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Retrieved on June 22, 2011 from www.connexions.org and from personal communication with the author
This article was originally published in Anarchist Studies, [Volume 12, #1, 2004]

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Contents

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1. Introduction

It would seem that today, in the conditions of late capitalism and globalisation, the modern state is becoming more dominant in political, social and economic life, rather than less so. This can be seen particularly in the current preoccupation with security and terrorism. The 'war on terror' serves as the latest ideological justification for the massive centralisation and expansion of state power. This new paradigm of state power opens the way for new political and social conflicts, radically different from those that have arisen in the past. This suggests that the problem of state power can no longer be explained in economic terms alone, but rather constitutes its own specific theoretical and political conditions and terms of reference. In other words, new domains and relations of power are emerging — and indeed have been emerging for some time — that can no longer be explained in economic terms, but rather require different modes of analysis.

Because the problem of state power is more crucial now than ever for radical politics, it would be worthwhile returning to one of the most decisive theoretical and political debates over precisely this question. The conflict between Marxism and anarchism over the power, function and relative autonomy of the state, and its role in a social revolution, was a pivotal debate that shaped nineteenth century radical political thought. This paper examines some of the key aspects of this conflict, focussing on the 'Bonapartist moment' in classical Marxism — that is, the emergence of the theoretical conditions for the relative autonomy of the state. However, I shall show that, despite this innovation, Marxist theory — Marx, as well as subsequent Marxist interventions — was 'in the last instance' constrained by the categories of class and economic relations. My contention here will be that classical anarchism took the theory of Bonapartism to its logical conclusion, and was able to develop a concept of the sovereign state as a specific and autonomous site of power that was irreducible to capitalist economic relations.

In doing so, anarchism broke radically with Marxism. Therefore, within the theory of Bonapartism lay the theoretical foundations for an 'epistemological break' with Marxism itself, allowing for the development of a new analytics of power — one that, to some extent, contributes towards contemporary 'poststructuralist' and 'post-Marxist' approaches to this question.[1] In this paper, I will examine the implications of Bonapartism by exploring and developing the classical anarchist critique of Marxism, as well as examining its relevance for contemporary radical political theory.

2. Bonapartism

Arguing against the Hegelian idea that the state embodies the general good, Marx saw it always as a particular state, one which paints itself as universal. Its universality and independence from civil society are only a mask for the particular economic interests — such as private property — that it serves (Marx 1970: 107). Marx was later to develop from this the position that the state represented the interests of the most economically dominant class — the bourgeoisie. For Marx, it was the economic forces of society that determined all historical, political, cultural and social phenomena:

> the economic structure of society is the real basis on which the juridical and political superstructure is raised, and to which definite social forms of thought correspond; that the mode of production determines the character of the social, political and intellectual life…(1967: 182).

Marx therefore criticises Pierre-Joseph Proudhon for his suggestion that political power could shape the economic system. According to Marx, the state lacks this power because it exists as a mere

[1] Some of these connections have been explored in Newman *From Bakunin to Lacan: Anti-authoritarianism and the Dislocation of Power* (2001).

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that rejects centralism and hierarchy, preferring structures that are more democratic and pluralistic.[7] All of these strategies and forms of activism suggest a contingent hegemonic style of politics, in which political identities and positions, rather than being determined at the outset, are constituted and reconstituted through their engagement in the struggle itself.

Conclusion

The anti-globalisation movement might be seen, then, as not only a form of hegemonic politics in action, but also as a contemporary expression of an anarchistic politics. In this sense, post-Marxism, poststructuralism and anarchism share a similar politico-theoretical terrain — one that is characterised by contingency, heterogeneity and the specificity of the political itself. I have tried to explore the emergence of this terrain, suggesting that it may be seen as arising from the crucial innovation of classical anarchist theory itself — the theorisation of an autonomous and specific political sphere that was irreducible to a Marxist class and economic analysis. As I have shown, the anarchism took Marx's notion of the Bonapartist State to its logical conclusion, thus developing a theory of state power and sovereignty as an entirely autonomous and specific domain, around which different political struggles could be constellated.

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[7] Here David Graeber has explored not only the different and increasingly imaginative forms of activism that characterise the movement, but also the different strategies employed by protest groups to build consensus amongst participants and to implement forms of direct democracy in decision making (see 2002).

reflection of the very economic conditions that it is purportedly able to change ('The German Ideology' in Marx and Engels 1976 vol. 5: 198).

However, while Marx saw the state as largely derivative of the economic forces and class interests, he did at times allow it a substantial degree of political autonomy. His work *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* describes a coup d'etat in France in 1851, in which state forces led by Louis Bonaparte seized absolute power, achieving not only a considerable degree of independence from the bourgeoisie, but often acting directly against its immediate interests. According to Marx, however, the Bonapartist state served the long term interests of the capitalist system, even if it often acted against the immediate interests and will of the bourgeoisie:

> …that the individual bourgeois can continue to exploit other classes and to enjoy undisputed property, family, religion and order that their class be condemned along with other classes to similar political nullity; that, in order to save its purse, it must forfeit the crown…('The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' in Marx and Engels 1976 vol.7: 143).

To what extent, however, does this account of the Bonapartist state allow for the theorisation of the relative autonomy of the state in Marxism? One of the central debates in Marxist theory has been on precisely this question. David Held and Joel Krieger argue that there are two main strands in the Marxist theory about the relation between classes and the state. The first — let us call it (1a) — exemplified by Marx's account of Bonapartism, stresses the relative autonomy of the state. It sees state institutions and the bureaucracy as constituting a virtually separate site in society — its logic is not determined by class interests and it assumes a centrality in society. The second strand (2a) which Held and Krieger argue is the dominant one in Marxist thought, sees the state as an instrument of

class domination, whose structure and operation are determined by class interests (see 'Theories of the State' in Bornstein, et al: 4, 1–20).

