – created a system which “generated perpetual tensions between center and periphery, and left both the society and its culture very fragmented” (Casey 1999, 82-7; Kamen 2003, 157-9, 174). State indebtedness also led to the political consolidation of the nobility and the expansion of the

seigneurial system, in contrast with the prevailing historical trend in England and Holland: in order to raise revenues, Philip II allowed the creation of new titles, the sale of Church lands, and the enclosure of Crown commons, which often resulted in entire villages becoming depopulated. These enclosed lands were frequently consolidated into the *latifundia* – many of which were owned by newly created nobles – that remained the predominant form of agriculture in southern Spain until the mid-20th century, and that profoundly shaped the social conditions that would lead to the emergence of the southern Spanish anarchist movement amongst landless agrarian laborers several centuries later (Casey 1999, 49-53; Kamen 2005, 164-6).

In the early 18th century, in an attempt to achieve fiscal solvency, Spain began abandoning its European imperialist claims in order to focus on defending its commercial sea-lanes to its American colonies; however, as the century progressed, the Spanish state became increasingly unable to collect enough revenue to perform even the most basic state functions, and fell under French political hegemony.

The area where the Crown exercised direct jurisdiction... included about half the population [of Spain]... The clergy and the nobility enjoyed exemptions [from taxation] while in some regions taxes could not be raised without the consent of the regional assembly (Shubert 2003, 169).

Under intense British military pressure, the Spanish Crown introduced a policy of free trade in 1778 that was gradually expanded to all of Spanish America; thus, the silver monopoly of Cádiz was ended, and Spain's financial position declined even further. By the 1820's, when virtually all of its American colonies declared their independence, the Spanish state exerted very little control over its colonies (Casey 1999, 83-4; Kamen 2003, 445-76). Pablo de Olavide, a late-18th century civil servant, called the Spanish state “a body composed of other and smaller bodies, separated and in opposition to one another, which oppress and despise each other and are in a continuous state of war.” (Olavide, in: Carr 1982, 62)

Thus, the 19th-century Spanish state exemplified what Anibal Quijano refers to as the “coloniality of power” (Quijano 1993, 167):

As a frame for historical analysis, the concept of coloniality of power draws attention to the fact that colonialism (European colonial expansion), modernity, and capitalism... developed together. Although each one of these historical phenomena has its own internal coherence, [none] of the three... can be fully explained without taking into account their historical co-occurrence, their interrelations and entanglements. (Medeiros 2005, 27)

While Quijano and Medeiros use this concept mainly to analyze Latin American society and politics, I argue that the development of 19th-century Spanish apparatuses of state power was fundamentally shaped by these same mechanisms of coloniality. The sets of political technologies and mechanisms that characterized Spanish colonialism did not remain localized in the contexts in which they were originally deployed, but rather circulated throughout Spanish and American societies – shaping the construction of European modernity in important yet undertheorized ways. Furthermore, this profound coloniality of Spanish state power did not merely serve to subjugate Indigenous Americans: as numerous historians have pointed out, the political technologies and ideological frameworks that were used to subjugate Indigenous Americans were developed during centuries of colonial racialization and exploitation of Muslims and Jews. The end result of these processes of colonialization was the construction of a set of highly militarized apparatuses of 19th-century Spanish state power, based on a highly racialized political logic of subjugation.

Thus, a genealogical analysis of the Spanish state demonstrates that this “coloniality of power” is not an immobile mechanism that operates solely along a European/non-European axis. Indeed, we can adapt Foucault’s argument about the state in order to theorize these mechanisms of coloniality:

we cannot speak of [coloniality] as if it was a being developing on the basis of itself and imposing itself on individuals as if by a spontaneous, automatic mechanism. [Coloniality]

is a practice. [It] is inseparable from the set of practices by which [it] actually became a way of governing (Foucault 2007, 276-7).

At a time when the English and French states were creating the vast apparatuses of governmentality that Foucault describes – applying technologies of power in which “it is not a matter of imposing a law on men, but... of as far as possible employing laws as tactics” (Ibid, 99) – the Spanish Crown was fundamentally structurally unable to construct such apparatuses of power. The expanded political functions of the early modern Spanish state – which, between the 16th and 18th centuries, centered on wars of European territorial control – were financed to a great extent through income from Spain’s vast apparatus of colonial extraction. The powers of Spanish government were narrowly focused on domination and ‘territoriality,’ even to the extent of being forced to contract many of its administrative functions out to domestic and foreign financiers. Furthermore, the state’s fundamental reliance on apparatuses of domination applied to internal politics as well:

Military commanders had the right to declare [internal] states of war. Military jurisdiction could be applied to civilians in such areas as lack of respect for military authorities. Most of this was kept on by [19th-century] Spanish liberalism (Shubert 2003, 176).

These apparatuses of sovereignty and repression were so central to the functioning of the Spanish state that early-19th-century liberal reformers were not able to seriously challenge them. In many ways, the Spanish liberal state – like the *ancien régime* that it supposedly supplanted – was characterized by “a preponderance of military institutions and juridical techniques enmeshed in administrative and governmental activity” (Ballbé 21; quoted in: Shubert 2003, 176).

However, as the 19th century progressed, the administrators of the liberal Spanish state – eyeing the processes of state governmentalization that were occurring in other European countries – initiated an anemic and geographically uneven process of the development of governmentalized apparatuses of state power. This development was especially notable in

Madrid, Barcelona, and the growing industrial cities of the Basque region. Many of these governmental technologies were based on the emergence of the “economy” as a field of governmental analysis and intervention (as Foucault points out, “it is... thanks to the isolation of the level of reality that we call the economy, that it was possible to think, reflect, and calculate the problem of government outside the juridical framework of sovereignty” (Foucault 2007, 104)). As Raymond Carr puts it,

since 1854 the vision of a ‘modern’ economy, growing towards prosperity, had haunted the imagination of progressive Spaniards. *The gap between Spain and Europe was no longer seen as an intellectual problem, but as an economic fact.* In the later years of the century the closing of this gap was conceived as a national necessity which would entail the destruction or modification of traditional attitudes. (Carr 1982, 389; my emphasis)

As the 19th century progressed, political technologies of economic intervention became increasingly important aspects of the political repertoire of the liberal Spanish state in industrializing cities such as Barcelona.

The 19th-century demographic explosion of Barcelona and Madrid led the federal and provincial governments to adopt new technologies for the management of population, thus leading to a profound “governmentalization” of state administrative apparatuses in these cities (keep in mind that governmentality, as Foucault describes it, is a form of “power that has the population as its target” (Foucault 2007, 108)). The government abolished the guild system in 1836, and gradually constructed a national property market in the early 19th century (according to Foucault, the governmentalized state has “no interest in trying to impose regulatory systems... on [economic] processes”) (Foucault 2007, 352; Shubert 2003, 57, 117). Segregated residential districts were designated for the various social classes in Madrid and Barcelona, as a means of controlling the population and decreasing class conflict (Shubert 2003, 106-7, 111). The codification of the legal system began in the 1840’s, censuses were introduced in 1857, and civil registers for births, deaths, and marriages were created in 1870 (Ibid, 170-71). That said, though,

this process of creating a governmentalized state, designed to control and manage the working classes of Barcelona and Madrid, was a highly incomplete one: for instance, no Spanish city created a professional, non-militarized police force until after the Civil War (Ibid, 178).

