

The
ACCUMULATION
of **FREEDOM**

WRITINGS ON
ANARCHIST ECONOMICS

EDITED BY DERIC SHANNON, ANTHONY J. NOCELLA II,
& JOHN ASIMAKOPOULOS



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Anthony J. Nocella, II

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This book is dedicated to all of the exploited and oppressed people struggling for freedom and dignity. Let us transform society, liberate ourselves, and be free!

To the global working class, may they unite and take what is theirs.

Economics was once called the dismal science and is still often associated with dry, technical argument and the modeling of preferences based on assumptions of perfect knowledge and rational calculation. The language of economics—investment, fiscal stimuli, growth, productive efficiency, bull and bear markets—is quite familiar. And the practical implications of these terms are all too predictable and easily understood, particularly during periods of recession. But to many the content of the subject remains mysteriously abstract and its scope seems narrowly focused. The study of economics is too often limited to the analysis of capitalist markets, the murky dealings of international finance or, as the recent and spectacular collapse of the banks shows, with systemic failure.

Naturally, there have always been critical voices within the discipline, but it is only recently that the possibility of imagining how economies might work, or be made to work differently, has been stated so emphatically. Since the emergence of the global social justice movement, new lines of inquiry about the assumptions, values, and effects of the global economic system have been opened. The mantra that there is no alternative has been subject to fresh scrutiny. Its counter-claim, that other worlds are possible, has proved to be a powerful rival and is beginning to supplant it. The rise of unregulated movements of capital, the dominating presence of multi-national corporations, and the structuring of free trade to favor the most powerful are no longer regarded as inevitable, unstoppable or spontaneous features of economic markets—much less, desirable. That the global economy is a badly regulated, ill-planned system which has been facilitated by a morally bankrupt and oppressive ideology—neoliberalism—is surely now clear.

Some of the most important critiques of the neoliberal dystopia to have appeared since 1999 have been informed by non-anarchist socialist and left-liberal positions. The work of Susan George, Peter Singer, Alex Callinicos, Joseph Stiglitz, and others provides a rich source of inspiration. But the anarchistic nature of the social justice movement and the grassroots actions that it has embraced also provides space for the discussion of explicitly anarchist approaches to economics. Some of this discussion might fill non-anarchists with horror, especially if it is assumed that anarchism stands only for the deregulation of the economy, the privatization of all services, and the rolling back of the state with little regard for issues of equality, participation, and creative flourishing. For most groups within the social justice movement, this brand of right-libertarianism is hardly better, though perhaps less hypocritical, than regulated neoliberalism. Its association with anarchism—which is fiercely contested—owes much to the influence of Murray Rothbard who described his uncompromising and radical defense of individual rights and free market distributions as anarcho-capitalist. Whether or not his identification with anarchism distorted the tradition, his position hardly exhausts the possibilities for an anarchist economics. On the contrary, anarchism offers a strong and rich heritage of anti-capitalist thinking, and it is these lines of thought which might usefully be revived.

Anti-capitalist anarchism is grounded in the belief that problems of inequality, alienation, exploitation, and aggressive competition stem from the complex relationship of political and economic interests. Sometimes this relationship is understood as a class relationship in which political elites (historically patriarchal, racist, homophobic, and religiously bigoted) are more or less subservient to the economically powerful. Others treat the interrelation as evidence of a more diffuse military-industrial complex, where similarly structured political, economic, and military interests

coalesce. Either way, anarchists have generally argued that capitalism has developed alongside the process of political centralization and state formation. A clean divorce of politics from economic activity, releasing markets from government interference, is simply impossible—even assuming it is desirable. The absorption of politics into economics is equally problematic.

Typically, the acknowledgment of the interdependence of states and markets has encouraged anarchists to examine the sociological effects of capitalism as well as its economic operation. For example, on the question of exploitation, anarchists have highlighted the repressive character of the organization and management of production as well as pointed out the injustice of ownership and the contradictions of individual property rights. Similarly, they have explored the expansion of capitalist markets by looking at the centrality of war and the militarization of everyday life in addition to analyzing capitalism's imperialist dynamic. This approach to capitalism has played an important role in shaping revolutionary strategies. Anarchists have uniformly rejected ideas of state control and central planning and tied the possibility of redirecting production towards the satisfaction of social and useful ends to a process of independent popular action. As Kropotkin argued in *The Conquest of Bread*, social transformation relies upon the ability of individuals working in local communities to find ways of securing their own sources of well-being: food, shelter, and clothing.

This tradition of thought has supported a variety of utopian visions, characteristically defined by calls for the decentralization of production and direct worker/community control. Some anarchists have also argued for the abandonment of international trade and the division of labor in favor of the close integration of agriculture and industry in local areas. Others, unmoved by the possibility of equalizing the burdens of labor and/or reducing the hours of labor, have called for the abandonment of work—and, potentially, the structuring discipline of time—and for its replacement by voluntary production (“productive leisure”). These principles have been adapted to suit a diverse set of arrangements. Perhaps the best known historical example of their application is the anarchist syndicalist federation, but anarchists have also supported cooperative systems, models of reciprocal exchange based on contract and ethical ownership, and free communism. In recent years, a variety of ecological alternatives have also been explored.

Globalization has not rendered the anarchist approach to economics redundant. Indeed, debates about the relative power of states and corporations as drivers of neoliberal change have refocused attention on the complexity of these relationships and the ways in which power is configured locally. Renewed interest in state sovereignty has encouraged analysis of the compatibility of principles of local decision-making, individual autonomy, and universal rights. These analyses have been shaped by a growing awareness of the interdependence of states and a desire to move beyond the liberal and communist polarization of Cold War ideology. Nevertheless, thematically there is a significant overlap between these discussions and traditional anarchist concerns.

Naturally, neoliberal globalization has created new concerns about the organization of economic systems which anarchists need to address. One set centers on the character of corporate capitalism. Naomi Klein's analysis identifies branding and outsourcing as its key features. Branding is associated with lifestyle consumption and the promotion of a vapid acquisitive culture. This is supported by seductive, highly manipulative marketing campaigns which help conceal the growing differential between rich and poor. Outsourcing describes a system of global franchising. In the old manufacturing sectors of the advanced economies, it brings the casualization of labor and mass unemployment. In the production zones of the developing world, it combines the slavish, sweated practices of Victorian capitalism with the bureaucratic efficiency of labor camp regulation. Escaping from the corporatization of the economy presents unimaginable difficulties. For although “the consumer

king,” the wheels of corporate global capitalism are oiled by a deregulated banking system which requires consistently high consumption to support its speculations. Even assuming the possibility of re-patterning mass consumption, sudden shifts are likely to provoke a crisis of confidence in the financial system, threatening the mortgages of those least able to support them—pensions and government welfare systems. The extent and grasp of the web in which individuals are caught has been exposed all too clearly by the bank-led collapse of the economy.