Held and Krieger also argue that these two contrasting traditions in Marxist thought correspond to two different revolutionary strategies in regards to the state. The first position (1a) would allow the state to be used as a force for revolutionary change and liberation (1b). Because the state is seen as a neutral institution in the sense that it is not essentially beholden to class interests, it can be used to revolutionise capitalism and topple the bourgeoisie from its position of economic dominance. The second position (2a) on the other hand, because it sees the state as essentially a bourgeois state, an instrument of class domination, demands that the state be destroyed as part of a socialist revolution (2b). This is the position exemplified by Lenin in *The State and Revolution.* This interpretation of the relation between the question of the autonomy of the state, and its role in a socialist revolution, may be represented in the following way:

1 (a) Autonomous state ⟹ 2 (a) Determined state ⟹	1 (b) State as tool of revolution 2 (b) State to be destroyed in revolution

A Marxist model

Now it is this dichotomy of state theories and their concomitant revolutionary strategies that could be questioned from an anarchist perspective. It could be argued that it is precisely the *second* position (2a) — the view of the state as determined by class — that entails the first revolutionary strategy (1b) which allows the state to be used as a revolutionary tool of liberation. Furthermore, one could see the first position (1a) — which allows the state relative autonomy — as entailing the second revolutionary strategy (2b) which calls for the destruction of the state in a socialist rev-

identities who would otherwise have little in common. In other words, the anti-globalisation struggle involves a contamination of the universal and the particular. It is a form of politics that is no longer confined to the particular, separatist demands of excluded minorities, but rather puts into question the global capitalist state order itself. At the same time, though, it problematises capitalism precisely from the perspective of the identities and minorities that are excluded and dominated by it, targeting specific sites of oppression — corporate power and greed, G-M products, workplace surveillance, displacement of indigenous peoples, labour and human rights abuses, and so on. In other words, it doesn't transcend these identities and demands from the perspective of a universal epistemological position — such as that of the proletariat, for instance; rather it is a universal politics that emerges in a contingent way precisely through these particular identities themselves. Moreover, it transcends the particularity of these identities only from a position that is formally empty. The different identities that come to represent the struggle at different times — students, trade unionists, indigenous groups, environmentalists — do so only temporarily, thus leaving the political field constitutively open to a plurality of identities, positions and perspectives. So while this movement is universal, in the sense that it invokes a common emancipative horizon that interpellates the identities of participants, it also rejects the false universality of Marxist politics, which denies difference and heterogeneity, and subordinates other struggles to the central role of the proletariat — or, to be more precise, to the vanguard role of the Party.

In many ways, then, the anti-globalisation movement may be seen as an *anarchistic* form of politics — it is not confined to a single class identity, having the character more of a 'mass' than a 'class' struggle; and it highlights different relations of political, social and cultural subordination, rather than just economic exploitation alone. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that anarchist groups feature prominently in these protests. Moreover, it is a movement

of equivalence" with other identities and groups. In this way, the groups in this chain are increasingly unable to maintain their own particularity, as they become united in opposition to a common enemy.

It is important to note here that this hegemonic political relationship is not determined in an essentialist way. There is no a priori link — as there was in Marxism with the proletariat — between the universal position and the particular identity that comes to incarnate it. According to Laclau, the relation of incarnation is entirely contingent and indeterminate. The 'stand in' is decided in an open field of discursive articulation and political contestation. Theoretically, any identity, if it manages to articulate adequate chains of equivalence, can come to represent a common political struggle. Furthermore, the particularity that 'stands in' for the universal does so only temporarily, and its identity is destabilised by the universality it 'represents' (Laclau, 1996: 53). Because this link is indeterminate and contingent, this opens the political field to other identities to attempt to fulfil this incarnating function

Let us apply this logic of hegemony to contemporary radical political struggles. One of the most important developments in radical politics in recent years has been the emergence of what is broadly termed the 'anti-globalisation' movement, a protest movement against the capitalist and neo-liberal vision of globalisation that so dominates us today. What is radical about this movement is not only the breadth of its political agenda, but the new forms of political action it entails. It is fundamentally different from both the identity politics that has recently prevailed in Western liberal societies, as well as from the Marxist politics of class struggle. It may be seen as a hegemonic political movement because, on the one hand, it unites different identities around a common struggle; and yet this common ground is not determined in advance, or based on the priority of particular class interests, but rather is articulated in a contingent way during the struggle itself. Chains of equivalence and unexpected alliances are formed between different groups and

olution. This inversion of the traditional Marxist model would be characteristic of an anarchist position:

1 (a) Autonomous state ⟹	2 (b) State to be destroyed in revolution
2 (a) Determined state ⟹	1 (b) State as tool of revolution

An Anarchist Model

The reason for this rather radical overturning of the accepted logic is that the first position (1a) comes closest to an anarchist theory of the state. Anarchism sees the state as an autonomous institution — or series of institutions — that has its own interests and logic. It is precisely for this reason that the state *cannot* be used as a neutral tool of liberation during the time of revolution. Even if it is in the hands of a revolutionary class like the proletariat — as Marx advocated — it still cannot be trusted because it has its own imperatives, beyond the control of the 'ruling class'. The time of revolution is when the state institution can least be trusted: it will merely use the opportunity to perpetuate its own power. To regard the state as neutral, then, as strategy (1a) does, is dangerous. According to this anarchist logic, moreover, position (2a) — that which sees the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie — fundamentally misconstrues the nature of state power, implying that the state is merely a neutral institution subservient to the interests of the dominant class. It is this position which would actually entail revolutionary strategy (1b) — the use of the state as a tool of revolution once in the hands of the revolutionary class. It is really a dispute over the meaning of *neutrality*: according to the Marxist logic, neutrality would mean independence from class interests, whereas for anarchists, neutrality would imply precisely the opposite — *subservience* to class interests. This is because the view of state as determined by class interests does not allow the state its *own* logic — it would appear as a humble servant of class

interests and could, therefore, be used as a neutral tool of revolution if it was in the hands of the right class. On the other hand, it is Marx's Bonapartist version of the state — that which sees it as a neutral institution not beholden to class interests — that is the precisely the logic which, for anarchists, paradoxically denies the neutrality of the state. This is because it allows it to be seen as an autonomous institution with its own logic and which, for this very reason, cannot be seen as a neutral tool of revolution.

It could be argued that anarchism pursues the logic of Bonapartism much further than Marx himself was prepared to take it and, in doing so, entirely turns on its head the Marxist conception of state and revolution. The anarchist conception of the state and its relation to class will be expanded upon later. However it is necessary at this point to show that while Marx was no doubt opposed to the state, it is precisely the question of *how* he was opposed to it — as an autonomous Bonapartist institution, or as an institution of bourgeois domination — and the consequences of this for revolutionary strategy, that is crucial to this debate. Nicos Poulantzas, who wanted to emphasise the relative autonomy of the capitalist state, argues that for Marx and Engels *bonapartism* is not merely a concrete form of the capitalist state in exceptional circumstances, but actually a constitutive theoretical feature of it (258). This would apparently question determinist interpretations of the state in Marxist theory. Ralph Miliband on the other hand, argues that for Marx and Engels, the state was still very much the instrument of class domination (5).