However, the anemic expansion of political technologies of governmentality that was taking place in Barcelona was almost completely absent from rural Andalucía; this was to a large extent a function of the overwhelming social and political power of agrarian elites in the south of the country. During the 18th century, financial insecurity had led the indebted imperial Spanish state to grant landed elites a high degree of autonomy, which – along with the vast private trade in silver – allowed agrarian nobles and bourgeois elites to consolidate overwhelming political and economic power. At the same time, silver imports continued to drive up prices, immiserating the peasantry; the combined effect of these two processes amplified the concentration of land in large parts of the country. A second wave of land concentration in the mid-19th century hit southern Spain especially hard, at about the same time that the agrarian anarchist movement emerged (Shubert 2003, 160). Thus, 19th-century agrarian Andalucía was a classic example of what Alain de Janvry describes as a “disarticulated” society: a system of class relations in which there is no positive correlation between returns to capital and returns to labor. (In such disarticulated systems, as de Janvry points out, “the objective logic for regressive and repressive labor policies implies that... labor militancy will tend to be directed not toward social-democratic settlements, but rather against perpetuation of the existing economic system” (de Janvry 1981, 36).)

This ‘disarticulated’ politico-economic situation in Andalucía – combined with the failure of the Spanish liberal state to expand governmental state functions to predominantly agrarian Southern Spain – resulted in the continued reliance of the rural Andalucian state on political apparatuses based on sovereignty and repression. On the one hand, the persistence of *caciquismo*

undermined the ability of the central Spanish state to establish *any* kind of mechanisms of political power in Andalucía; in the village, the *cacique*, or village strongman, was “the true monopolizer of political life,” and typically worked together with local agrarian elites to enforce social order (Tusell; quoted in: *Ibid*, 188).⁵ However, there was one significant expansion of the 19th-century Spanish state in rural Andalucía: the creation of the *Guardia Civil*, an apparatus of sovereign, repressive state power *par excellence*. Granted responsibility for law and order in the countryside in 1876, the *Guardia* was increasingly used to violently break strikes in the 1880’s and 90’s, and the *Guardia*’s unambiguous social conservatism made it the most hated institution among the rural poor.

Landowners competed to have posts built in their localities and often paid for them themselves... [The limitation of the *Guardia*] was stated explicitly by General O’Donnell in a circular of 1854: ‘The distribution of the *Guardia Civil* in over 1000 detachments amounts to a fully military occupation of the entire national territory.’ There could be no more eloquent statement of the ultimate weakness of the Spanish state, which lacking any other effective unifying institution relied so heavily on what Lleixà has called the ‘domination, not the direction, of the ruled by the rulers’. (Shubert 2003, 182)

Thus, the 19th-century Spanish state was profoundly unable to construct governmentalized state apparatuses in rural Andalucía, relying instead on the power of rural elites, the mediation of the *caciques*, and the brute force of the *Guardia Civil*.

Thus, in mid-19th-century Spain, there existed a fundamental discrepancy between, on the one hand, Barcelona, where governmentality had become an important if underdeveloped technology of state power; and, on the other hand, rural Andalucía, where such governmentalized technologies of power had largely failed to develop, and the maintenance of social order continued to be based on the power of a highly militarized, ‘sovereign’ state, working together with landed elites to maintain an explosively inegalitarian and exploitative

⁵ The word *cacique* is derived from *kassequa*, a native Haitian term for a village chief. In the late 19th century, it became widely used in Spain to describe local political leaders. Needless to say, this word is in itself a fascinating example of the coloniality of power. (OED 754)

latifundia system of class relations. My argument in this section is that the divergence between the anarcho-syndicalism of the working classes of Barcelona and the anarcho-communism (*comunismo libertario*) of landless workers of Andalucía that emerged in the 1880's – which I will discuss in more detail in the following section – cannot be understood separately from the divergence of political technologies of 19th-century Spanish state power between these two parts of the country.

In the remainder of this thesis, I will use this argument to make a larger point: that the leftist understanding of radical social movements as fundamentally ontologically distinct from and opposed to the institutions that they are struggling against, is undermined by the historical example of the fundamental ways in which the political technologies of the Spanish state and the political technologies of anarchist movement were fundamentally similar and mutually constitutive – both in Barcelona and in rural Andalucía.

We can see examples of these divergent sets of political technologies in social historians' recent research on 19th-century Spanish anarchism. On the one hand, George Esenwein's fascinating account of the continuities between Republican federalism and Bakuninist working-class-based anarcho-syndicalism – continuities that consist both of the ideological influences of the works of Francisco Pi y Margall on early Spanish anarchist theorists, and of social connections between working-class participants in the two movements – presents a compelling example of the ways in which state liberalism and the anarcho-syndicalist movement in Barcelona were profoundly interrelated. (Esenwein 1989, 22-27, 98-106) On the other hand, Walther Bernecker's study of the history of violence in the Spanish anarchist movement demonstrates that in Andalucía – where violence, a manifestation of the prevalence of 'sovereign' apparatuses of power, was the dominant political technology of the Spanish state –

the landless agrarian proletariat increasingly turned to terrorism as its primary repertoire of resistance (Bernecker 1982, 90-91).

As anarcho-communist ideology gained ground among poor peasants and landless workers in the 1880's, communists and syndicalists began to clash ideologically within the anarchist movement, especially over the issue of terrorism: while anarcho-communist ideology "provided poor peasants and agricultural workers with the opportunity to take aggressive action against the ruling class," the anarcho-syndicalist union leadership opposed terrorist tactics, arguing that they would provoke government repression. (Ibid, 142) For instance, Clara Lida describes the emergence of *Mano Negra* – a secretive group of Andalusian peasant anarchist terrorists – as growing out of the "disenchantment of the rural masses with the traditional leadership and organization of the Spanish IWMA" (the forerunner to the CNT). Adopting many ideological positions of the *Mano Negra*, "the Andalusian Federations reject[ed] the strike and, instead, turn[ed] towards sabotage and destruction as a mean of checkmating the economic power of the landowner." This placed agrarian anarchists in direct conflict with the working-class-based anarchist leadership, which relied on the strike as their fundamental political tool, and "regarded the Andalusian rural workers as a mass of exploited and illiterate peasants, incapable of organization." (Lida 1969, 332-37) This division within the anarchist movement cannot be understood separately from the distinction between the relatively 'governmentalized' apparatuses of state power in Barcelona, and the violent and repressive apparatuses of 'sovereign' state power in Andalucía: while in Barcelona the anarcho-syndicalist movement (which developed alongside the increasingly 'governmentalized' Spanish state) increasingly viewed its political project as one of transitioning the modern capitalist economy from an elite-governed to a worker-governed system, the Andalusian anarcho-communist movement (which developed alongside the repressive, 'sovereign' Spanish state) eschewed organized, 'workerist' forms of

labor unrest, and viewed violent resistance as the only effective means of countering the violence of the state.

