

Robert H. Haworth, ed., *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*

Oakland: PM Press, 2012, 335pp. ISBN 987-1-60486-484-7

Anarchist education is an unusual battlefield. Most social struggles have clearly defined sides – for and against this or that policy, ideology or practice – but anarchist education is often positioned *in and against* highly hierarchical and authoritative traditional educational systems. It is therefore hardly a surprise that Robert H. Haworth, editor of this important and timely volume, kicks off the introduction by describing his frustration as an anarchist working in the heart of academia. Although most anarchists do not feel ‘sell-outs’ because of their engagement within superstructures, many of us have at least sometimes felt exactly that. Written predominantly by past and present academics, most chapters directly or indirectly explore the positions of anarchists within the traditional educational systems. This focus dominates the whole book, and is reflected notably in chapters such as ‘Inside, Outside and on the Edge of the Academy: Experiments in Radical Pedagogies’, ‘Anarchy in the Academy: Staying True to Anarchism as an Academic-Activist’ and ‘Against the Grain of the Status Quo: Anarchism behind Enemy Lines’.

The book is conveniently divided into three sections. According to the editor, the first section ‘Anarchism & Education: Learning from Historical Experimentations’ is inspired by Judith Suissa’s recent assertion that the relationship between anarchism and education has been ‘undertheorized’. Modest in size (contains only four out of seventeen chapters), it provides some food for thought about Suissa’s assertion. The first section appropriately starts with Justin Mueller’s insight into general concepts such as anarchism, values of anarchist education, human nature and the relationships between the State and the Classroom. In the best tradition of Proudhon and Goldman, David Gabbard re-examines the question of compulsory schooling. Based on the historical practices of Work People’s Colleges, Saku Pinta draws important conclusions for contemporary working-class education. Finally, Joseph Todd reconceptualises nowadays extremely relevant ideas developed by Ivan Illich such as learning webs and deschooling.

The second section, ‘Anarchist Pedagogies in the “Here and Now”’, is much more extensive. It starts with Matthew Weinstein’s excellent study of street medics organised to support protesters. Isabelle Fremeaux and John Jordan provide a critical overview of ‘probably the only anarchist school left in Spain: Paideia’. Jeffery Shantz presents two contributions: a study of the Anarchist Free Space and Free Skool in Toronto, and ‘attempts by anarchist workers to restore, revive and maintain spaces of learning and infrastructures of resistance’. Sara C. Motta describes the systematisa-

tion of the praxis of the Nottingham Free School. Elsa Noterman and Andre Pusey look into various experimental educational projects in Leeds. Finally, Caroline K. Kaltefleiter and Anthony J. Nocella II analyse the oxymoronic position of anarchist academics and develop very useful principles that could be followed 'in pursuit of staying true to being an activist in and out of the academy'.

The third section, 'Philosophical Perspectives and Theoretical Frameworks', kicks off with Alex Khasnabish's inspiring analysis of Zapatismo as radicalised imagination which opens political possibilities through critical engagement in liberatory pedagogies. Lucy Nicholas explores the relationships between anarchism, poststructuralism and queer theory. Building on Joe Kincheloe's postformal psychology, Curry Stephenson Malott investigates opportunities for postformal, anarcho-feminist critical pedagogy. Nathan Jun explores philosophy and pedagogy as practices of liberation, with the particular accent on the role of anarchists as academics and intellectuals. Alejandro de Acosta offers a poetic yet very serious insight into our pedagogical practices and their relationships to activism, organising and movements. Finally, Abraham P. DeLeon challenges the *status quo* and concludes the book with an attempt to build radical pedagogies in the context of dominant power relationships.

In his short but powerful afterword 'Let the Riots Begin', Allan Antliff recognises the importance of academic anarchism. However, he warns that the marriage between anarchism and academia should not result in the domestication of anarchist activism into the dominant academic discourse. Antliff appropriately stresses that the goal of anarchist education is much deeper than mere critique of the present state of affairs, and insists that it should aim directly at social transformation. In this way he reminds readers about the importance of keeping the radical edge, and links diverse educational praxis presented in the book with the very foundations of anarchist thought.

In the best anarchist tradition, the book supports more than one way of articulating thoughts about anarchist pedagogies. In the beginning of each section Alejandro de Acosta kicks off the discussion with short dialogues, which offer warm, friendly and poetic reflections about the key presented topics. The dialogues send the clear message that this collection of essays is not conceived as the one and only scientific truth or an academic Babylon. Instead, they present an invitation to a dialogue across sections and chapters, between the book and its readers, between its readers and their surroundings, and between science and arts. On this basis, de Acosta's dialogues serve as powerful reminders of the fact that the discourse of science is not and should not be the only way of approaching the world around us.