So what is one to make of this disparity in the interpretations of Marx's theory of the state? Marx himself never developed an entirely consistent theory of the state, pointing perhaps to a theoretical deadlock that he was unable to overcome. There are times when he appears to have a very deterministic and instrumentalist reading of the state, when he says, for instance: "…the State is the form in which the individuals of a ruling class assert their common interests…" ('The German Ideology' in Marx and Engels, 1976 vol.5:

Laclau shows that the political field can be reduced neither to essentialist determinacy nor to a complete 'postmodern' dispersal of identities — neither, in other words, to absolute universality nor absolute particularity. Both are reductionist paradigms that deny a properly political domain. Rather, politics must be seen as involving a *contamination* of the universal and the particular. Political identities are split between their own particularity, and the dimension of the universal that constitutes them in their particularity. Political identities, no matter how particular, cannot exist without a dimension of universality that contaminates them. It is impossible for a group to assert a purely separate and differential identity, because part of the definition of this particular identity is constituted in the context of relations with other groups (Laclau, 1996: 48). For instance, the demand of a particular minority for cultural autonomy always bears reference to a universal dimension — the demand for the right to be different is also a demand for equal rights with other groups. It is also the case, however, that the universal is contaminated by the particular. The universal is formally empty, so that it can only articulate itself if it is represented by a particular political identity. However, it is also the case that because the universal is formally empty, no identity can completely represent or embody it. In other words, the universal, for Laclau, is an 'impossible object' in that its representation is, at the same time, impossible *and* necessary. While no particularity can fully symbolise this universal, its partial symbolisation is crucial if we are to have any notion of politics at all.

So in this *hegemonic* relationship of mutual contamination, the universal is split between its universality and its need to be represented through a concrete particularity; while the particular is split between its particularity, and its reference to a universality which constitutes its horizon (see Laclau in Butler et al: 56). As I have shown, even the most particular of identities, if it is to engage in any form of political activism or to articulate a series of political demand, has to refer to some universal dimension and form "chains

'chains of equivalence' can be formed between them as they become united around a common struggle or in opposition to a common enemy. For instance, we can imagine a situation in which there is an authoritarian government that antagonises different groups in society — a government that denies worker's their rights also denies students *their* rights, and so on. Despite their different specific aims and identities, a certain relation of equivalence would be formed between workers and students as they become united against a common foe. In this situation, a certain identity will 'stand in' for or embody the universality of this political struggle, thus 'suturing'[6] or temporarily holding together the political field.

To understand this hegemonic relationship more formally, we can think of it in structural terms. For Laclau, the political field is constituted by two irreducible poles or principles — the *universal* and the *particular* — and the dynamic that operates between them. Because there is no longer any universal subject — the position which was once held by the proletariat — this dimension of the universal is 'empty'; that is, it can no longer be embodied in an objective content. The universal remains as the empty horizon of politics — the 'empty signifier' — that cannot be filled and yet, precisely because of this, generates the desire or structural imperative in political identities (the particular) to fill or embody it. It is this political operation of attempting to fill the 'unfillable' place of politics that is precisely the logic of 'hegemony' (Laclau in Butler, et al: 58). In other words, there is a political dimension that is symbolically empty and which can only be articulated through a contingent relation of representation, in which a particular political identity comes to partially embody it, thus generating the very contingency in the social and political identities that are constitutive of it.

[6] This concept 'suture' is taken from Lacanian psychoanalysis to describe a process by which the subject is joined into the signifying chain, allowing the signifier to stand-in for the subject's absence in discourse (see Miller 26–28).

90). Nevertheless, the theory of Bonapartism opened the way for a more heterogeneous approach to the question of the state and its relative autonomy.

3. Autonomous or determined state?

So how should we approach this central ambiguity in Marxism? There is no clear answer to this. But at the risk of sounding like trying to enforce some cohesion onto Marx's thoughts on this subject that he himself maybe never intended, perhaps one can say the following: while one can clearly reject the crude functionalist reading of the state, and while allowing the state a considerable degree of political autonomy in certain instances, one could still say that, for Marx, the state is *in essence* class domination. By this I mean that while the state is by no means the simple political instrument of the bourgeoisie and, indeed, as Marx himself shows, often acts against it, the state is still, for Marx, an institution which allows the most economically powerful class — the class which owns the means of production — to exploit other classes. In other words, it is still the state that facilitates the bourgeoisie's domination and exploitation of the proletariat. This interpretation would allow the state a significant degree of political autonomy: it could work against the political will of the bourgeoisie, but it still would have to protect the long-term structural position and interests of the bourgeoisie. So rather than saying that, for Marx, the state is the *instrument* of bourgeoisie, it may be more accurate to say that the state is a *reflection* of bourgeois class domination, an institution whose structure is determined by capitalist relations. Its function is to maintain an economic and social order that allows the bourgeoisie to continue to exploit the proletariat. By maintaining the conditions of the capitalist economy in the name of the 'common good', the state serves the interests of the bourgeoisie.

One can see in Marx's account of the state — if there can be said to be an 'account' as such — a continuation of the Hegelian critique of the *partial* state, the state that serves the interests of part, rather than the whole, of society. For Marx, as we have seen, the state has an illusory, ideological character: it parades itself as a universal political community open to general participation, whereas in fact it acts on behalf of certain sectional interests. It is an ideological veil behind which the real struggles of economic classes are waged, behind which the real misery and alienation of people's lives is concealed. Like Hegel, Marx was concerned with finding an ethical agency, a form of communal control, a legitimate form of power which would transcend the partial state and embody the interests of the whole of society — something which would, in other words, overcome the contradiction between public and private life. For Marx, the capitalist state was an expression of the alienation in civil society, and the only way this alienation could be overcome was through an agency that did not reflect existing economic and property relations. Unlike Hegel, Marx believed that this agent could not be the modern state *as it stands,* because it was essentially the state of bourgeois relations. While Hegel saw this unifying agent in the ethical principle behind the liberal state, Marx found it in the proletariat.

The proletariat is Marx's version of the universal agent sought within the Hegelian tradition — the subject that would overcome the contradictions in society. Because of its unique place in the capitalist system, the proletariat embodied the universality of this system, and therefore, for Marx, the emancipation of the proletariat is synonymous with the emancipation of society as a whole: "a class which is the dissolution of all classes, a sphere of society which has a universal character because its sufferings are universal…" ('Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*: Introduction' in Tucker: 538, 16–25).

The proletariat represents the possibility of exercising a legitimate and universal ethical authority over society: a society characterised by the universality of its members' interests. Marx's account of the state is, however, underdeveloped, and it is left to Lenin and Gramsci to develop the Marxist theory of the state and political agency.

political tasks of the bourgeoisie. This was extended to Lenin's notion of the class alliance, in which the bourgeoisie and the proletariat would unite to achieve common democratic political ends. In both these positions, there is a conscious construction of a political unity, which involves one class 'standing in' synthetically for the demands of other classes. Gramsci took this synthetic political construction the furthest with his notion of 'collective will', in which radical alliances or ' historic blocs' could be formed from different sectors and classes in society through ideology, intellectual leadership and shared 'values' and 'ideas' (Laclau and Mouffe: 66–67).