A second set of issues prompted by globalization center on the environmental and ecological costs of industrialization and modernization. These concerns also have a long history but the servility of kowtowing governments has lent them a new urgency. The signs of ecological collapse—increasing rates of extinction, climate chaos, and ozone depletion—are now frighteningly obvious. So is the political corruption that often accompanies corporate expansion. Shell’s involvement in Nigeria and the execution of Ken Saro-Wira is an outstanding example of the influence that corporate interests can exert in court. Less obvious are the longer-term effects of industrial production and, especially, agribusiness. For example, the routine contamination of food supplies which results from the demand to increase yields and eradicate the plant and animal diseases that are encouraged by industrial processes that are now employed as standard in agriculture. Also hidden is the amount of food waste generated by the need to meet the supermarket standards of the rich world. It is estimated that British households unnecessarily throw away approximately six million tons of food a year. But even this huge figure pales in comparison to the amount that gets lost between field and display shelf. The miraculous promises of GM technology to make good the food shortages that lead millions to die of malnutrition and starvation every year should be seen in this context rather than as freak and unmediated crop failures. In the framework of global capitalism, the drive of so-called emerging economies in India and China to follow the industrial model will further exacerbate all of these problems.

A third set of concerns centers around the unfairness of global market regulation and, in particular, the Western bias of institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organization. The imposition of a one-size-fits-all policy to deal with economic problems across the globe and the use of trade sanctions has helped increase inequalities and facilitated the virtual recolonization of poorer states. A related issue is the growing interstate rivalry for control of natural resources. As Noam Chomsky has demonstrated, for most of the postwar period democratic states have pursued imperial ambitions with the vigor of old empires, defending liberal freedoms at home and pushing exploitative agendas abroad. Overt military action has been taken to protect vital interests. Oil is now a security issue, as the invasion of Iraq and the race to control the Arctic gas and oil fields has shown. Water is another. Current predictions are that the combined effects of untreated wastewater, agricultural pollution, and the massive transportation of ever-dwindling supplies from the poor to the rich worlds will result in destruction and death on an unprecedented scale.

Finding a response to any of these issues is an enormous undertaking and the more original voices that can be heard the better. One way of developing a specifically anarchist approach to neoliberal globalization is to examine the issues it has thrown up by using the frameworks of analysis developed in the early years of Western capitalist expansion. This would mean taking seriously the claim that it is both possible and desirable to find a way of regulating economic behavior without relying on the coercive apparatus of the state. Such an approach might take inspiration from the principles of design that the earlier generation of anarchists proposed without relying on or being too constrained by the particular models they devised. Parecon is a productive and inspirational example that might be developed in several different ways.

In the course of pursuing anarchist alternatives, it seems likely that the pressing nature of current

problems will require some hard political choices. Contrary to what skeptics believe, resistance is sometimes an option, and anarchists have a long history of practical, constructive experimentation in developing systems of mutual support. This tradition continues to thrive, as thousands of other grassroots actions and initiatives demonstrate. Yet should resistance and experimentation fail or where the immediate choice of policy alternatives makes them irrelevant, the conviction that an anarchist economic system is realizable is a source of strength. It should help anarchists identify the most preferred (or least worst) options and, ideally, contribute positively to the reshaping of non-anarchist preferences.

Anarchist Economics: A Holistic View

Deric Shannon, Anthony J. Nocella, II, John Asimakopoulou

In an online discussion titled “Anarchist Economics” one poster recently commented, “Anarchist economics?! Now, that’s an oxymoron!” After further discussion, it became clear that this person, a long-time anarchist, operated under the assumption that “economics” is *capitalism*. While that may be true for the typical university “economics” class, there is a long history of economic analyses, models, and practices that are based on *anti-capitalist* principles.

Meanwhile, to many who are not even radicals, capitalism looks like it is on its last legs, or at the least like an undesirable way to organize humanity.[2] Hundreds of billions (!) of public dollars have been spent to help private and enormous failed businesses recover. And while corporations are bailed out of their problems, in typical capitalist fashion, workers bear the brunt of the world’s economic troubles (in addition to being daily disempowered, taxed, then having our money get turned over to groups and people who are already powerful and wealthy). We have seen “austerity” for workers in the form of cuts to education, social provisions, and massive layoffs while the world’s wealthiest continue to enjoy higher and higher profit margins.[3] Some top economists have even suggested that the current economic tumult may be worse than the Great Depression.[4] Hunger is on the rise, people are losing their homes, jobs are disappearing—capitalism is, yet again, in crisis.

In addition to this depression, we see evidence for possible catastrophic consequences if we continue to despoil and damage the entire nonhuman world and treat it as a mere collection of “resources” for human use—another grouping of commodities for sale under capitalism. Various non-class oppressions and relations of domination, confining notions of gender and sexuality—and “identity” more generally—are still strong elements in the ways that we organize socially, embedded in our institutions, including our economy. Our way of life, in many ways, is unsustainable.

It is within this context that we wish to put forward these contemporary writings on anarchist economics, with a sense of the history that undergirds these critiques of the status quo and visions of radically different futures and presents. Nevertheless, the ubiquity of conflation of “economics” with capitalism and markets warrants some work at definitions. Likewise, because anarchism is a *prefigurative* practice—a politics that seeks to lay the foundations of a future society in the present—distinctly *anarchist* economics, we argue, will have some unique features of its own.

Anarchism and Economics

So if “economics” is not synonymous with “capitalism” or “markets,” what is it? Why should anarchists be concerned with economics?

Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary defines economics as “a social science concerned chiefly with description and analysis of the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.” Generally, as accepted historical narratives go, economics as a social science began with Adam Smith and his book *The Wealth of Nations*, and was further developed by the likes of Thomas Malthus and John Stuart Mill. These famous men of classical economics are perhaps best known for being proponents of private ownership of the means of production and for theorizing that markets tend toward stabilization (best exemplified in Smith’s famous phrase “the invisible hand”—which carries with it the assumption that markets are the most efficient method for the allocation of resources). And so goes the narrative, then along came Karl Marx to challenge the assumptions of political economy and critique capitalist property relations, theories of value, and markets. And now the science

generally divided between different capitalist analyses and models and *Marxian* models and analyses. There are a couple of problems with this historical narrative. First, like most historical narratives in the various social sciences, it locates the “beginning” of economics in post-Enlightenment European history and ignores earlier contributions from people of different time periods and locations, such as the Indian teacher Chanakya, or the famous North African forerunner of sociology Ibn Khaldun. Secondly, it effectively reduces perspectives critical of capitalism to Marxism, suggesting a limited framework for anti-capitalist perspectives. This might reflect larger relations of power in society, as these histories tend to be written by Western scholars and Marxism (or, perhaps more accurately stated, “Marxism” as it was interpreted and practiced by Lenin and his descendants) was the ideology that won out in the anti-capitalist revolutions of the twentieth century in Russia and China. This common narrative, then, effectively erases anarchist contributions to economic thought.