Of course, it is not my intention to argue in favor of a dualistic, mechanistic relationship between the political technologies of power and resistance in 19th-century Spain. Nor am I trying to argue that the development of the Spanish state predetermined the evolution of the Spanish anarchist movement. Rather, I believe that the relationship was one of mutual influence, in which these two sets of agents developed political technologies and repertoires of power/resistance over decades of mutual interaction. Governmentality is not merely a technology of state power; rather, it is a political technology that, once deployed, spreads throughout society, creating ‘governmentalized’ social movements that then interact with and shape the development of the state. This thesis is obviously not intended to do justice to the complexity of this process of co-evolution in 19th-century Spain (which would necessitate a much more detailed, archival study); rather, it is intended to outline some of the ways in which the sociopolitical positions of these two sets of agents were mutually constitutive.

Thus, I argue that the profound division that emerged with the Spanish anarchist movement—a division that is exemplified in this distinction between the anarcho-sindicalist movements of the working classes of Barcelona, and the anarcho-communist movements of the landless laborers of Andalucía – cannot be fully understood separately from the historical development of the Spanish state (and vice versa); specifically, the evolution of the anarchist movement cannot be adequately theorized without considering the conditions under which governmentality belatedly and differentially emerged as a political technology in mid-19th century Spain. I am using this point to argue that it is more theoretically productive to view social movements in Foucauldian rather than Marxian terms: to understand state institutions and anti-

state movements as mutually productive and complexly interrelated, rather than diametrically opposed and ontologically distinct.

I will now contextualize my examination of this division within the anarchist movement through a case study of the agrarian anarchist collectivization movements in Andalucía and Aragón during the Spanish Civil War.

Section Three: Anarchist Agrarian Collectivization during the Spanish Civil War

It had been necessary [for the CNT] to declare good intentions, to... recognize the authority of [the Republican] government, whose activities were moving in the direction of the reconstruction of the traditional state which had collapsed in July 1936. Astonishingly, all this was accepted and indeed carried out by anarchist leaders. In terms of the pure anarchist line of the early days of the Second Republic, to propound popular support for any government body would have been seen as an aberration. ...Yet in 1936, not only was this apparatus of regional administration created, but the orthodox anarchists of 1931 were to be found defending participation in the central government.

- Julián Casanova (1987)

In the previous section, I argued that the distinction between the working-class-based anarcho-syndicalist movement of Barcelona and the landless-laborer-based anarcho-communist movement of agrarian Andalucía is inseparably interrelated with the historical development of the Spanish state – specifically, with the rise of Spanish political technologies of governmentality in the mid-19th century. In this section, I will examine the distinctions between these divergent articulations of Spanish anarchism through a case study of the agrarian anarchist collectivization movement in Andalucía and Aragón during the Spanish Civil War. Drawing on new social historical research on the history of these collectives, I will attempt to decenter and de-essentialize the traditional, ultimately Marxian understanding of Spanish anarchists as diametrically opposed to the state, and examine the ways in which the dominant, working-class-based factions of the Spanish anarchist movement functioned according to a political and ideological framework that was in many ways strikingly similar to that of the increasingly governmentalized state institutions with which the working classes of Barcelona and Madrid were confronted (as illustrated by the above quote from Julián Casanova). This case study also allows me to undermine the idea that Spanish anarchism was a singular and ideologically

coherent entity, by describing the profound struggles over meaning and power that took place within the early-20th century Spanish anarchist movement.

In much of southern Spain – a region of dry steppes and highly fertile land, and of strongly Islamic-influenced culture – the bulk of agricultural production in the 1930's took place under the *latifundia* plantation system, an example of what de Janvry refers to as “disarticulated accumulation”: a politico-economic system in which the growth of the capitalist economy is rooted in rising profits and rents, rather than in rising wages. With no positive economic connection existing between wages and economic growth, elites in a disarticulated society have every incentive to maintain a system of productive relations that is as exploitative and repressive as possible, and “labor militancy will tend to be directed not toward social-democratic settlements but rather against perpetuation of the existing economic system.” (de Janvry 1981, 34-36).

In the 1930's, the *latifundia*, a mere 0.1% of agricultural landholdings in southern Spain, covered 33.2% of the land; the 96% of land parcels owned by smallholders took up 29.6% of the arable land in the south of the country. Massive landed estates were worked by a mass of landless waged laborers, who comprised 75% of the southern agrarian population. The *latifundia* system of productive relations found its purest expression in Andalucía, where the socioeconomic gap between the landed and landless classes in the early twentieth century was massive; in the *latifundia* system – an example of what regulation theorists refer to as an ‘incomplete mode of regulation’ – elites were increasingly unable to “ensure that the distortions created by the accumulation of capital [were] kept within limits which [were] compatible with social cohesion.” (Aglietta 1998, 44) Southern Aragón, while not strictly speaking a *latifundia* economy, nonetheless bore strongly similar socioeconomic and climatic characteristics to

Andalucía, with the addition of a sizeable minority of smallholding peasants and tenant farmers. It was in these two highly inegalitarian southern provinces that the rural anarchist collectivization movement was at its most influential.

The relations of production that prevailed in early-20th-century Andalusian and Aragonese agriculture contrasted with agrarian productive relations in other parts of the country. In the south of Castilla, *latifundia* agriculture also predominated; however, the tendency there was towards middle-sized estates, and social unrest was not historically as widespread as in Andalucía or Aragón. (Alexander 1998, 354-55) In Catalunya and Levante, tenant farming and sharecropping were the predominant forms of agricultural production, with large landholdings playing a lesser role; small landowners controlled 51.3% of land in the Levantine province of Valencia, for example. (Ibid, 335-36, 390-92) A more egalitarian peasant- and tenant-based smallholding system prevailed in northern Spain; while, as Jorge Uría shows, this region did have a complex history of agrarian unrest, this unrest took an entirely different form than it did in the south. (Uría 2005)

Most historians of Spanish anarchism describe agrarian anarchist movements of Andalucía and Aragón as a rebellion of landless farmworkers against the *latifundia* system – and, indeed, this argument clearly holds a great deal of explanatory power. However, to portray agrarian anarchist movements as a simple reaction of economically desperate landless laborers against wealthy landowners would be an oversimplification: in a series of highly influential studies, Temma Kaplan decenters the late-19th-century Andalusian anarchist movement by demonstrating that the social base of the anarchist movement was much more complex, with small landowners and skilled workers playing an important role in constructing and controlling the local institutions of Andalusian anarchism, especially in the late 19th century (Kaplan 1975, 52). However, the landless laborers of southern Spain certainly did comprise the most radical elements of the

Spanish anarchist movement; furthermore, these landless anarchists – or *Desheredados*, as they were popularly known – were in a subaltern position within the anarchist movement as a whole.

Spanish Anarchism and the CNT

In 1868, Giuseppe Fanelli, an Italian disciple of Mikhail Bakunin, traveled to Madrid and convened a small cell of anarchist activists, affiliated with the First International; rapidly, this incipient anarchist group expanded to Barcelona. The working-class-based, Bakuninist anarcho-syndicalist movement that this initial group of Spanish anarchists created in these two cities in the 1870's and 80's – in the context of the emergence of governmentality as a political technology of the Spanish state, as we saw in the previous section – emphasized the role of revolutionary labor unions, which were to replace capitalist factory ownership through management by revolutionary syndicates. In many ways, Spanish anarcho-syndicalism was thus similar to the other working-class labor movements that emerged out of the First International: anarcho-syndicalists aimed to cut the capitalist head off of the emerging modern, industrialized economic system, and replace it with institutions of working-class management that would ensure continued industrialization and economic 'development' (Bookchin 1977, 12-15). Thus, in many ways, its political logic was similar to that of the governmentalized state that it sought to replace, aiming to shift the function of economic governance from state institutions to syndicalist organizations.