What is crucial about this concept of hegemony is that designates a distinctly *political* relationship. That is to say, radical political identities are seen here as being constructed contingently and strategically to suit the specific situation, rather than being the inevitable outcome of historical or economic forces. In other words, it is assumed here that there is no necessary or essential relationship between the proletariat and other social identities — there is only a synthetic relationship between them that develops out of political expediency and is entirely contingent. It also suggests that radical political struggles can no longer be limited to the proletariat alone, and must be seen as being open to other classes and social identities. This is similar to the anarchist position, which sought to include other classes and social strata in the revolutionary struggle alongside the industrial proletariat — peasants, intellectuals déclassé and the lumpenproletariat. Indeed, Bakunin preferred the word 'mass' to 'class' to characterise this heterogeneous revolutionary identity, 'class' implying hierarchy and exclusiveness (1950: 47).

This notion of hegemony, if it is taken to its logical conclusion, breaks the link that had always been assumed in Marxism between class position and political outlook, showing that identities, alliances and radical positions are constituted contingently through engagement in political struggles themselves, rather than being predetermined. Laclau and Mouffe argue that when a number of different identities are engaged in different political struggles,

8. The politics of contingency

Given the theoretical proximity between anarchism and post-Marxism, it is perhaps surprising that this connection is not explored by Laclau and Mouffe — particularly since, as I have suggested above, classical anarchism was able to offer, as a radical alternative to Marxism, a wholly autonomous theory of the state and political power. Moreover, while anarchism could be used to inform post-Marxism, perhaps post-Marxism can also be used here to inform anarchism. In particular, Laclau and Mouffe's theory of *hegemony* could be developed here as a way of understanding the processes of political identification characteristic of contemporary anti-authoritarian struggles.

Hegemony is a concept used by Laclau and Mouffe to describe a radically synthetic political relationship that goes beyond the confines of the Marxist understanding of class struggle. It refers to a political and theoretical problematic that emerged from the central crisis of Marxism — the widening gap, already apparent in the nineteenth century, between, on the one hand, the empirical reality of the shrinking of the working class and the transformations in capitalism, and, on the other, Marx's predictions about the polarisation of society into two opposed classes and the inevitable collapse of capitalism. There were various attempts to patch up this gap through synthetic political articulations — interventions which seemed momentarily to invoke the autonomy of the political and the contingency of the social, only re-inscribe these once again within the parameters of economic determinism and class reductionism, thus foreclosing their radical potential. Indeed, it was only with the introduction of the concept of 'hegemony' that the political domain started to be considered in its own right. The solution proposed by the Russian Social Democrats to the specific problems in Russia of during the nineteenth century was a hegemonic one — because of the situation of 'combined and uneven development' the proletariat would have to take upon itself the

terised by a lack of *public* — as opposed to *private* — authority; a society in which people were alienated from each other and from the public sphere. Marx therefore saw this exercise of public authority, of *social* power, as a necessary stage in the ushering in of communism — a 'transitional' stage. This social power would be organised, moreover, in the apparatus of the state: "There corresponds to this also a political transition in which the State can be nothing but the dictatorship of the proletariat" ('Critique of the Gotha Program' in Marx and Engels, 1968: 327, 315–331). Marx called, furthermore, for the workers to strive for "…the most decisive centralisation of power in the hands of State authority." ('Address of the Central Council to the Communist League' in Tucker: 509, 501–511). So the state, controlled by the proletariat, has become for Marx, albeit temporarily, the vehicle which would liberate society from bourgeois domination by representing society as a whole. Thus the aim of the revolution, for Marx, was not initially to destroy state power, but rather to seize hold of, and in the transitional period perpetuate, it. Of course, it must be remembered that Marx sees this proletarian state as a temporary arrangement, and Engels argued that it would "wither away" when no longer necessary (1969: 333).

However if the state is *always* a reflection of class domination, how then can Marx see the transitional state as acting on behalf of the whole of society? Anarchists saw this as a major flaw in Marx's thinking. Marx, on the other hand, believed that because the state in the 'transitional period' was in the hands of the proletariat — the universal class — it would act for the benefit of society as a whole. According to Marx, it was no longer a partial state, as it had been in bourgeois society — it was now a *universal* state. In fact, according to Marx, state power will no longer even be political power, since 'political power' is defined by its reflection of the interests of a particular class. In other words, because there are no more class distinctions in society, because the bourgeoisie has been toppled from its position of economic and, therefore, political dominance, there is no longer any such thing as political power:

"When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, public power will lose its political character" ('Communist Manifesto' in Tucker: 490). Marx also says in response to anarchist Mikhail Bakunin's objections to the transitional state: "… when class domination ends, there will be no State in the present political sense of the word" ('After the Revolution: Marx debates Bakunin' in Tucker: 545, 542–548). For Marx, because political domination and conflict are an expression of class domination, once class domination disappears, then so will political domination — the state will become a neutral administrative apparatus to be used by the proletariat, until it simply 'withers away'.

Let us follow Marx's logic: because political power is the derivative of class and capitalist relations, once these relations are abolished, then, strictly speaking, political power no longer exists. However, the anarchists saw this claim as dangerously naive. It neglected what they saw as the fundamental principle of state power (or for that matter, any form of institutional or centralised power): that it is independent of economic forces and has its own imperative of self-perpetuation. As I have shown, Marx does allow the state some autonomy and self-determinacy — particularly in his theory of Bonapartism. However, my argument is that he did not develop the implications of this argument to their full extent, falling back into the position of class and economic reductionism. By contrast, anarchism sees the state, *in its essence*, as independent of economic classes, thus radicalising the Bonapartist argument and taking it to its logical conclusion.

4. The anarchist theory of the state

The idea that the state can be utilised for revolutionary ends is the result of the Marxist analysis which sees the state as derivative

they do not contest capitalist exploitation, but rather that economic exploitation would be seen here as an aspect of broader relations of domination. In particular, the permutations of the state over the past fifty or so years — from the welfare state and its increasing bureaucratisation, to neo-liberal state privatisation, to more contemporary forms of security-driven biopolitical sovereignty as discussed above — have generated new relations of subordination, domination and surveillance, as well as concomitant forms of resistance: "In all the domains in which the state has intervened, a politicisation of social relations is at the base of numerous new antagonisms" (Laclau and Mouffe: 162). In other words, they are struggles against specific forms of state power and relations of domination instigated by it. In this sense, they are *anti-authoritarian, anti-state* — that is 'anarchist' — struggles.