We do not, however, want to suggest an easy relationship between anarchism and economics and such. Anarchism, after all, is not limited to its critique of capitalism and puts forward a new understanding “that the war against capitalism must be at the same time a war against all institutions of political power,” recognizing that “exploitation has always gone hand in hand with political and social oppression.”[5] For anarchists, then, “economics” abstracted from the rest of social life presents a problem in terms of analysis. Indeed, economic life intersects with all other aspects of social life, including other forms of social domination—so within these pages the reader will often see various authors attempting to lay bare those connections, moving “economics” beyond mere production, distribution, and consumption.

There is also a problem with the kind of specialization of knowledge that words like “science” tend to communicate. Typically, science evokes specialists and experts, mirroring the hierarchical and competitive production of knowledge under capitalism in the academy. The rest of society is assumed to be looking to these “experts” for their analyses and for the best way forward. But anarchists have always stressed that people can run our own affairs without the need for experts or bureaucrats. The majority of those anarchists who have contributed to economics have not, in fact, been academic workers and have argued for economic arrangements that dispense with the need for experts to direct the rest of us.

Further, beyond the assumptions of economics as a social science, the view of work and production tied to workplaces as a separate sphere of life and an economy as a medium of exchange is anathema to some schools of anarchist thought. Some anarchists explicitly call for an end to the economy,[6] the abolition of work, [7] and free consumption that would preclude exchange value and the relations that arise from it. If we define “economies” or “economics” this way—to include the assumption that exchange relations and access to the social product being tied to work—it could be suggested that some strains of anarchism are advancing something altogether different from “economics.” Nonetheless, anarchists have contributed to economic thought, despite historical portrayals that write them out—reducing the narrative to capitalism and its Marxian opponents—and we do aim to remedy this despite some of these tensions.

Indeed, as the libertarian wing of the socialist movement, anarchism played a key role in the development of economic analyses, practices, and visions of a future society that were anti-capitalist and non-Marxist. Proudhon’s contributions in this regard are particularly salient, as he was a contemporary of Marx as well as an influence on his thinking (and anticipated many Marxian arguments before they were ostensibly “invented” by Marx).[8] Proudhon also advocated an anti-capitalist anarchist vision called *mutualism*, a market form of socialism, both as a strategy out of capitalism and a broad sketch of what a post-capitalist society might look like.

Likewise, Bakunin, Marx's bitter opponent in the First International, contributed greatly to socialist criticisms and analyses of capitalism. [9] These forays into economics were not limited to this time period, but continued through Kropotkin[10] before the Russian Revolution, Santillán[11] after the Spanish Civil War, and so on into the contemporary period. And we wish to stress that these principles, analyses, and forays into vision were not limited to "great men of history," but represented collective theorizing by a *libertarian* socialist milieu—the anti-authoritarian and anti-state wing of the socialist movement. Thus, comparing anarchism to "Marxism" is a bit of a misnomer, as "Marxism" reduces many different ideas, collectively produced, to the leadership of a single "great man of history"—Karl Marx.

As a result of this history, anarchism has an interesting (and sometimes tense) relationship with Marxism, and that is reflected in the contents of this book. Some anarchists reject any association with Marxism and there has certainly been plenty of ink spilled in mutual denunciations (in some historic moments, it has also led to spilled blood—particularly of anarchists at the hands of authoritarians who identified with Marx's work). Still others have argued for a historical continuity within anarchism and the anti-authoritarian, anti-state variants of Marxism constituting a libertarian socialism—or, in some contexts, a libertarian *communism*. However, while some have suggested that engagements between the traditions could be fruitful,[12] this has definitely not been done without anarchist critics. [13] You can see various authors in this collection, and many places outside of it, using these terms—"libertarian socialism" or communism—to describe their position, often as a nod to the similar trajectories between anarchism and some variants of Marxian thought. [14]

The differences between anarchist and Marxist thought might also (partially) explain a lack of anarchism within the field of economics. Marxism, after all, tends to be centrally focused on economics—considering the economy the "base" of a society, giving rise upon those economic foundations to other social relations. Marx stated it thusly:

In the social production of their existence, men [*sic*] inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely [the] relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces of production. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation, on which arises a legal and political superstructure, and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life.[15]

Anarchism, on the other hand, is a critique of domination that typically is not reducible to economics—or even economics *and* political life. Rather, when anarchists theorize about other relations of ruling (such as patriarchy, racism, heteronormativity, and so on), they are usually not "subsumed under an analysis that is limited to a critique of the state-capitalist apparatus," but rather are seen as "social dynamics which are generated, reproduced and enacted within *and* outside the apparatus." [16] Anarchists tend to see forms of domination presenting themselves in society without the need to root them in the economy. Although some anarchists would suggest that class is *primary*,[17] most avoid the ranking implied in such statements and the Marxist theory of an economic base serving as the foundation for the rest of existing social relations.[18]

However, as anti-capitalists, anarchists have always been concerned with economics. We have participated (and continue to participate) in revolutions and insurrections directed against capitalism and class society. We attempt to embody anti-capitalist values in the ways that we engage with other

people and our world more generally. Since anarchists have always been preoccupied with the problem of capitalism and how we might move beyond it into communities of mutual aid and cooperation, it is necessary to start, in an anarchist economics, with that which we oppose—capitalism.

Capitalism and the Anarchist Critique

Anarchism is a diverse set of anti-capitalist ideas and this diversity is reflected in the ways that various anarchists describe and critique capitalism. We will, no doubt, miss some things in this short introduction, but we do think that we can make some broad generalizations that are useful in situating the contents of such a volume. But first, if we may, we would like to offer two general caveats.

First, theory can only go so far in describing existing institutional arrangements and, importantly, the ways that they materialize in daily life. Capitalism is a resilient system, oftentimes changing its features in reaction to class struggle as well as its own internal limitations. As opponents of capitalism, then, anarchists have been concerned not just with describing capitalism as it is, but also with capitalism as it *may be*. That is, if we want to move beyond capitalism to something altogether different, then we need to understand how capitalism can recuperate struggles that seem at first glance to develop in opposition to it. This means attempting to analyze how capitalism has changed, and might change, in order to satisfy popular demands and still allow for the continuation of capitalist accumulation despite resistance to the system.

Secondly, it is a truism that social life is complex. We cannot possibly hope for theory to completely describe how a system operates that involves and affects billions of people. And we certainly cannot have those kinds of hopes for a single section in the introduction of a small edited collection. Nonetheless, we might try to describe in broad, general terms the features of the economic system we live under—capitalism—and why anarchists oppose it.