In the 1870's, the anarchist movement gained influence in rural Andalucía and Levante; there, anarchism was articulated very differently than in Barcelona and Madrid. (Ibid, 89-91). Beginning in the 1880's, the rural landless workers of Andalucía adopted anarcho-communist ideology, aiming to completely and radically restructure the capitalist economic system, with the goal of creating socioeconomic autarchic and self-determining individual communities; needless

to say, such a system would necessitate a radical de-industrialization and decentralization of society.

Agrarian Andalusian anarchist ideology critiqued not only the inequality and material exploitation inherent in capitalist relations of production, but also the ethical and spiritual impoverishment inflicted by the capitalist socioeconomic system as a whole (Bolloten 1991, 66-68; Bernecker 1978, 104-5). As an illustration of this more systemic, utopian critique of capitalist society, the anarcho-communism of these landless farmworkers was not merely a social movement, but a cultural movement as well: many rural anarchists did not drink or smoke, most were profoundly anti-religious and disavowed marriage, and many practiced naturopathy, polyamory, nudism, vegetarianism, or raw-foodism (Bookchin 1977, 56-59; Cleminson 2003, 2004). Needless to say, these were quite revolutionary cultural practices in late-19th-century agrarian Spain.

In 1910, the *Confederación Nacional del Trabajo* (CNT) was founded, as a means of unifying the Spanish anarchist movement. The CNT grew rapidly in the 1930's, and by 1936 it represented 1.5 million workers; in a country with a labor force of 8.5 million, the CNT was thus by far the largest political force at the beginning of the Civil War (Bernecker 1978, 56; Thomas 1961, 40). The CNT was organized according to anarcho-syndicalist principles, espousing ideological commitments to decentralization and direct action:

The national organization [of the CNT] was in effect a loose collection of regional confederations which were broken down into *comarcal* (local and district) confederations, and finally into *sindicatos*, or individual unions. These *sindicatos*... were established on a vocational basis... To coordinate this structure, the annual congresses of the CNT elected a National Committee... The purpose of the CNT... was to keep alive the spirit of revolt, not to quench it with piecemeal reforms and long, attritive strikes. (Bookchin 1977, 160-62)

However, most leadership positions within the CNT were occupied by anarcho-syndicalist workers and intellectuals from Barcelona and Madrid, and the agrarian anarcho-communist

organizations of southern Spain were consigned to subaltern positions within the organization. (Casanova 1987, 425-8) In fact, Temma Kaplan argues that in 19th century agrarian Andalucía, the *Federación Regional de España* (FRE) – a precursor to the CNT – was dominated politically by anarcho-syndicalist small landowners, who used the FRE (and anarcho-syndicalist ideology) as a means of pacifying their predominantly anarcho-communist farmworkers. Consequently, to Kaplan, the FRE “only moved the class struggle between these two groups into the anarchist organization itself.” (Kaplan 1975, 69) Thus, there existed a powerful gulf between these two different articulations of Spanish anarchist ideology, representing groups with very different socioeconomic positions and political projects; and within the CNT, the worker-based syndicalists dominated the organizational hierarchy.

Over the three years of the Spanish Civil War, the CNT became less decentralized and more hierarchical, and several reformist CNT officials joined the Republican government as ministers in November 1936. To Walther Bernecker, “entry of the anarchists to the government... led not only to a ‘politicization’ and restructuring of organized anarchism, but also to abandonment of fundamental positions of classical anarchism and atrophy of the democratic formation of opinion and decision-making process in the CNT.” (Bernecker 1978, 365) This increasingly hierarchical nature of the CNT is best exemplified by the Council of Aragón, an anarchist governing council that increasingly came to function within Aragón essentially as a dictatorship of the proletariat (Casanova 1987, 435-41; Bernecker 1978, 222). Thus, in many ways, the syndicalist-dominated CNT came to resemble the very state institutions that it ostensibly opposed.

Revolution on the Land

In February 1936, the governing right-wing coalition lost national parliamentary elections to the Popular Front, a coalition of liberals, Socialists, and Communists. During the spring of 1936, the parties of the right felt increasingly politically threatened, not so much by the piecemeal reforms enacted by the new Popular Front government as by the land occupations and general strikes called by the CNT and the radical-socialist *Unión General de Trabajadores* (UGT). (Bolloten 1991, 3-20) On July 18, 1936, Francisco Franco, the leader of a faction of fascist and monarchist army officers, broadcast a radio appeal to the Spanish officer corps, urging them to support a *coup d'état* against the government. (Ibid, 34-45) Battles for control between Republican- and Nationalist-controlled military factions resulted in a rapid partitioning of the country: the southeast (including Madrid and Barcelona) and the northern coast became controlled by the Republicans, while the northwest (excluding the coast), western Andalucía, and Spanish Morocco were occupied by the Nationalists. (Thomas 1961, 139-64) The Republican strongholds – Catalunya, Aragón, southeastern Castile, Levante, and eastern Andalucía – all stayed in Republican hands through early 1938, and it was in precisely these regions (especially Catalunya, Aragón, and Andalucía) that the anarchist movement was at its strongest.

Consistently with Theda Skocpol's argument that social revolutions "become possible only through the administrative-military breakdown of preexisting states," the extent to which the outbreak of the civil war was followed by agrarian social revolution was largely a consequence of the locally differentiated extent to which state capacity was undermined in the weeks following the *coup d'état*. (Skocpol 1979, 287) In Castile and Catalunya, where the Republican state managed to maintain or quickly re-establish control of the more governmentalized state institutions, there were usually far fewer changes in rural relations of production. On the other hand, in Aragón and Andalucía, where central state power was based solely on the violence of the *Guardia Civil*,

the *coup d'état* was followed by profound and wide-ranging reconfigurations of agrarian relations of production, in which landless workers expropriated landholders on a vast scale. To a large extent, these revolutions did not proceed according to any predetermined CNT plan; rather, large numbers of communities were completely outside of CNT control, and the CNT endorsed the widespread dispossession of large landowners after the fact (Bernecker 1978, 104). However, as Julián Casanova points out, one should not overlook the role that urban CNT militias played in imposing agrarian collectivization, especially in Aragón (Seidman 2000, 211):

Only detailed local studies can indicate the extent to which either the CNT [peasant] unions were the principal protagonists of the revolutionary experiences in whose areas where they were will established, or to which it was the terror spread by armed groups which imposed the communal exploitation of the land. (Casanova 1987, 432)

Whether instigated and dominated by local CNT unions or urban militias, this rural social revolution was often highly violent: landowners and rightist political functionaries were frequently assassinated, priests and nuns were murdered, churches were burned, and – most famously and gruesomely – the bodies of Catholic clergy were disinterred and publicly displayed (Casanova 2005, 93-5). As we saw in the previous section, historians such as Brennan and Hobsbawm have often interpreted this violence as a spontaneous reaction of violent, ‘millenarian’ peasants against the local elites that had hitherto oppressed them with total impunity. However, contemporary social historians have de-essentialized Hobsbawm’s interpretation of rural anarchist violence, arguing that it should be interpreted as an extension of the political repertoire of anti-systemic violence that had characterized the Spanish anarchist movement since the 1880’s (Bernecker 1982; Casanova 2005). This political repertoire of violence was very similar to that of the central state in southern Spain – which, again, had no real presence in the Andalucía apart from the terror of the *Guardia Civil*.