Laclau and Mouffe also show the way in which the struggles of workers and artisans in the nineteenth century tended to be struggles against relations of subordination generally, and against the destruction of their organic, communal way of life through the introduction of the factory system and new forms of industrial technology such as Taylorism. They did not conform to Marx's notion of the proletarians embracing the forces of capitalism in order to radicalise it (Laclau and Mouffe: 156). This refusal to reduce the struggles of workers to the specific Marxist vision of the proletarian struggle against capitalism, would also be characteristic of the classical anarchist position, which emphasised the heterogeneity of subaltern subjectivities and antagonisms (the crucial role of the lumpenproletariat, for instance, which had been dismissed by Marx) and their primarily anti-authoritarian character. There is an important theoretical link here between anarchism and 'post-Marxism' — both positions reject the economic and class reductionism of Marxist thought, insisting that it cannot account for the specificity, complexity and heterogeneity of political struggles.

the economy. Laclau and Mouffe argue that the potential political radicalism contained in Marxism was vitiated by its class essentialism, economic reductionism and blind faith in rational science and the dialectic. Therefore, using and developing insights from poststructuralism, deconstruction and psychoanalysis, Laclau and Mouffe have sought to radically rethink Marxism in ways that are non-essentialist, pluralistic and avoid the deterministic logic of the dialectic.

For Laclau and Mouffe, economic and class determinism constitute the central problem in Marxist theory, preventing it from being able to fully grasp the *political* — field of political identities, power relations and antagonisms — in its specificity, autonomy and contingency. They argue that the contemporary political field is no longer held together by the struggles of the proletariat, and that for some time it has been fragmented by a whole series of different and competing identities and struggles — those of blacks, feminists, gays, ethnic minorities, students, environmentalists, consumers, and so on. Class is no longer the dominant category through which radical political subjectivity is defined. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, "The common denominator of all of them would be their differentiation from workers' struggles, considered as 'class' struggles." (159) Moreover, these identities are no longer overdetermined by the struggle against capitalism, but they are rather struggles over a number of different issues that can no longer be explained in economic or class terms — for instance, environmental degradation, differential cultural identity, institutional surveillance, and welfare rights.

It could be suggested, moreover, that these new struggles and antagonisms point to the *anarchist* moment in contemporary politics. As Laclau and Mouffe argue, these 'new social movements' have been primarily struggles against *domination* rather than economic exploitation, as the Marxist paradigm would contend: "As for their novelty, that is conferred upon them by the fact that they call into question new forms of subordination" (160). That is not to say that

of social forces, namely the economic power of the bourgeois class. Anarchism works the other way round: it analyses from the state to society. It sees the state and centralised political power as determining the social and constituting the fundamental site of oppression. Marxist theory also sees the state as an evil to be eventually overcome, but it is an evil derived from the *primary evil* of bourgeois economic domination and private property.[2]

The state, for anarchists, is a priori oppression, no matter what form it takes. Bakunin argues that Marxism pays too much attention to the *forms* of state power while not taking enough account of the way in which state power operates and its structural predominance in society: "They (Marxists) do not know that despotism resides not so much in the form of the State but in the very principle of the State and political power" (1984: 221). Peter Kropotkin too, argues that one must look beyond the present form of the state: "And there are those who, like us, see in the State, not only its actual form and in all forms of domination that it might assume, but in its very essence, an obstacle to the social revolution…" (9). Oppression and despotism exist, then, in the very structure and symbolic location of the state — in the principle of sovereignty that lies at its heart. The state, in other words, constitutes its own locus of power — it is not merely a derivative of class power. The state has its own specific logic, its own momentum, its own priorities: these are often beyond the control of the ruling class and do not necessarily reflect economic relations. For anarchists, then, political power refers to something other than class and economic relations.

[2] This point of difference is summed up by Engels: "While the great mass of the Social Democratic workers hold our view that the State power is nothing more than the organisation with which the ruling classes — landlords and capitalists — have provided for themselves in order to protect their social privileges, Bakunin maintains that it is the *State* which has created capital, that the capitalist has his capital *only by the grace of the State*. As, therefore, the State is the chief evil, it is above all the State which must be done away with and then capitalism will go to blazes of itself. We, on the contrary, say: Do away with capital…and the State will fall away of itself" (see 'Versus the Anarchists' in Tucker: 728, 728–729).

The modern state has its own origins too, independent of the rise of the bourgeoisie. Unlike Marx, who saw the modern state as a creation of the French Revolution and the political ascendancy of the bourgeoisie, Bakunin saw the state as the child of the Reformation. According to Bakunin, the crowned sovereigns of Europe usurped the power of the Church, creating a secular authority based on the notion of divine right — hence the birth of the modern state: "The State is the younger brother of the Church." (1985: 20) Kropotkin also attributes the state's emergence to non-economic factors such as the historical dominance of Roman law, the rise of feudal law, the growing authoritarianism of the Church, as well as the endemic *desire* for authority (1943: 28).

Furthermore, it could be argued that the political forces of the state actually determine and select specific relations of production, rather than the other way round. This is because they encourage particular forces of production which are functional for the state, allowing the development of the means of coercion required by the state. This turns the base-superstructure model of the state on its head, seeing the determining forces going from top to bottom rather than from the bottom to the top.[3] According to this argument, to see the state as derivative of class power is to fall victim to the state's deception. The state apparatus in itself appears to be faceless — it appears to lack any inherent values or direction. Marx sees it as an illusory reflection of the alienation created by private

[3] Alan Carter argues that because many Marxists have neglected the possibility of political forces determining economic forces, they have fallen into the trap of the state: "Marxists, therefore, have failed to realise that the State *always* acts to protect its own interests. This is why they have failed to see that a vanguard which seized control of the State could not be trusted to ensure that the State would 'wither away'. What the State might do, instead, is back different relations of production to those which might serve the present dominant economic class if it believed that such new economic relations could be used to extract from the workers an even greater surplus — a surplus which would then be available to the State" (see 'Outline of an Anarchist Theory of History' in Goodway: 184, 176–197).

humanity." (1984: 138) This looming conflict is also echoed by Agamben, who, perhaps pointing to the increasingly *anarchist* nature of radical politics, contends that "the novelty of coming politics is that it will no longer be a struggle for the conquest or control of the State, but a struggle between the State and the non-State (humanity)…" (1993: 84).

7. Anarchism and post-Marxism

Anarchist theory, in its emphasis on the sovereign state as an autonomous and specific dimension of power, has uncovered new arenas of radical political antagonism that are no longer overdetermined by economic or class. To further explore these new fields of struggle and the way that political identities that arise from them, I shall turn to the interventions of key post-Marxist thinkers Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe. I shall suggest that not only does the post-Marxist project have important links with classical anarchism, but that anarchist theory can itself be extended through an analysis of the relations of hegemony and political identification central to the post-Marxist argument.