We could begin by simply saying that capitalism is the way the world is currently organized in terms of production, distribution, and consumption. But, again, that would not get at the ways that capitalism was organized historically, nor would it account for the ways that capitalism might reconstitute itself in reaction to attempts to dissolve the social relations that form it. Another approach might be to use a textbook definition. One popular sociology textbook defines capitalism as “a political economy characterized by an arrangement of production in which workers cooperate to produce wealth that is then privately owned by whoever hired the workers.”[19] That is certainly descriptive, but misses out on some important nuances (and features that seem generalizable to capitalist society).

Rather, we propose understanding capitalism in terms of some major defining features. This allows one to analyze capitalism contemporarily, historicize aspects of its development, and speculate about its future (if it is to have one at all). It also allows for us to sketch an explanation of capitalism that accounts for debates among anarchists. These features are not meant to be exclusive to capitalism (indeed, some could arguably exist in a different kind of system of production and allocation) nor are they intended to be eternal. As mentioned before, capitalism is a resilient system and is capable of changing to accommodate the pressures of class struggle. These descriptive features also allow for illustrating anarchist *criticisms* of capitalism. With this in mind, we suggest understanding capitalism in terms of wage labor/exploitation, private property, markets, class society, and states.

Wage labor/exploitation is one of the basic constituent parts of capitalism. In order to access the social product, workers must rent themselves out for a wage. The value produced under capitalism by workers, minus whatever wage the capitalist pays, is then appropriated by the capitalist in the form

surplus value—this process is exploitation. Some anarchists refer to this set of relationships as “wage slavery” to point out a historical continuity between *owning* another person and what is, essentially, *renting* another person. Bakunin, in his famous analysis of capitalism, put it thusly:

And once the contract has been negotiated, the serfdom of the workers is doubly increased; or to put it better, before the contract has been negotiated, goaded by hunger, he [*sic*] is only potentially a serf; after it is negotiated he becomes a serf in fact. Because what merchandise has he sold to his employer? It is his labor, his personal services, the productive forces of his body, mind, and spirit that are found in him and are inseparable from his person—it is therefore himself. From then on, the employer will watch over him, either directly or by means of overseers; everyday during working hours and under controlled conditions, the employer will be the owner of his actions and movements. When he is told: “Do this,” the worker is obligated to do it; or he is told: “Go there,” he must go. Is this not what is called a serf?[20]

Not only do anarchists oppose wage labor and exploitation on the grounds that they are unfair, but these things are also against the material interests of working people and create a social relation of domination between the boss and the worker (which Bakunin so eloquently describes above). Indeed, many anarchists argue that the wage labor relation is *the* defining aspect of capitalism. One cannot be an anarchist in any coherent sense and advocate for wage relations and economic exploitation.

This social relation (exploitation) is made possible by private property. To be clear, anarchists make a distinction between *possessions* and private *property*. Possessions are personal items based on current occupancy or use (i.e., no anarchist advocates taking your home or your toothbrush). But private property allows for exploitation through ownership without *use*. Just as capitalists exploit workers through wage labor, so too do capitalists exploit workers through landlordism, claiming ownership of homes they do not live in and charging people for their occupancy. Likewise, capitalists do not *use* the means of producing goods, services, and so on in our society—workers do. Yet in a system of private ownership, capitalists reap the benefits of things that are *socially* produced by the rest of us. This is what led Proudhon to the now-famous statement, “Property is theft!”—arguing that this declaration was just as logical as the belief that slavery is murder.[21] That is, *their property is essentially our loss*.

Another element of capitalist society as we know it is market relations. Generally, and like many other things, because in dominant narratives Marxian economics are juxtaposed with capitalist models, we are told that for allocation we have a choice between central planning and markets. Anarchists, however, have typically called for some form of *decentralized* planning. To further complicate matters, under capitalism we have market allocation, but there are some anarchists who have suggested that we might have anti-capitalist, socialist markets.[22] This was the theory proposed by Proudhon—a market socialism in which self-managed worker-owned firms would compete in a market regulated by a “agro-industrial federation.” [23]

Most anarchists, however, reject market-oriented visions, with some even suggesting that markets themselves are part and parcel of capitalist society. Jarach, for example, points out that there has been “a nearly total absence of Proudhon’s economic ideas among anarchists for the last 150 years.”[24] Bowman, in his treatment of communism, refers to Proudhonian visionary arguments as a form of “capitalism without capitalists” due to its retention of some fundamental aspects of capitalism.[25] This collection generally reflects those trends, treating markets (however deformed by the state) as a crucial part of capitalist society. And while many pieces take note of market-oriented anarchism,

visions of post-capitalist society, most are critical of those kinds of arguments.

Anarchists point out that these economic arrangements lead to the development of class society. While we are often told we are all equals under the law or that we all have equal power through voting, anarchists point out that these claims (which serve to justify and naturalize capitalist society) are absurd. Rather, we do not live in a society of equals. We live in a society of *classes*—with different material interests. The ruling class in capitalist society has an interest in maintaining capitalism while the rest of us have an interest in smashing capitalism and taking what rightfully belongs to us—everything.

Rather than a fetishized version of the worker as a (usually white and male) industrial (factory) worker and the capitalist as a (also usually white and male) factory owner (complete with a top hat), McKay explains anarchist class analysis by defining these two classes thusly:

Working class—those who have to work for a living but have no real control over that work or other major decisions that affect them, i.e. order-takers. This class also includes the unemployed, pensioners, etc., who have to survive on handouts from the state. They have little wealth and little (official) power. This class includes the growing service worker sector, most (if not the vast majority) of “white collar” workers as well as traditional “blue collar” workers. Most self-employed people would be included in this class, as would the bulk of peasants and artisans (where applicable). In a nutshell, the producing classes and those who either were producers or will be producers [editorial note: this would, then, include most students as well as those who engage in reproductive labor, such as child-rearing, housekeeping, etc.]. This group makes up the vast majority of the population.

Ruling Class—those who control investment decisions, determine high level policy, set the agenda for capital and state. This is the elite at the top, owners or top managers of large companies, multinationals and banks (i.e. the capitalists), owners of large amounts of land (i.e. landlords or the aristocracy, if applicable), top-level state officials, politicians, and so forth. They have real power within the economy and/or state, and so control society. In a nutshell, the owners of power (whether political, social or economic) or the master class. This group consists of around the top 5–15% of the population.[26]

It should be noted, however, that anarchist class analysis allows for some degree of “fuzziness.” That is, not everyone fits neatly into these broad categories (though, we would argue, most people do). It should also be noted that some radicals, anarchists included, argue for the existence of a third class. Some refer to this as “the middle class,” “the coordinator class,” “the techno-managerial class,” and so on. This is typically used to highlight the existence of people with a high degree of social power—often directly over working people—such as high-paid lawyers, tenured professors at elite institutions, and so on. This class is sometimes conceived as having their own sets of material interests, in opposition to the ruling class and the working class, and sometimes conceived as having similar interests as workers, but being placed above them in capitalist society due to their social power. Most anarchists, however, reject this view, arguing for a traditional two-class analysis.