The Formation of the Agricultural Collectives

In the months following July 1936, a significant proportion of anarchist landless farmworkers and smallholders in Aragón and Andalucía expropriated large landholdings, and created small-scale agricultural collectives to control and manage the land in their communities. (In other parts of Republican Spain, land reform, rather than collectivization, was usually the consequence of rural social revolution, with many ‘collectives’ being essentially federations of small farmers.) Agrarian anarcho-communist ideology consistently rejected agrarian reform in favor of “collective labor and the elimination of the very idea of landowning;” in accordance with this ideological position, the land surrounding many anarchist-dominated communities was collectivized in its entirety, and socio-economic life in these communities was vastly restructured. (1936 Andalusian CNT Conference, in: Casanova 1987, 426; Bernecker 1978, 95-99) (In this process of ‘total collectivization,’ land was often coercively expropriated from both small and large landowners – especially in Aragón, where workers’ militias from Barcelona traveled throughout the Aragonese countryside in the summer of 1936, often forcing collectivization on unwilling smallholders (Seidman 2000, 211; Casanova 1987, 433).)

In each collective, the working male population was organized into small labor groups, each of which selected a delegate who served as the labor group’s interface with the collective’s assembly and the administrative committee, reporting to these on the group’s progress, and reporting these assemblies’ decisions back to the labor group (Alexander 1998, 328; Bernecker 1978, 96).⁶ “Leadership authority was related to the accomplishment of specific tasks, and was discarded as soon as the designated tasks were complete” (Breitbart 1979, 84). In accordance

⁶ It is important to point out that agrarian anarchist collectivization was in many ways a masculinized communism, with men retaining most (although not all) positions of economic and political power; a variety of works have described the patriarchal perspectives that permeated the Spanish anarchist movement (Kaplan 1971; Gemie 1996; Ackelsberg 1985, 2005).

with agrarian anarchists' focus on cultural as well as social transformation, many collectives devoted considerable resources towards the development of radical education and cultural institutions. The longstanding anarchist networks of *ateneos libertarios* (which still exist today) were expanded during the Civil War: local CNT activists transformed the former homes of the wealthy into cultural centers, containing libraries and artwork pilfered from the rich, as well as lecture and dance halls (Breitbart 1979, 86-7; Dolgoff 1974, 133-4).

Central to the anarcho-communist project of social revolution was the transformation of the material relationship between production and consumption. A key component of anarcho-communist ideology is the argument that, by abolishing the capitalist institution of money – what Michel Aglietta refers to as the “primordial social link in market economies” (Aglietta 1998, 46) – one can eliminate the basis for the destructive social practices that characterize capitalist productive relations (Bookchin 1977, 58-60; Bolloren 1991, 66-8). Thus, in many collectivized villages, money was burned or melted – much to the chagrin of the CNT leadership, which in many instances intervened to stop the destruction of money (Alexander 1998, 329, 348, 376; Dolgoff 1974, 114).

However, agrarian collectivization should not be understood as a uniform process: thus, for example, collectivists a wide variety of highly innovative and complex systems for distributing wages and goods. Some collectives paid workers according to family size, others according to the individual's economic contribution (which to a certain extent preserved social inequalities); others paid workers in weekly advances (the most unequal system, especially in terms of gender) (Alexander 1998, 329; Bernecker 1978, 106-9). Some communities relied on barter or local currencies; others introduced consumption vouchers, which were only valid locally and for a limited period of time; and in some towns, all forms of payment were abolished, and collectivists took what they needed from common stocks (Breitbart 1979, 84-85; Bernecker 1978, 110-16;

Dolgoff 1974, 114-19.). However, after the formation of the Council of Aragón in October 1936 – a semi-state body, dominated by urban CNT activists – wages and wage differentials were largely reintroduced in the province, as a means of facilitating inter-regional trade (and, most likely, of siphoning off money to fund the militias) (Casanova 1987, 439). Likewise, in most places in Catalunya and Levante, regional CNT congresses reintroduced the *peseta* in the months following the revolution.

As Julián Casanova points out, one of the most challenging unresolved questions of Spanish Civil War historical research is whether collectivization occurred more at the impetus of local CNT activists, or whether it was pushed more by urban CNT militias. However, it is clear that as time went on, the uncontrolled requisitions of the CNT militias – which often went so far as to intervene directly into collectives’ administration – severely undermined the politico-economic autonomy of many collectives, especially in Aragón. Local politico-economic autonomy was undermined by workers’ militias, governed by the CNT headquarters in Barcelona. (Casanova 1987, 430-34)

Anarchism, Collectivization, and Gender

Numerous researchers have pointed out that patriarchal assumptions suffused the historical Spanish anarchist movement. Sharif Gemie argues that

the desire to assert the power, the morality and the potentially universal nature of certain communities led [Spanish] anarchists to shy away from confronting oppressive patriarchalism in their family structures and sexual moralities. (Gemie 1996, 432)

Indeed, the *Mujeres Libres*, or ‘free women’ – an anarcho-feminist group which broke with the CNT in 1936 – was created precisely to challenge the patriarchy of the CNT. The *Mujeres Libres* critiqued the mainstream anarchist movement for failing to acknowledge the legitimacy of women’s liberation as a separate struggle, arguing that “women had to organize independently of

men, both to overcome their own subordination and to struggle against male resistance to women's emancipation." (Ackelsberg 1985, 65-68; Ackelsberg 2005) To Temma Kaplan, the criticisms of the *Mujeres Libres* were largely ignored:

In spite of their awareness of the exploitation of women in capitalist society, [the Spanish anarchist movement] did not develop a program to prevent similar exploitation in revolutionary society. There is no reason to believe that the condition of Spanish women would have been fundamentally changed if the anarchists had won the war. (Kaplan 1971, 102)

We can see an excellent example of this continuity of patriarchal practices by examining the socioeconomic structures of the rural anarchist collectives in terms of the gendered division of resources. In Catalunya and Levante, collectives paid out wages (*asignaciones*) to the head of each household in the community; as Bernecker points out, in most cases "unmarried women living outside of their parents' household were entirely ignored." Other collectives, in which laborers were compensated according to a 'labor-card' system, generally set wage-rates "not only according to the 'needs' of a collectivist, but also according to their 'social importance'... Women received consistently lower wages." (Bernecker 1978, 106-7) These are important shortcomings of the rural Spanish anarchist movement; that said, as Gemie points out, "this insensitivity is shot through with sudden pockets of sympathy, of solidarity and even genuinely revolutionary challenges to dominant ideals of gender roles." (Gemie 1996, 435)