In their work *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, Laclau and Mouffe attempt to address the theoretical and political crisis of Marxism — evident not only in the abject failure of Marxist-Leninist projects, but also in concrete social conditions of the shrinking working class in post-industrial societies, the fragmentation of the political domain and the rise of the 'new social movements'. Added to these factors is the cultural and epistemological conditions of 'postmodernity', which entails a scepticism about the universal essentialist identities and positivistic categories that Marxism based itself on. The theoretical premise for the post-Marxism problematic is the contention that the failure of Marxism as a political project was due to its general neglect of politics — to its insistence that the political is subordinated to

are strictly speaking outside normal legal jurisdiction, thus allowing the government almost complete impunity in the power they exercise over the detainees. Moreover, the designation 'illegal combatant' highlights the ambiguous status of the detainees, the fact they are beyond normal legal protections — their subjectivity being that of homo sacer. According to Agamben, "*The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule.*" (1998: 168–169) We can see this clearly in the informal, extra-legal structures and practices that are emerging as a result of the 'war on terror' becoming a permanent feature of political life. Agamben suggests that security, which was one amongst several functions of sovereign state — has now become its single, overriding function, the "basic principle of state activity." (2002: 1) Central to this security paradigm, however, is not the prevention of emergencies, but their *production* — the state has a vested interest in sustaining a certain level of disorder, violence and catastrophe, precisely in order to legitimize its increased incursions into social life. The problem with this new security paradigm of the state is that, as Agamben argues, "it can always be provoked by terrorism to turn itself terroristic." (2002: 1)

Agamben's analysis has therefore unmasked the hidden matrix of biopolitics, sovereign power and subjectivity that underlies contemporary politics. In many ways he goes beyond the classical political paradigm of anarchism, pointing to new modalities of biopower which anarchism would simply not have the conceptual language to grasp. However, Agamben's emphasis on the sovereign power of the state and the way that it increasingly dominates life today, directly reflects the anarchist argument that insisted on seeing sovereignty as an irreducible principle of power and domination that transcended its various concrete articulations. Moreover, the anarchists argued that the central division in politics was not between the proletarian and bourgeois, as Marx claimed, but rather between humanity and the state, which for Bakunin is "*the most cynical and complete negation of*

property, or as an institution of the bourgeois class. In reality, however, the state has its own origins and mechanisms, and operates according to its own agenda, which is to perpetuate itself in different guises — even in the guise of the worker's state.

For anarchists, state power perpetuates itself through the corrupting influence it has on those in power. This is where the real domination lies, according to Bakunin: "We of course are all sincere socialists and revolutionists and still, were we to be endowed with power…we would not be where we are now." (1984: 249) Therefore, the fact that the proletariat is at the helm of the state does not mean, as Marx claimed, an end to political power. The state would simply re-instantiate itself at this new political juncture. The Marxist program would only mean a massive increase in political power and domination. Moreover, Bakunin believed that Marx's revolutionary strategy would lead to a new stage of capitalist development. The Marxist workers' state would only perpetuate, rather than resolve, the contradictions in capitalist society: it will leave intact the division of labour, it will re-instate industrial hierarchies, and furthermore it will generate a new set of class divisions between workers and peasants, and the new governing class (Bakunin 1980: 336–337).

Bakunin perhaps represents the most radical elements of Marxist theory. He takes Marx seriously when he says that the state is *always* concomitant with class divisions and domination. However there is an important difference. To put it crudely, for Marx, the dominant class generally rules through the state, whereas for Bakunin, the state generally rules through the dominant class. In other words, bourgeois relations are actually a reflection of the state, rather than the state being a reflection of bourgeois relations. Unlike Marxism, the emphasis in anarchist theory is on the state itself — a term which *includes* economic exploitation — rather than on economic relations specifically. Anarchism would seem to have a much broader concept of the state than Marxism. The ruling class, argues Bakunin, is the state's real material representative. In this

sense, ruling classes are essential to the state, rather than the state being essential to ruling classes. The bourgeoisie is only one of the state's specific forms of articulation (Bakunin 1984: 208). When the bourgeoisie is destroyed the state will create another class in its place, through which it can perpetuate its power — even in an allegedly classless society. In the wake of a Marxist revolution, a new bureaucratic class will come to dominate and exploit the workers in much the same way as the bourgeoisie did. Behind every ruling class of every epoch there looms the state — an abstract machine with its own logic of domination. As Bakunin shows, the state fully realises itself as a *machine* when the Marxist revolution installs the bureaucratic class at its helm: "when all other classes have exhausted themselves, the class of bureaucracy enters upon the stage and then the State fall, or rises, if you please, to the position of a machine." (1984: 208) It is precisely this machine-like character of the state — this structural imperative of self-perpetuation — that is dangerous, and which Marxist theory, because of its economic and class reductionism, could not account for. It is for this reason, anarchists argued, that revolution must be aimed not at seizing control of state power, even if only temporarily, but at destroying it and replacing it with de-centralised, non-hierarchical forms of social organisation. It is also for the reasons mentioned before that anarchists argue that state cannot be trusted to simply 'wither away'. For anarchists it is extremely naive, even utopian, to believe that entrenched political power — and Bakunin's analysis *has* shown the workers state to be precisely this — will simply self-destruct just because old class divisions have disappeared and relations of production have been transformed.

5. The problem of economic reductionism

For anarchists, Marxism has great value as an analysis of capitalism and the relations private authority which it is tied to. However,

itself — *zoé*[5] — providing the perfect subject of biopolitics, upon whom the power over life itself can be exercised without limit. Indeed, as Agamben shows, the camp is the exemplary biopolitical space of modernity precisely because it provides a certain extra-judicial zone in which sovereign power can be exercised without restriction over the body and biological life of the detainee: "this is the principle according to which 'everything is possible'." (1998: 170) Homo sacer can be seen, then, as the dimension of subjectivity that emerges when sovereign power coincides with biopolitics, as it has done in an unprecedented way in the modern age. More alarmingly, according to Agamben, it is this subjectivity that we are all becoming increasingly reduced to.