We might juxtapose this anarchist class analysis with sociological analyses of class that often split society into a lower (or “under”) class, working class, lower middle class, upper middle class, and upper class. Anarchists argue that there might be cultural differences to account for between better off members of the working class and those less well off, and at times differences in terms of their identification with the present society. However, we should recognize a unified (if not always united) working class as a better model for looking at the potential for rupture with capitalist society and

where that rupture might come from.

Finally, anarchists point out that the social relations in capitalist society are protected and maintained by states. As Malatesta pointed out years ago, we are taught that states are “the representative...of the general interest: it is the expression of the rights of all, construed as a limit upon the rights of each” and that states are “moral...endowed with certain attributes of reason and justice.”[27] Anarchists point out that actually the state protects property relations, allowing for the existence of private property (again, without occupancy and use). Without a police force and proper laws to threaten (and use) force for rents and wage labor, what would stop us from just taking our homes, our workplaces, and our communities? Note, for example, the ways the police are used to attack people even in so-called “public” places during the existence of the various “Occupy” sites. Similarly, when was the last time the police were used to break up a strike by beating up the boss and carting *him* off to jail? Yet there is a history of the police repression of labor—indeed, of many individuals or groups attempting to take back and determine their own lives.

This is the *economic* function of the state—to protect private property and the accumulation of capital. Also, this is one reason why anarchists reject the Leninist suggestion that we seize the state (or in some interpretations, smash the existing state and create a new “workers’ state”—complete with a vanguard party to run it). Its very existence implies a classed society. Anarchists argue that the state will not wither away of its own accord after a tumultuous period while it is controlled by benevolent leftists. Rather, we must rid ourselves of the state, not use it to attempt to further our own ends. It is one reason why anarchists advocate for direct action (rather than electoralism or participation in governance).

It should be noted that the state serves many more purposes beyond its economic function of protecting capital and capitalists, although it would require a book-length work to outline the other functions. The state also draws boundaries around the public and private spheres, it forces identity categories on us from above, and it controls ever more aspects of social life well beyond simple economic relations (thus the need for an analysis that recognizes forms of domination related to, but not reducible to, class, capitalism, and economics). Anarchists might analyze it as an institution, as a set of social relations, or as some combination of those things (and anarchists *have* in the past advanced those sorts of analyses of the state), but for the purposes of attempting to abstract “economics” from other spheres of life, the state’s function as a protector of capitalism and recuperator of struggles (particularly as struggles get opportunistically channeled into electoral politics) is particularly salient.

Beyond these institutional features, other features of modern capitalism exist that we have declined to comment on. We want to encourage the reader, however, to consider the role of currency and money in capitalism. Further, it is questionable if modern capitalism could exist without debt, as Graeber skillfully points out (and in the process, he smashes many myths associated with capitalism and economists).[28] One also might investigate pricing mechanisms and value as vital pieces of capitalism (some libertarian communists argue, for example, that destroying capitalism means likewise dispensing with the value form). However, due to spatial constraints, we limit our institutional analysis to the above features.

Anarchists also point out (the somewhat obvious fact) that part of how capitalism reproduces itself is through the participation of people in those social relations. That is, anarchists can often be found advocating for mass refusals and the withdrawal of our participation—sometimes in the form of general strikes; sometimes, as in the case of the illegalists, in the form of direct expropriations—without the support and participation of social movements or not; sometimes in the form of occupations and

the taking of space; and still other times in advocating for creating alternatives to capitalist relations in the here and now; and so on. But the advocacy of these kinds of practices does lead to the question: If it is in our interests to abolish capitalism, why (and how) is capitalism continually reproduced in our social lives and why do we not destroy those social relations and begin writing a new future today?

Some of the possible answers to that question are contained within popular understandings of economics (which also might explain why anarchists are often loath to refer to our analyses as “economics” or our proposed alternatives as “economies”). Capitalism is justified by ideological assumptions about “human nature,” what is “pragmatic,” and just how wonderful and benevolent democracy can be. Given that mass media are largely owned and operated by wealthy corporations, our popular forms of entertainment are most often commodities produced under (and by) capital, our compulsory educational systems are run by the state, and so on, it might not be a surprise just how popular those kinds of ideological assumptions are and how infrequent critical thought enters into human relations (anarchists can also often be included in that).

For example, capitalism is often justified by a belief that it is “human nature” to be greedy, to want to accumulate wealth at the expense of others, to desire power over other people, and the like. Yet the vast majority of human social relations were spent in hunter-gatherer societies without any concept of private property, in collectivities that based their lives on personal possessions and forms of common social resources (nothing that could properly be called *property*). Given that long history, how could it be “human nature” to want to dominate, to own, to compete for resources? Did we collectively just act against our natural wiring for the vast majority of our existence? The argument barely makes any sense, yet such ideas of “human nature” are common among people the world over. This is part of what prompted Emma Goldman to declare, “Poor human nature, what horrible crimes have been committed in thy name! Every fool, from king to policeman, from the flatheaded parson to the visionless dabbler in science, presumes to speak authoritatively of human nature. The greater the mental charlatan, the more definite his [*sic*] insistence on the wickedness and weaknesses of human nature. Yet, how can anyone speak of it today, with every soul in a prison, with every heart fettered, wounded, and maimed?”[29] Her larger point was that those things that we refer to as “human nature” are little more than our projections of our dominant institutions into our very *selves*. Thus, capitalism is not some naturally occurring system. It is a system that is constructed and one that can be dispensed with.

Similarly, economists often object to anarchist alternatives to capitalism as utopian (in the pejorative sense of the term) or not being pragmatic. They argue instead that alternatives to capitalism would never “work” (another word that requires some unpacking, which we will forego in this introduction). First, this ignores the vast majority of human social organization, which presumably “worked” (that is, we are still here and people sometimes struggled in the past, but other times we have surely thrived without capitalism).[30] This also ignores human experiences and experiments outside of capitalist relations that exist within capitalist society[31] or in revolutionary situations.[32] But more egregiously, it assumes that capitalism, even by its own ideological standards, is a system that “works.” Given massive poverty, privation, and hunger; the routine destruction of landbases and the despoiling of the natural environment; massive worldwide wars; periodic crises such as the one we are experiencing while we pen this introduction—indeed, given that a tiny elite owns massive amounts of resources (multiple homes, dozens of luxury cars, servants and coteries, and the like) while most of us struggle to survive—can we really say this is a system that “works”?