The Destruction of the Collectives

In early May 1937, a five-day street battle took place between the Communist-dominated provincial government of Catalunya and the radical workers' militias that controlled the city; the armed workers of the CNT and UGT were ultimately defeated by the well-organized paramilitary forces of the *Partido Comunista de España* (PCE). The largely urban-based CNT leadership, seeking to protect its close political relationship with the Republican government,

repeatedly declared that open insurrection against the Republican state was too dangerous, and appealed to the anarchist workers to lay down their arms (Bolloten 1991, 431-61; Bookchin 1994, 61-65). The CNT's stance was widely criticized: for instance, Leon Trotsky lambasted the CNT leadership for its demonstrated willingness to make "political, economic, and doctrinal concessions... to those governments... which are negotiating with the class enemy in order to conclude the war and liquidate the revolution" (quoted in: Guérin 1994, 2, 271). The end result of these battles was a vast increase in Communist influence within the Republican government, to whom it was proven that Communists stood for public order and against social revolution.⁷

Several months later, having consolidated their political power, the Communists attacked the agrarian collectives in Aragón, where the CNT was at its strongest and most autonomous from the Republican state. In August 1937, the Communist general Lister occupied Zaragoza, executing prominent CNT militants, shutting down the Council of Aragón, and attacking the CNT agricultural collectives. Communist troops confiscated land, livestock and farming implements, and destroyed the collectives' buildings; furthermore, under the protection of PCE militias, many smallholding peasants – forced into joining the collectives by revolutionary violence or CNT militias – took the opportunity to reclaim their land (and, in many cases, pilfer the collectives). Unwilling, once again, to alienate itself from the Republican government, the CNT leadership refused to deploy its militias against Lister – despite considerable outrage and unrest from rank-and-file soldiers, who had heard reports of the Communist aggression and were eager to deploy against the Communists. In the following months, roughly half of the Aragonese collectives collapsed (Bernecker 1978, 82-83; Bolloten 1991, 525-30; Bookchin 1994, 62).

⁷ Prophetically, during the 1936 elections, the Socialists had satirized the PCE with the slogan: "To save Spain from Marxism, vote Communist!" (Bookchin 1977, 279)

Then, beginning in April 1938, many collectivized industrial enterprises were decollectivized by the Republican state and returned to their former owners; finally, at this point, the CNT leadership broke with the Republican government, only to realize that its opportunity to prevent counter-revolution had come and gone (Ibid, 633-8). In the spring of 1938 Aragón fell to the Nationalists, in February of 1939 Catalunya was overrun, and in March Madrid, and the rest of Spain, fell to Franco's armies. The CNT was virtually annihilated in Spain, but its surviving leaders set up camp in southern France, and armed bands of anarchist militants conducted a guerrilla war against the Franco regime until the mid-1950's.

Conclusion

This case study of the rural anarchist collectivization movement demonstrates a concrete example of how the differential development of the 19th-century Spanish state was profoundly interconnected with the fundamental distinction between the Spanish anarchist movements in Barcelona on the one hand, and rural Andalucía and Aragón on the other. There existed a vast discrepancy between the decentralized and differentiated agrarian social revolution of landless anarchist workers in Andalucía and Aragón, and the centralizing, normalizing, and de-radicalizing influence of the CNT leadership in Barcelona, rooted in the industrial working class.

Thus, in many ways, the political logic of the urban working-class-based anarcho-syndicalist party leadership was one of governmentalization. Despite a powerful ideological commitment to decentralization and autarchy that suffused CNT discourse and propaganda, the syndicalist-dominated CNT leadership used militias of anarchist workers – mostly from Barcelona – to impose collectivization on agrarian anarchist communities in Aragón, and deployed large-scale, syndicalist organizational structures as means of 'normalizing' and regulating the disorganized, autarkic collectives. More importantly, as Casanova points out, the syndicalist CNT leadership –

despite a commitment to anti-statism that was the *sine qua non* of anarchist ideology – ended up collaborating with, and even participating in, the Republican state, even at the expense of protecting the anarchist movement from Communist aggression. Thus, this historical example allows us to decenter and destabilize the traditional understanding of the Spanish anarchist movement as being fundamentally opposed to and ontologically distinct from the state. Rather, I argue that the Barcelona-based, anarcho-syndicalist CNT leadership – based in the working class, and having developed in a historical process of mutual constitution with the increasingly-governmentalized state apparatus in cities such as Barcelona – cannot be understood separately from the Spanish state’s incipient deployment of political technologies of governmentality, and the entire system of industrial management, democratization of the state, and institutionalization of social relations upon which governmentality as a set of political technologies was based.⁸

Thus, this case study has allowed me to decenter the Spanish anarchist movement in several important ways. In the following section, I will apply Foucault’s theory of governmentality to the contemporary Spanish anarchist movement.

⁸ Here, it is important to draw a distinction between, on the one hand, the institutionalization of relations of power and domination, which characterizes *disciplinary* modalities of power; and, on the other hand, the general institutionalization of all social relations (education, child care, health, morality, etc.) and their configuration within a socio-political system that is configured so as to optimize the functioning of the economic system as a whole, which characterizes *governmentalized* modalities of power.

Section Four: Freedom, Governmentality, and Contemporary Anarchism

The transformation of society is our great challenge.

- CNT (Plataforma Reivindicativa)

*We're people who want to bring this society down. We're not trying to transform it.
We're trying to destroy it.*

- David, member of La Base

In the preceding two sections, I decentered the received understanding of the historical Spanish anarchist movement, by demonstrating that the distinction between the working class-based anarcho-syndicalist movement of Barcelona and the landless worker-based anarcho-communist movement of rural Andalucía corresponds to a difference in the extent of governmentalization of state technologies of power in these two parts of the country. In this section, I briefly discuss contemporary Spanish anarchism, which I outlined in the introduction and the first section. In doing so, I apply Foucault's framework of governmentality – specifically, his theorization of freedom – to the contemporary Spanish anarchist movement as well, thus allowing me to further decenter the prevailing conception of 'Spanish anarchism' as a unified movement, and to theorize the profound theoretical tension that exists between leftists and post-leftists within the contemporary anarchist movement.

As I argued in the introduction, there exists a discursive division between the anarchist political discourses of the historical CNT and those of the contemporary Spanish squat movement. I described this discursive discontinuity in section one as well, distinguishing the teleological, totalizing, and ideological discourse of historical, leftist anarchists from the anti-teleological, anti-totalizing, and anti-ideological discourses of contemporary, post-leftist anarchists – a contrast between, on the one hand, the 1930's CNT's triumphalist and teleological

discourse of revolution and class struggle, and, on the other hand, David's statement that anti-state struggle is "all a game... We are not really resisting." If state technologies of power and anarchist practices of resistance are indeed engaged in a process of mutual constitution, then this contemporary transformation in anarchist discourse must be related to a transformation in the political technologies of the modern Spanish state. I will now attempt to theorize the characteristics of that transformation, while continuing to draw on Foucault's theorization of governmentality.

Numerous Marxian theorists describe the development of Western political economy over the last eighty years as a shift towards Fordist relations of production. This concept of a Fordist regime of accumulation is based on the argument that the expansion of capitalism in the late-19th century was limited by a lack of market capacity, and that this underconsumption problem was resolved when capitalist elites created an alliance between industrial management and reformist working-class labor unions. However, Fordism, as a regime of accumulation, was much more than simply a new economic regime: it involved "mass consumption, a new system of the reproduction of labor power, a new politics of labor control and management, a new aesthetics and psychology, in short, a new kind of rationalized, modernist, and populist democratic society." (Harvey 1990, 125-6) Clearly, within the context of this transformation to a Fordist regime of accumulation, this fundamental shift in anarchist discourse makes a great deal of sense.