One of the more recent articulations of the biopolitical state has been the new security paradigm that has emerged in the wake of September 11. Indeed, it could be argued that the ongoing 'war on terror' and the obsession with security that is part of this, provides the new ideological justification for the aggressive reassertion of the sovereign power beyond the formal limits normally imposed by law and liberal-democratic frameworks. In other words, the modern state is showing its true face by moving closer and closer to a state of emergency or *exception*. Already we have seen, in the name of combating terrorism, unprecedented infringements on civil liberties and undreamt of powers of surveillance being accrued by governments and security apparatuses. This is combined, of course, with an increasing militarisation of the state, and the preemptive use of force against external enemies, real or imagined. We have also seen the emergence of contemporary forms of the biopolitical space, in the detention camps such as Camp X-Ray in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba and Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. These camps

[5] According to Agamben, *zoe* was for the ancient Greeks biological life itself — the mere fact of existence — as opposed to *bios*, which was a form of life proper to the individual within the polis. In other words, at the heart of the very concept of life itself is the division between symbolic and politically significant life, and naked life stripped of this significance (see 1998: 1–2).

sight to come together for their common ends (1984: 136)? Political authority cannot, therefore, be based on a rational and free agreement between individuals; rather it is based on a founding gesture of violence that arbitrarily brings into being the symbolic institution of the law, and which is concealed by the ideological fiction of the contract. In other words, the social contract serves only to mask the true nature and function of the state — self-perpetuation and the violence with which this in ensured: "And since all States, ever since they came to exist upon the earth, have been condemned to perpetual struggle — a struggle against their own populations, whom they oppress and ruin…" (Bakunin 1984: 139).

This violence directed by the state against its own population, is embodied in Agamben's figure of *homo sacer*. Homo sacer means literally 'sacred man', and is defined by the act of legal homicide. According to an ancient principle of Roman law, one who is declared homo sacer is excluded from normal legal protections and can therefore be murdered by any one with impunity (see Agamben 1998: 71–74). This figure is characterised by an ambiguity surrounding the word 'sacred' — implying not only what is holy and consecrated, but also what is *untouchable*. That is to say, if one is declared homo sacer, according to this law, it means that he cannot be formally sacrificed or executed, because this would confer upon him a symbolic status — rather, he is flung into a state of exclusion and abandonment, and left to the mercy of others. In Agamben's analysis, homo sacer is the ultimate subject upon whom the violence of the state is exercised with impunity. For instance, modern examples of homo sacer may be refugees, who are denied any sort of formal legal protection and who are at the mercy of governments all around the world. The Jews in Nazi Germany were perhaps the ultimate homo sacer — before they could be deported to the murder and concentration camps, they had first to be stripped of their German citizenship and the legal rights and protections guaranteed by it. Moreover, because homo sacer is denied any symbolic and political significance, his status is reduced to that of naked or 'bare' life

in focusing on this, Marxism neglected other forms of authority and domination — primarily that of the state, but also technology, religious institutions and party hierarchy (see Bookchin: 188). This was because it had a tendency to reduce them to the conceptual categories of class and economics, and to regard them as secondary to, and derivative of, these. Marxism is caught, one could argue, in a reductionist logic that cannot adequately account for the specificity of political domination. According to Elizabeth Rappaport, "His (Marx's) tendency to regard all political conflict as grounded in class antagonism led him to underestimate the importance of the political dimension of socialist development." (343)

This reductionist logic extends to more contemporary forms of Marxism. For instance, while Louis Althusser proposed a concept of society radically different from the classical Marxian notion of the social superstructure strictly determined by the economic essence or structure, he nevertheless saw social relations as being determined, *in the last instance*, by the economy. Althusser's intervention did, however, extend the logic of Bonapartism, once again engaging with the possibility — within Marxist discourse — of theorising the autonomy of the political. He proposed that the economy acts on the social only indirectly — economic forces were part of the social whole, and did they do not constitute a privileged core outside the social superstructure. In other words, political formations can act on the economy, just as they can be acted on by the economy. He calls this symbiotic relationship *overdetermination* (1977: 101). Moreover, Althusser explored more complex and decentralised constellations of power — ISAs (Ideological State Apparatuses) that included not only the state bureaucracy, but also institutions such as the Church and schools, as well as other forms of social and political domination — which largely functioned autonomously from the workings of the capitalist economy. This rejection of the base-superstructure thesis has much in common with classical anarchism. Althusser would seem, then, to be approaching the anarchist position because

he allows for a greater emphasis to be placed on the autonomy of the state apparatus, and other non-economic forms of power. However despite this, Althusser structured his conception of the social around the economy: the economy for Althusser, is the "structure in dominance", the organising principle in society (see 'The Object of *Capital*' in Althusser and Balibar: 188, 71–182). While political and social formations were not directly, in every instance, determined by the economy, they were still *dominated* by it. The prerogatives of the economy still took precedence, *in the last instance* — in a time of revolution, for example — over other social formations.

Alex Callinicos, on the other hand, has sought to defend classical Marxism against the potential challenge it faced from Althusser, and from structuralism generally. For Callinicos, Althusser's rejection of the Hegelian social whole culminates in an affirmation of difference — a multiplicity of social practises that cannot be dialectic*ised* back into an original unity (62). It is this potential openness to the notion of difference and plurality, according to Callinicos, which has caused the 'crisis of Marxism'. Instead, what must be reaffirmed is the classical Marxist notion of the social totality, centrally determined by the economy. It is only this perspective, Callinicos argues, that allows for the possibility of the Class Struggle. However it is precisely this perspective, that negates the possibility of other sources of power in society, which has been challenged by anarchism.

Bob Jessop tries to develop, *within* the Marxist framework, a contingent theory of political power and the state. He argues that in Marxist theory there are three main ways of approaching this question. The first sees the relationship between economic interests and institutional systems purely in terms of function. The second approach stresses the way in which the institutional *form* of different systems reflects or corresponds to the structural needs of economic systems. The third approach rejects the economic determinism of the last two, and sees the relationship between institu-

underlies its different articulations, from monarchy, to parliamentary democracy, to the Marxist workers' state.[4]

At the heart of sovereignty, according to Agamben, is the *state of exception* — that is, the principle by which the state can stand both inside and outside the juridical order simultaneously (1998: 15). This is the paradox of state authority — that the sovereign provides the foundations of the legal order and, precisely because of this, is also beyond its limits and has the power to suspend it at certain moments. Therefore the principle of sovereignty consists in the power of the state to suspend the normal legal system and declare a state of emergency. The state of emergency is the exception that proves the rule: rather than being an aberration of the normal functions of state power, it is where it shows its true face, where it can operate with impunity and in a *zone of indistinction* in which the normal legal limitations and protections no longer apply. If this state of exception is the fundamental principle of state power, then the law no longer offers us any protection from it. The law has, in other words, abandoned us to sovereignty. This space of exception is also marked by a certain violence: "the sovereign is the point of indistinction between violence and law, the threshold in which violence passes over into law, and law passes over into violence." (1998: 32)

This hidden intersection of violence, law and sovereignty was also unmasked in the classical anarchist critique of the state, in which the theory of the social contract — which serves as the standard liberal justification of the state — is shown to be false. Bakunin thus dismissed the notion of the social contract as an "unworthy hoax" because it masks a logical contradiction: if, as social contract theorists claim, people live a savage existence in the state of nature, without rationality or morality, then how can they have the fore-

[4] Indeed, Bakunin argues that a democratic republican state can be more despotic than a monarchic state, because it can oppress people in the name of the popular will (1984: 209).