But we are told that under democracy checks and balances are present in the form of state regulation of the economy that can address some of the failures of capitalism. This is sometimes why people

refer to the study of capitalism as “political economy”—because there is no idealized “free market that exists without state interference. But even a cursory look at recent history should demonstrate how absurd these deeply held beliefs about democracy are. Perhaps the best examples are when leftist governments are voted into power. In much of Europe we have a rather long history of socialist parties legislating regulatory mechanisms into the economy in order to create a kinder and gentler capitalism. And we can see with the current austerity just how lasting those reforms and regulations are (which, to say, not lasting at all—the state can dismantle any reform or regulation it sets in place at any moment. Therefore, we only keep what we take and defend). Further, as anarchists, we argue that a kinder and gentler form of exploitation is not enough. We want to run our lives and actively create and participate in our social relations without the kinds of restraints placed on us by hierarchical authority and power—in the context of the economy, identity, culture, our conceptual order, indeed *all* facets of social life.

Part of the danger of this particular ideological underpinning of capitalism is the creation of militant liberal alternatives that aim for much less than total social transformation. Militant reformism can serve as a recuperative mechanism to radical social movements, defanging possible transformations by functioning as the leftwing of capital. Thus the institutionalized Left historical (and contemporarily) is something that anarchists should be wary of if we wish different worlds instead of reformed versions of the existing order.

The preceding institutional analysis of capitalism was intended to describe the existing society, as well as give some insights into possible forms that a future capitalism might take. The analyses of the ideological assumptions in place to justify and naturalize capitalism are intended to destabilize the mythologies surrounding those institutional arrangements. Anarchists have, however, offered possible alternatives to capitalism in varying degrees of detail. These alternatives tend to be bound up with specific strategic and theoretical assumptions as well. Next we will look at some of these anarchist proposals, also noting anarchists’ frequent reticence to advance visionary arguments in too much detail.

Anarchist Economics

As we said before, a distinctly *anarchist* economics is going to have some unique features of its own and we have organized this anthology to reflect that. Firstly, anarchism has some interesting tensions in terms of post-capitalist vision. Secondly, as a largely *prefigurative* practice, a part of anarchist economic analysis must include investigations into current practices that might contain anarchist elements that could contain seeds of a future, post-capitalist economy (while, of course, also noting their limitations). It also means that we need ways to evaluate the resistance strategies we use to create ruptures in capitalism and to recognize the spaces in everyday life in which capitalism is *not* present. Finally, since anarchism is a holistic movement seeking to reconfigure the totality of social relations and not limited to the economy, our analyses of current practices need to include investigations into the affective and embodied experience of these practices. We begin with a look at the different proposals advanced by anarchists for a future society (and the processes used to create such a society).

To begin discussing the differences between the three main post-capitalist anarchist theories—mutualism, collectivism, and communism—we should first take note of a few things. First, as mentioned above, most anarchists reject mutualism outright contemporarily. While it played a historical role in laying the foundations of anarchist economics (as McKay eloquently lays out in his chapter), it has little impact on the existing milieu beyond those foundations (although one will occasionally find

adherents to this market philosophy at various bookfairs and anarchist gatherings or, more often, on open anarchist Internet forums—and they *do* seem to be gaining steam as more and more people lose faith in capitalism). Beyond that, many anarchists are suspicious of visionary arguments and blueprints for the future, seeing anarchism as a conscious creation of the dispossessed and not a future that can be written within the context of the present. As Emma Goldman put it:

Anarchism is not, as some may suppose, a theory of the future to be realized through divine inspiration. It is a living force in the affairs of our life, constantly creating new conditions. The methods of Anarchism therefore do not comprise an iron-clad program to be carried out under all circumstances. Methods must grow out of the economic needs of each place and clime, and of the intellectual and temperamental requirements of the individual.[33]

Following this, some anarchists would eschew labels and “hyphenations” like “anarchist communism,” preferring to refer to their preference simply as “anarchy,” or at times not refer to preference at all.

There is also a strong tradition of revolutionary pluralism in anarchism. In the past, some anarchists would advocate for an “anarchism without adjectives,” perhaps most famously advanced by thinkers such as Voltairine de Cleyre, to indicate a tolerance for many visionary (and strategic) differences. Similarly, there have been (and are) anarchists who advocate for specific proposals, but see a need for a deep humility and commitment to pluralism in terms of vision. One of the best examples of this can be found in the Italian anarchist Errico Malatesta, who advocated for anarchist-communism, who stated:

One may, therefore, prefer communism, or individualism, or collectivism, or any other system, and work by example and propaganda for the achievement of one’s personal preferences, but one must beware, at the risk of certain disaster, of supposing that one’s system is the only, and infallible, one, good for all men [*sic*], everywhere and for all times, and that its success must be assured at all costs, by means other than those which depend on persuasion, which spring from the evidence of facts.[34]

Undoubtedly, this is also reflective of anarchist suspicion of visionary arguments and blueprints for a future society.

Finally, it should also be noted that the borders that we draw around these different visionary proposals are points of contention and debate. What we call “collectivism” here might be called a transitional phase for anarchist-communism by others. Still others argue for a minimalist definition of libertarian communism that would include things like some form of remuneration for labor time, onerousness of tasks, and the like—which contemporary anarchist-communists typically reject (but past anarchist-communists have, at times, advocated for). Yet we argue that contemporarily these categories have crystallized to have certain meanings among anarchists. Our attempt at defining them, then, is itself a heavily politicized project and we want to acknowledge that. Undoubtedly we will ruffle some feathers in the process, but the purpose here is to give some broad sketches and not have the final word on how these terms were defined historically or how they are commonly used today. Indeed, we hope that these defining strategies can serve as jumping off points for needed debate about the usage and meaning of these categories. This is also why these sketches are brief—an entire book could be written about each tendency. And we have no intention of doing that here, so some paragraphs on each tendency will have to suffice for the purposes of this collection.

Mutualism

As we mentioned before, Proudhon was an advocate of a form of market socialism called mutualism. Mutualism was an anti-capitalist model that saw mutual banks and credit associations as a way to socialize productive property and allow for a form of dual power for workers, particularly through the use of low-interest loans, charging only the necessary interest to pay for administration. Thus, Proudhon argued for mutualism not only as a post-capitalist vision, but also as a strategic orientation stressing the need to build alternative economic relationships in the here and now that would eventually replace capitalism. While mutualism is not typically advocated by anarchists anymore, we still owe much of our development of economics to Proudhon (ironically enough, Marxists also owe this debt to Proudhon). Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that there are still some advocates of mutualism.

As Proudhon sketched it out, wage labor and landlordism would be abolished in a mutualist society. Rather, ownership would be based on occupancy and use. Therefore, all workers would have access to their own means of production—most organizing into cooperative, non-hierarchical firms. These self-managed firms would compete in a free market, regulated by a grand agro-industrial federation. Many mutualists have argued that these firms would function in ways similar to worker cooperatives contemporarily, but without some of the pressures of operating in the context of a capitalist and statist society. Further, rather than capitalists expropriating surplus value from workers, workers would keep or trade those products that they produce.