However, Foucault's theoretical discussion of the relationship between freedom and governmentality in *Security, Territory, Population* allows us to understand this transition in terms of a transformation in technologies of power, thus avoiding the materialist, and, specifically, economic limits of Fordist theory. In a crucial passage in *Security, Territory, Population*, Foucault reconsiders an argument that he made about freedom in *Discipline and Punish*:

I said somewhere [Foucault 1977a, 221-24] that we could not understand the establishment of liberal ideologies and a liberal politics in the 18th century without keeping in mind that the same 18th century, which made such a strong demand for freedoms, had all the same ballasted these freedoms with a disciplinary technique that... considerably restricted freedom. ... Well, I think I was wrong. ... I think something completely different is at stake. That is that this freedom, both ideology and technique of government, should in fact be understood within the mutations and transformations of technologies of power. More precisely and particularly, *freedom is nothing else but the correlative of the deployment of apparatuses of [governmentality]*.⁹ ... [T]he idea of an administration of things that would think before all else of men's freedom, of what they want to do, of what they have an interest in doing, are all correlative elements. It is not an ideology; it is not exactly, fundamentally, or primarily an ideology. First of all and above all it is a technology of power (Foucault 2007, 48-9; emphasis added).

Foucault's argument about freedom in this passage holds vast potential for analysts and theorists of the state. 'Freedom' is perhaps the single most essentialized concept in the English language – and it is a term that academic writers are frequently unwilling to de-essentialize. In this passage, Foucault decenters the term, and argues that our modern understanding of 'freedom' is inseparable from the historical deployment of apparatuses of governmentality.

One possible implication of Foucault's reconceptualization of 'freedom' is the argument that the vast theoretical indistinction of this word (one of the emptiest signifiers in contemporary English) may result in part from the fact that 'freedom' performs a variety of very different structural functions in modern politics. In contemporary terms, 'freedom' is simultaneously an anti-systemic discourse ("freedom" as a demand of essentially every contemporary social movement), a discourse of the state ("freedom" as that which George Bush is 'bringing' to the Middle East), and a political technology of modern governmentality (freedom as a set of institutions of representative democracy, which grant state agencies a means of governmentalizing society by minimizing social struggle). Foucault's argument allows us to theorize the ways in which freedom (both as a discourse and as a set of political technologies) is

⁹ Here, Foucault refers to "apparatuses of security" rather than governmentality. However, later in the book, he coins the term "governmentality" to refer to these processes, and argues that he would rename the course "a history of governmentality" if it were possible. Throughout the remainder of the text, he refers almost exclusively to "governmentality" rather than "security." Thus, I changed the wording here to avoid confusion.

inseparable from the functioning of modern governmentality – and to argue that the very ambiguity of the signification of ‘freedom’ is central to the term’s conceptual power.

In my opinion, one of the most important implications of Foucault’s discussion of ‘freedom’ in this passage is that it compels us to decenter and retheorize the prevailing understandings of late-19th and early-20th-century leftist (i.e., socialist and anarchist) social movements, and examine the ways in which those movements were complicit in constructing ‘freedom’ as a modern “technology of power.” Leftist social movements evolved in a process of sustained interaction with state mechanisms of repression, and thus constructed a totalizing and teleological discourse of freedom that was in many ways very similar to the discourse of the modern, governmentalized state: these movements ideologically framed themselves as possessing the power to create a fundamentally new world, one in which freedom will proliferate and circulate without limit. However, in the early 20th century, the totalizing political discourses of these leftist social movements were appropriated by Western governments, and recoded into a form compatible with ‘freedom’ as a “technology of power.” This continuity between the ‘freedom’ of social movements and the ‘freedom’ of the state was also organizational as well as discursive: during this period – in a process that was bitterly contested within the various incarnations of the International Workingmen’s Association – social democratic and even Communist parties and unions were incorporated into the capitalist economic and political system, while more radical groups were violently repressed. Thus, these leftist social movements were an inseparable part of the construction of the modern governmental state; specifically, they were an inseparable part of the deployment of ‘freedom’ as the primary political technology of contemporary governmentality. (As Jason McQuinn puts it: “Historically, the vast majority of leftist theory and practice has functioned as a loyal opposition to capitalism.” (McQuinn 2002, 3))

However, it is important to emphasize that this process of appropriation should be understood in Foucauldian terms. I am not suggesting that the omniscient, omnipotent state moulds and manipulates leftist social movements, transforming them into mere cogs in its machinery. Here, as elsewhere in this paper, I argue that Foucault's framework – and specifically his comment that “the history of the governmental *ratio*, and the history of the counter-conducts opposed to it, are inseparable from each other” (Ibid, 357) – allows us to view the political logics of states and anti-state social movements as being fundamentally mutually constitutive and profoundly interconnected. Indeed, when Foucault says that “resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault 1978, 95), we need to take this argument very seriously, and carefully think through its potential implications for social movement theory.

Foucault's theory of freedom helps us decenter and historically situate the ideological discourse of the historical Spanish CNT, an organization which – as a primarily anarcho-syndicalist, urban-dominated labor union, employing a discourse of politics rooted in the First International – constructed a political discourse of ‘freedom’ that was decidedly leftist. In the second section of this paper, I argued that the political technologies of Spanish state power, and the political technologies of Spanish anarchist resistance, were profoundly inseparable and mutually constitutive; and, furthermore, that this process of mutual constitution was especially apparent in division between the working class-dominated anarchism of Barcelona and the farmworker-based anarchism of Andalucía and Aragon. Then, in the third section, I discussed the ways in which the CNT imposed its political agenda on agrarian anarchist communities, framing its political project of ‘freedom’ in terms of total subordination to the union leadership's vision of total collectivization. (The increasingly hierarchical and statist motivations of the CNT are especially apparent in the fact that several members of the CNT leadership even joined the Republican state, refusing to protect the anarchist collectives against violence from the CNT's

allies within the government.) Thus, there was a clear continuity – both organizational and discursive – between the Republican state and the anarcho-syndicalist movement: the CNT leadership’s leftist discourse of ‘freedom’ was entirely compatible with ‘freedom’ as a political technology of the Republican state.

When Hakim Bey asks: “Must we wait until the entire world is freed of political control before even one of us can claim to know freedom?” (Bey 2003, 96), his statement is an illustration of the uneasy coexistence of two different and incompatible discourses of ‘freedom’ within the anarchist movement. The first, leftist discourse frames ‘freedom’ in the totalizing, teleological, and ideological terms in which it has been articulated in leftist discourse since the mid-19th century, and in which it was articulated by the leadership of the CNT (for instance, Bakunin argues that “the anarchist social revolution... [is an] an elemental force sweeping away all obstacles” (Bakunin 1980, 325).) However, as Hakim Bey points out, this discourse has proven to be compatible with the political technologies of the state:

as soon as ‘the Revolution’ triumphs and the State returns, the dream and the ideal are *already* betrayed. I have not given up hope or even expectation of change – but I distrust the word *Revolution*. (Ibid, 98)

Bey’s goal in this text is to construct a second, post-leftist discourse of freedom that fundamentally breaks with leftism – and is as fractured and radically contextual as leftist discourse was powerfully ideological and totalizing.