This book has been written predominantly by past and present academics. It is therefore hardly a surprise that more than a few contributors refer to important

radical or critical figures that are usually not directly linked to anarchism, such as Paulo Freire and A.S. Neill. This consequence of the authors' academic background offers plenty of opportunity for broadening horizons, and should be warmly welcomed. Furthermore, most chapters are written to a high academic standard and achieve adequate levels of balance between breadth and depth. However, some practical studies would benefit from deeper theoretical underpinning and/or situating their conclusions in wider contexts, while one or two chapters could almost be categorised as opinion papers. Such variety, which can be put down to the traditional openness of anarchist discourse, makes the volume somewhat unusual in the typical academic context, but enriches it with various voices and perspectives. In my humble opinion, this trade-off between academic vigour and anarchist inclusiveness is fully appropriate and does the book more good than harm.

All in all, Haworth's *Anarchist Pedagogies* is a more than welcome addition to the undertheorised field of anarchist education. The book clearly displays the richness of anarchist educational thought, and builds decent foundations for future research. The presented studies and theories are more than academic exercises in anarchist education: they present true survival kits for anarchists who work in and against the traditional educational systems. We can just hope that the editor and authors of *Anarchist Pedagogies* will continue their valuable work in the field.

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Nathan Jun, *Anarchism and Political Modernity*

New York & London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2012, 250 + xviii pp.
ISBN: 978-1-44116-686-9

Anarchism and Political Modernity is an ambitious philosophical project that draws on various aspects of philosophical thought from different eras. Nathan Jun's philosophical journey starts from the usual point of departure, Ancient Greece, and ends at the postmodern world. Throughout this journey the author examines, identifies and redefines a number of philosophical concepts, on which he constructs his argument. The size of the book, however, could be extended, to cover a journey of this magnitude. But Jun presents a well-structured argument and an intriguing approach to anarchism that may draw criticism from within and outside the anarchist cycles.

The author identifies the political philosophy of anarchism as perhaps the first

kind of postmodernism and provides a definition that focuses on the rejection of representation, which he, among others, detects as the foundational characteristic of political modernity. The whole book can also be described as Jun's argument against the fairly new anarchist school of thought known as post-anarchism, and especially Todd May's thesis about the incompatibility between the views on the concept of power of, what he calls, 'classical' anarchism and that of the poststructuralist thinkers, such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze.

The book contains six chapters, but it seems as if it is also divided into three parts that contain two chapters each. In the first part of the book, the author tries to establish a framework within which to think about political philosophy in general. Within this context Jun compares political power with the concepts of force, motion and change as they were conceived by Aristotle and Heraclitus. He ends up defining politics as 'social physics' because they are concerned with power relations between and among humans, which always involve relations of force, motion and change. 'Social physics' is a result of the tension of actual and possible power relations, he says. Based on this definition the author provides a new taxonomy for political philosophies that concentrates on the way they evaluate power relations and on how they regard themselves in relation to power relations. The crucial point in the examination that takes place in the first part of the book is Jun's characterisation of all ancient and medieval political thought as 'archic', one that presupposes a natural cosmological order.

Within ancient and medieval political thought the individual is part of a natural hierarchy alongside other material entities, and second to the community, which in turn is second to the 'archic' order, according to Jun's analysis. The period of modernity, on the other hand, is the era in which the concept of subject emerges and the material world, the world of the senses, is questioned. In chapters 3 and 4, Jun is interested in providing an accurate account of political modernity through the analysis of the two dominant political ideologies that emerged in that period; liberalism and socialism. He goes through the analysis of various aspects of modernity that cannot be characterised as political in order to provide the philosophical ground on which the two ideologies were built. Representation, the substitution of the one for the many, the general for the particular, as Jun says, is the basic concept of modernity. In addition, power in modernity becomes coercive and 'archic' in the sense that it is external to and above the society and the individual.

Solutions to the problem of the coercive politico-economic power, based on representational theories and practices, supported by universal and transcendent concepts, is what constitutes political modernity and the modern political theories of liberalism and socialism, according to Jun. In this sense, as the author argues in chapter five, anarchism, contrary to the common belief, has little in common with