Now it is precisely this notion of biopower that contemporary continental philosopher Giorgio Agamben takes up and develops into a coherent theory of biopolitics. However, where he differs from Foucault is that, rather than seeing the principle of sovereignty and state power as having been superseded by biopower, he sees the two modes as coinciding to form the political nexus of the modern age. As Agamben argues, there is a hidden point of intersection or *indistinction* between juridico-institutional and biopolitical models of power, and that therefore the investigation of sovereignty and state power, rather than being obsolete, is never more relevant than today: "*It can even be said that the production of a biopolitical body is the original condition of sovereign power.*" (1998: 6) Indeed, as Agamben shows, there is a blindspot in Foucault's work surrounding the point at which techniques of individualisation and totalising strategies actually converge. In other words, what is missing from Foucault's account of power is the question of how the individualising power of biopolitics is exercised, which institutions exercise it and by what principles is it legitimated? What this refers to is the precisely the principle of state power or sovereignty — and without this Foucault's theory is incomplete. Moreover, as Agamben comments, Foucault's theory has neglected any analysis of the exemplary instances of biopower — twentieth-century totalitarian states (1998: 119).

So it would seem that political theory, if it is to fully grasp the new ways in which powers is exercised today, needs a theory of state sovereignty. Indeed, rather than dismiss the notion of state sovereignty, or see it as a discursive illusion, Agamben sees it as the central problem for contemporary politics. He shows the way in which sovereignty, in its biopolitical articulation, is the hidden matrix of the politics of modernity, underlying different political ideologies and the transformations from totalitarianism to liberal-democracy . There is a certain resonance here with the anarchist argument about state sovereignty — that it is the secret logic that

tions and economic systems to be based on *"contingent articulatory practices"* (80). The second, and possibly even the first, approach is represented by Callinicos who sees the social and political as centrally determined by economic relations. The third strand of Marxist thought is perhaps best reflected by Althusser who, on one level at least, seems to put forward a contingent approach to the relationship between the political and the economic, allowing the political considerable degree of autonomy. However, as I have shown, even in this sort of analysis, the political is still ultimately determined by the economy. Therefore, it could be argued that for a genuinely contingent and autonomous theory of political and non-economic power to emerge, it means going beyond the conceptual limits of Marxism. As Rappaport says: "It does…require going beyond Marx in developing a theory capable of explaining political relationships which do not have their foundations in material scarcity." (343)

6. Sovereignty and bio-politics

The classical anarchist critique therefore showed that Marxism was incapable of grasping centralised political power in its truly autonomous dimension. The major theoretical achievement of anarchism was precisely to unmask this autonomous dimension of power and authority, as well as highlight the dangers of their reaffirmation in a revolution if neglected. In other words, political power was now seen as phenomena that could no longer be reduced to its different class articulations. Rather, it was to be seen in terms of an abstract position or place in the social, and as having its own structural logic which articulated itself in different ways. Anarchism therefore exposed the limitations of Marxist theory in dealing with the problem of power. Blinded as it was by its economic determinism, it failed to see power as an autonomous phenomenon that was irreducible to economic factors and that required its own specific forms of analysis.

It is precisely this need to examine power as a separate and autonomous phenomenon that is reflected in contemporary post-structuralist theory, in particular that of Michel Foucault. Foucault also criticised the economic and class reductionism of Marxism, precisely because it prevented one from examining power relations on their own terms: "So long as the posing of the question of power was kept subordinate to the economic instance and the system of interests which this served, there was a tendency to regard these problems as of small importance." ('Truth and Power' in 1980: 109–133). For Foucault, power cannot be reduced simply to the interests of the bourgeoisie or capitalist economics: power does not flow from the bourgeoisie, but from institutions, practices, and discourses that operate independently of it — such as the prison, the family, psychiatric discourse — which have their own specific logic.

Foucault would agree, then, with the anarchist position that the Marxist revolution is only a changing of the guard: it only changes the form and distribution of power in society, rather than subverting it. For Foucault, a Marxist revolutionary politics that neglects the autonomy of state power by reducing it to an economic analysis is bound to perpetuate this power:

> One can say to many socialisms, real or dreamt: Between the analysis of power in the bourgeois state and the idea of its future withering away, there is a missing term: the analysis, criticism, destruction, and overthrow of the power mechanism itself. (1976: 453–466)

Like the anarchists, then, Foucault believes that power must be studied in its own right, not reduced to a mere function of the capitalist economy or class interest. If it is continually subordinated to an economic analysis, then the problem of power will never be addressed and will continue to perpetuate itself.

However, Foucault's reconfiguration of power went not only beyond Marxism, but also beyond anarchism itself, undermining the

paradigm of sovereignty that not only inscribed anarchist theories of power, but those of classical political philosophy generally. That is to say, that, according to Foucault, not only was power irreducible to the class position of the bourgeoisie, but it was also irreducible to the central apparatus of the state itself. Indeed, Foucault argues that the state is a kind of discursive illusion that masks the radically dispersed nature of power and the way it has pervaded social relations at every level. In other words, power relations can no longer be seen as emanating from a centralised institution like the state, or indeed from any institution. Rather, power is a force relationship that is exercised at the level of everyday interactions, and permeates a multiplicity of infinitesimal discourses, practices and strategies. Indeed, government itself not an institution but a series of practices and rationalities which Foucault calls *governmentality* or the "art of government." The state, "no more probably today that at any other time in its history, does not have this unity, this individuality, this rigorous functionality, nor, to speak frankly, this importance;" ('Governmentality' in Gordon 1991: 103, 87–104).

Indeed, according to Foucault, political philosophies — including anarchism — that enshrine power in the state, are part of an outmoded 'juridico-discursive' framework of sovereignty which is no longer valid today: "what we need … is a political philosophy that isn't erected around the problem of sovereignty… We need to cut off the King's head: in political theory that has still to be done." (1978: 93) This is because the sovereign mode of power — symbolised by *the right to take like or let live* — has been superseded by the modern mode of biopower — symbolised by *the right to sustain life or to let die.* In other words, in contrast to sovereign power, biopower has extended its reach over biological life itself. It is a form of power that takes life as its object and sustains it, regulating its flows and movements, and intensifying its capacities and powers, thus more effectively controlling and dominating it. It is a much more subtle and pervasive form of power than that previously exercised by the sovereign over his subjects.