Thus, it is important to understand contemporary Spanish anarchist discourse – as well as contemporary American anarchist discourse – as a product of the tension between these two understandings of freedom. Contemporary Spanish anarchists are attempting to wrest this signifier from the control of the state, to recode it in post-leftist terms that signify something entirely different: autonomy from any kind of social, economic, or political control; autonomy

from power and oppression altogether.¹⁰ Thus, in contemporary Spain, the anti-authoritarian movement is divided between traditional, leftist anarchists – especially, those of the CNT – who continue to follow this first discourse of freedom and liberation, and post-leftists, who – whether calling themselves anarchists, or ‘autonomists,’ or feminists, or hackers, or squatters – seek to recode the historical anarchist discourse of freedom into something fundamentally different.

However, to say this is not to claim that there exists any sort of simple division between leftist and post-leftist anarchist discourse; rather, contemporary, post-leftist anarchism – as we saw in Bey’s argument above, and in David’s quote in the introduction – contains within itself a powerful tension between these two divergent ways of talking about freedom. Thus, when David refers to the squat movement as arguing that “there is no hope, there is no future, there’s no ability to fight” – and, again, when he argues that

we’re going to participate in a violent movement, because we want to be alive, and we want to maintain the idea of resistance. But it’s only an idea that we’re maintaining. We are not really resisting –

he is articulating this tension between a leftist discursive position that constructs freedom as a product of Revolution as a totalizing, teleological, and triumphalist project of social transformation, and a post-leftist discursive position according to which

the slogan ‘Revolution!’ has mutated from tocsin to toxin... a nightmare where no matter how we struggle we never escape... that incubus the State, one State after another (Bey 2003, 97).

However, as the tone of David’s remarks indicates, this second discursive position is highly structurally tenuous: for the post-leftist anarchist, lacking this totalizing discourse of ‘freedom,’ while at the same time living in a society pervaded by the modern, governmentalized state – living in a society in which political discourse is profoundly based upon the assumption that

¹⁰ As we saw in the first section, Foucault would argue that this autonomy can only ever exist discursively; but this discourse is no less powerful or valid because of this fact.

'freedom' cannot exist without the state – it has become increasingly difficult to articulate a fundamentally anti-authoritarian discourse of freedom.

Conclusion

A specter is haunting anarchism: the specter of Marx. Ever since it originated within the utopian working-class social movements of the 19th century, anarchism has discursively constructed itself in opposition to Marxism – while incorporating the fundamentally teleological, totalizing, and ideological – i.e., leftist – shortcomings of Marxist theory.

Marxist political theory and practice are foundationally based on the concept of a fundamental historical break between capitalist and socialist modes of production. In Marxist theory, the proletarian movement is a “self-conscious, independent movement” whose structural position is one of fundamental *difference* from, and unrelenting opposition to, the bourgeoisie. To Marx, the proletariat is “that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society,” a class which “cannot become masters of the productive forces of society, except by abolishing... every other previous mode of appropriation.” (Marx & Engels 1978, 482)

This conception of revolutionary politics, based on the assertion of an irreconcilable *difference* between bourgeoisie and proletariat, is central to a particular discourse which – following other contemporary theorists, such as Jason McQuinn – I refer to as ‘leftist anarchism.’ According to the writings of leftist anarchist historians, the historical Spanish anarchist movement arose spontaneously, its ideology and political framework owing nothing to the society that preceded it, its only relationship with state and capital being one of absolute and unrelenting opposition.

While there is much that is historically unique, and massively creative, about the Spanish anarchist movement, an examination of the struggle between two distinct classes (Barcelonan workers and Andalucían landless laborers) that coexisted within the anarchist movement allows us to demonstrate that Spanish anarchist movement – rather than being fundamentally politically and epistemologically distinct from Spanish feudal and bourgeois social classes – cannot be

understood separately from the historical development of the Spanish state (a history which I have attempted to theorize using a combination of Foucauldian and Modernity/Coloniality theoretical frameworks). And contemporary, post-leftist Spanish anarchists are profoundly struggling with that anarchist historical legacy – attempting to distance their political discourse and practice from that of the traditional, leftist anarchist movement, while remaining profoundly shaped by the leftist political framework that has characterized anarchist discourse ever since its beginnings in the mid-19th century.

Although I have spent most of this paper discussing the historical Spanish anarchist movement, my primary intention was to write a “history of the present” – to engage with the contemporary anarchist movement, and to position myself alongside other theorists who, aiming to articulate a ‘post-leftist’ anarchist framework, are deconstructing the essentialist assumptions that continue to dominate anarchist political discourse. To me, this is no mere theoretical exercise: as anarchists, our actions are all-too-frequently shaped by a profoundly *ideological* conception of anarchist political action, in which Revolution (in a totalizing and teleological sense) is the sole goal of revolutionary activity, to which all other human needs and desires must be subordinated. As Jason McQuinn puts it,

whether the abstraction is God, the State, the Party, the Organization, ... Humanity, Peace, Ecology, Nature, Work, Love or even Freedom: *if it is conceived and presented as if it is an active subject with a being of its own which makes demands of us*, then it is the center of an ideology. ... Even resistance, revolution, and anarchy often take on ideological dimensions when we are not careful to maintain a critical awareness of how we are thinking and what the actual purposes of our thoughts are. (McQuinn 2002, 7; emphasis added)

This left-anarchist ideology is evident when anarchist cheer for Bush’s electoral victory or for downturns in the stock market as steps towards social alienation and thus towards revolution, without sympathy for the people whose lives will be destroyed by such events. It is dominant when we think of blocking buses at a G8 meeting as being somehow more valuable and radical than planting a community garden, working with homeless youth, or caring for one’s friends and

family. And it is dominant when we denigrate the tactics of non-anarchist movements as being insufficiently radical, rather than seeking to understand the ways in which different movements, while maintaining their specific political positionalities, can synergistically organize and thus support one another's goals.

The specter of Marx – of *leftism* – runs deep within our movement. And, perhaps, the most important lesson of the Spanish Revolution is that the political framework of leftism (which is foundationally based on teleological and totalizing political assumptions) dangerously compels us to conceive of Revolution and Anarchy as “active subjects,” to ideologically construct our perceptions of our movements autonomously from the historical circumstances in which they arose. Above all, the leftist political framework compels us to construct our political opponents as fundamentally ‘Other,’ to dehumanize and devalue their lived experiences to the extent that Revolution (or, rather, the reified partial goals which we have conflated with ‘Revolution,’ such as overthrowing a social and political abstractions such as ‘the State’ or ‘capitalism’) becomes more important than the actual work of creating a radically free society, than the relentless engagement in collective struggle against all forms of hierarchy, domination, and oppression.

Many critics – drawing, whether consciously or not, on leftist political theory – have argued that because Foucault views power in fundamentally relational and non-subjective terms, he has undermined the very possibility of resistance. Instead, he has de-essentialized resistance: he has recognized that there is no privileged position of pure, unadulterated radicalism, that “resistance is never is a position of exteriority in relation to power.” (Foucault 1978, 95) Rather, to the post-leftist anarchist, resistance is a struggle, not against any one institution or class, but rather against a form of human relationship which will always exist, and which we ourselves will continue to exercise even as we struggle against it.

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