This would mean that distribution in a mutualist society would be “by work done, by *deed* rather than need. Workers would receive the full product of their labour, after paying for inputs from other co-operatives.”[35] This is an important distinction, particularly as anarchists who advocate for communism argue for forms of distribution by *need* and parts of the debates over anarchist visionary arguments are centered on the distribution of the things that we produce. This also means that in a mutualist society, exchange relations would continue to exist, with self-managed firms exchanging goods and services in a market. For this reason, some anarchists—particularly communists—argue that mutualism would actually just be a self-managed form of capitalism, as it retains so many elements of capitalism (exchange relations, markets, and so on).

Some modern descendants of mutualism are Kevin Carson, Shawn Wilbur, some folks at the Alliance of the Libertarian Left or Center for a Stateless Society.[36] Many of these modern mutualists have altered features of Proudhon’s arguments in key ways, influenced by the American individualists like Benjamin Tucker and Josiah Warren. Some of the aforementioned groups see anarchists working together across broad economic spectrums—some of whom are socialist, others who advocate for forms of capitalism and could not therefore properly be called “anarchists” (if the term, which is admittedly broad and sometimes messy, is to have any consistent meaning at all). Thus, for example, lining the top of the web page for the Alliance of the Libertarian Left can be seen pictures of mutualists like Proudhon side by side with self-avowed capitalists like Murray Rothbard. Nevertheless, it is within these modern descendants where we see the ghost of Proudhon and echoes of his mutualist anarchism.

Collectivism

Collectivism is most often associated with Bakunin, who referred to himself as a “collectivist” to distinguish his theory from state-communists. While mutualism was a reformist and gradualist strategy that would try to *overgrow* capitalism over a long period of time, Bakunin saw a need for a revolutionary rupture with capitalism. Therefore, Bakunin argued for a revolutionary movement that

would expropriate property, socializing it.

Collectivism, then, begins with the assumption of social ownership of productive property, like mutualism. The product of labor, however, would be gathered into a communal market. Bakunin's friend, Guillaume, when outlining Bakunin's vision called for a society where "items...produced by collective labor will belong to the community. And each member will receive remuneration for his [sic] labor either in the form of commodities...or in currency. In some communities remuneration will be in proportion to hours worked; in others payment will be measured by both the hours of work and the kind of work performed; still other systems will be experimented with to see how they work out." [37] Where communities used currency, it would be used to purchase items from the collective market.

And yet Dolgoff said of Guillaume that he "saw no difference in principle between collectivism and anti-state communism. The collectivists understood that full communism would not be immediately realizable. They were convinced that the workers themselves would gradually introduce communism as they overcame the obstacles, both psychological and economic." [38] Thus, in this way, the idea of remuneration was not seen as an end in Bakunin's collectivism, but rather a transitional phase into a system of "full communism," presumably where norms of remuneration would be done away with.

But it is not clear that Bakunin saw himself as anything other than a communist anarchist, which makes part of this project of definitions and categorization both difficult and, as we said, heavily politicized. Guillaume writes that "the term 'collectivists' designated the partisans of collective property" in the First International and that "(t)hose who advocated ownership of collective property by the state were called 'state' or 'authoritarian communists.'...To distinguish themselves from the authoritarians and avoid confusion, the anti-authoritarians called themselves 'collectivists'." [39] Nevertheless, the term "collectivism" is still widely in use among anarchists, who often distinguish between collectivism and communist anarchism on the basis of debates over remuneration and distribution.

Contemporarily, like mutualism, there are few anarchists who advocate for collectivism, as such. But echoes of some of these concerns over remuneration can be seen as some anarchists advocate for participatory economics (or "parecon"), a non-market libertarian socialism developed by Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel and also advocated by Chris Spannos. [40] Indeed, Albert writes in his introduction afterward for this anthology that "citizens should have a claim on society's economic product that increases if they do socially valued work longer or more intensely or under worse conditions." This is where we might see the descendants of collectivism in some ways. However, for advocates of parecon it is typically not seen as a transitional phase into a full communism of free consumption, but an end unto itself, which differentiates it from Bakunin's theory. It differs in other key ways as well and curious readers are encouraged to read the many books on participatory economics that outline its theory.

Communist Anarchism

Communist forms of anarchism are the dominant tendency among anarchists (for those who identify with a particular economic tendency). Strategically, communist anarchists (sometimes referred to as anarcho-communists, anarchist-communists, or libertarian communists—with each of those terms connoting some strategic and theoretical differences) typically see a need for a revolutionary break with capitalism. Some envision, like Bakunin, this being a series of grand revolutionary events enacted by an organized working class. Others, however, see anarchism and communism more as processes than end goals, and often advocate for insurrectionary moments that would, perhaps

coalesce into revolutions.

Libertarian communists advocate for the social ownership of productive property and distribution on the basis of need or, perhaps better stated, an end to ownership and property relations altogether (i.e. the abolition of property). This anarchist communism argues for economic visions organized around the principle “from each according to ability, to each according to need,” though the details of how to realize this objective are certainly debatable. Added to this, “communism” is also a contested term with a variety of meanings, both historically and contemporarily. This makes for a category that is difficult to pin down with simple definitions, but much of the early communist anarchist theory was written in reaction to the collectivist wages system.

Communist anarchists typically argue against any form of currency or remuneration. In Kropotkin's view, this was a wrong-headed idea from the start and one that could possibly lead to the redevelopment of capitalism:

In fact, in a society like ours, in which the more a man [*sic*] works the less he is remunerated, this principle, at first sight, may appear to be a yearning for justice. But it is really only the perpetuation of past injustice. It was by virtue of this principle that wagedom began, to end in the glaring inequalities and all the abominations of present society; because, from the moment work done was appraised in currency or in any other form of wage; the day it was agreed upon that man would only receive the wage he could secure to himself, the whole history of State-aided Capitalist Society was as good as written; it germinated in this principle.[41]

Kropotkin's view presented one way forward for a post-revolutionary society that has “taken possession of all social wealth, having boldly proclaimed the right of all to this wealth—whatever share they may have taken in producing it will be compelled to abandon any system of wages, whether in currency or labour-notes.”[42]

This is important not only in terms of vision, but also inasmuch as it refers to the political *content* produced by anarchists during insurrectionary or revolutionary movements. That is, communist anarchists tended to be process-oriented. So instead of advocating for a revolutionary break, then a new organization of society along communist anarchist lines, Kropotkin suggested that workers, in the context of a revolution, would “demand what they have always demanded in such cases—communization of supplies.”[43] Similarly, in Carlo Cafiero's report to the Jura Federation, he described anarchy and communism in immediate terms. For Cafiero, “liberty and equality are the two necessary and indivisible terms of the revolution.”[44] Further, and again in the immediate sense, “Anarchy today is the attack, the war upon all authority, all power, every State.”[45] Emma Goldman also suggested a process of creating communism that precluded commercial processes:

To make this a reality will, I believe, be possible only in a society based on voluntary cooperation of productive groups, communities and societies loosely federated together, eventually developing into a free communism, actuated by a solidarity of interests. There can be no freedom in the large sense of the word, no harmonious development, so long as mercenary and commercial considerations play an important part in the determination of personal conduct.[46]

Kropotkin was particularly adamant about this: “The Revolution will be communist; if not, it will be drowned in blood, and have to be begun over again.”[47]

These descriptions of vision and process do nothing to talk about many of the other tensions and disagreements among communist anarchists. There are those who believe that formal anarchism

organizations are crucial to social struggle and those who think those kinds of organizations become ends unto themselves and get in the way of struggle. Some communist anarchists argue for an egoist anarchism rooted in personal desire while others argue for a more social- and collective-oriented approach to theory. There are communist anarchists who identify with the Left and others who reject it, some who argue for self-managed workplaces and others who advocate for the abolition of work. Also, there are many who find themselves in some middle place in these disputes. Again, this brief introduction is no place to expand on these debates, but they should be accounted for so as not to leave the reader with the assumption of the existence of some monolithic communist anarchism, which quite obviously, does not exist.

Other Unique Characteristics

Aside from the tensions around vision among anarchist communists, collectivists, and mutualists, we argue that an anarchist economics is also unique because of the prefigurative nature of anarchism. That is, anarchists argue that the ways that we organize in the here and now should *prefigure* the kind of world we wish to create, inasmuch as that is possible. This means that a part of anarchist economics is an investigation of current practices that might contain anarchic elements. Likewise, this means that an anarchist economics would be concerned with evaluating anarchist resistance strategies as well as attempt to create ruptures in capitalism and eventually abolish it.

Finally, an anarchist economics would also concern itself with the embodied experiences of people as they engage in these contemporary anarchic economic practices and forms of resistance. This focus on the affective aspects of production and distribution is perhaps best described by Milstein's reformulation of the communist maxim, "(f)rom each according to their abilities *and passions*, to each according to their needs *and desires*." [48] While this is certainly accounted for in Marxist economic analyses of capitalism, particularly Marx's focus on alienation, for anarchists this means paying close attention to the affective and embodied experiences of people engaged in non-capitalist economic activity (however limited those activities might be as they exist in embryonic form *under* capitalism).

The Contents of This Anthology

This anthology represents over three years of collecting and editing contemporary writing on anarchist economics. We have tried to assemble a good cross-section of contemporary anarchist economics in the form of analyses and critiques of capitalism, pieces on the history of anarchist economics, contemporary pieces on vision, as well as those unique aspects of anarchist economics we have outlined above. This anthology, in those three years, has undergone huge amounts of editing, rewriting, and reformulating into this, its final version.

We have created sections for the book that quite often bleed into each other. That is, the reader might see elements of critique in our "analysis" section or elements of resistance in our "practical" section, and so on. This phenomenon seemed unavoidable when compiling the book as these elements of economics are often not neatly separated one from the others. Nonetheless, we ask the reader to understand that the process of creating discrete sections for the book was seen by the editors as both valuable (in order to identify commonalities in pieces), but at the same time, in many ways impossible.

We begin with two pieces in our "History" section. First, Chris Spannos explores the history of anarchist economics to try to broadly sketch the future. As he mines through anarchist writers and historical examples, he brings out the principles from these sources by which he believes a post-capitalist society is best served. Spannos provides an important contribution in terms of looking in

our history and our present to make a case for a radically different future. Next, Iain McKay looks specifically at Proudhon's contributions to radical economics. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of this piece is just how much of socialist economic theory originated not with Marx (as the traditional histories are written), but with Proudhon. McKay draws out these contributions, as well as some of the visionary and strategic commitments of Proudhon's *mutualism*.

Our "Analysis" section is opened by Abbey Volcano and Deric Shannon, who contribute a sort of "beginner's guide" to important concepts for understanding capitalism in the 2000s. They take several elements of contemporary capitalism that anarchist beginners to economics might use to understand how our social system has changed and how we might best analyze it in our contemporary period. Next, Jeff Monaghan and D.T. Cochrane evaluate anarchist resistance strategies to capitalism. They argue that we might make models for evaluating how economic disruption campaigns and sabotage hurt capital—and amend our practice accordingly. In the next piece, Richard J. White and Colin Williams argue that capitalism is not the totalizing system that we often paint it as. Reflecting on the rising interest in elements of post-structuralism among anarchists (or "post-anarchism," as some people have come to call these forays into theory), they argue that we should note the places in our society that are non-monetized and that have avoided the alienating aspects inherent in capitalist social relations. Doing so, they create a counter-narrative to what they call the "capitalist hegemony thesis" that sees capitalism as inescapable (and perhaps link up nicely with socialist post-structuralist commitments to an "exodus" from capitalism typified by anarchist theorists like David Graeber and Stephen Shukaitis, or autonomist Marxists like Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt).

John Asimakopoulos begins our "Critique" section demonstrating that crisis and inequality are inherent in capitalism. As such, he argues that we need mass movements to usher in alternatives to our system rather than attempts at "regulating" a broken institutional framework. Anarchists might use this analysis to illustrate how reforms are illusory and that smashing capital is a necessary requirement for creating a stable and humane social order. Robin Hahnel reformulates a talk he gave at B-fest in Greece in May of 2010, an annual anarchist gathering in Athens, explaining the current economic crisis. He also outlines libertarian socialist responses to the austerity measures imposed on countries like Greece by the European Union. Anarchists who have paid attention to mass responses to these measures in Greece, Spain, France, and beyond will benefit from Hahnel's analysis and recommendations for economic policy in the short term. Finally, William T. Armaline and William D. Armaline focus on educational institutions under contemporary capitalism. This political economic analysis is especially salient now given the militant resistance that has risen in response to tuition increases and funding cuts at universities all over the world—ranging from protests, property defacement and destruction, to the student occupation movements.

As we mentioned, since anarchism is a prefigurative practice, part of what makes an anarchist economics distinctly *anarchist* is a focus on alternatives and resistance enacted in the here and now. Our next two sections speak to this concern, beginning with our "Practice" section. First, Uri Gordon looks at common contemporary anarchist practices. This valuable piece investigates a wide variety of current economic practices of anarchists (and those that might contain *anarchic* elements) with a nonsectarian approach fitting for the diverse anarchist milieu. Secondly, Caroline Kaltefleiter takes a cultural studies approach to investigating everyday resistance strategies in a time of capitalist crisis. She argues that the everyday spaces created by café cultures, community currencies, and street actions provide examples of the spirit of community and mutual aid necessary to demonstrate alternatives to capitalism, while also noting some of the limitations in these practices.

In our "Resistance" section, Marie Trigona begins with a piece on Latin America's occupied factories

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