

Direct Action

Vicente Ordóñez¹

For nothing is more rousing than thought. Far from representing a gloomy resignation, it is the very quintessence of action. There is no more subversive activity than thinking, none more feared, more slandered, and this is not due to chance, nor is it innocuous. Thinking is political. And not only political thinking is, far from it. The mere *fact* of thinking is political. Hence the insidious battle led more efficiently than ever today against the *ability to think*, which, however, represents and will increasingly represent our only recourse.

Viviane Forrester, *The Economic Horror*

Introduction

Power appears in many guises, not just as political authority – state, law and police: power is also immanent and transcendental. It is not just the law, which is imposed on citizens' heads and gestures by requiring them to obey the dictates of the state: wherever one goes, all kinds of rules state what it is *normal* to do. Resisting this power takes on a polyhedral appearance, standing against the law and rules, against regulations and models. Therefore, much liberating discourse stems from *bricolages*, but never from a single theory that is a fossil from the past.

The following fact should be emphasized from the start: anarchism has been defined throughout history as a denial of specific systems that exploit and dispossess. Precisely in this respect, anarchism is like philosophical scepticism: its doubts and denials are closely linked to the past doctrines that one wishes to judge and refute (McLaughlin 2007, 29). There are many forms of anarchism, just as there are many forms of scepticism. The form or forms in which the aforementioned systems have appeared will thus determine the specific way in which anarchism has displayed its action and its rejection.

Over the last forty years, the anarchist movement has taken on many different forms, depending on its arena of action and its central concerns. Where resistance to patriarchy was a significant feature of its struggle, anti-hierarchical prefigurative action took on a distinctly anarcho-feminist orientation. Where resistance to ecological destruction was most important, strains of green anarchism such as social ecology and Primitivism came to the fore. Indeed, anarchist tactics are extremely complex and fluid. Because it rejects any determining fixed principle that legitimates forms of control that seek to achieve a single predetermined goal, anarchism is a more experimental and transitory form of human organisation than some of its rigid, highly-structured target driven competitors. It would, however, be mistaken to see it as lacking an ideological structure of core, stable, mutually defining features (Freedman 1996). Anarchism can be defined in terms of a rejection of hierarchies, such as capitalism, racism or sexism, a social view of freedom in which access to material resources and the liberty of others are prerequisites to personal freedom and a prefigurative commitment to embodying goals in one's methods (Colson 2001; Franks 2006).

Direct action is a relatively stable feature of anarchism, although it is not a sufficient descriptor, since there have been other hierarchical groups, such as fascists and the professional revolutionaries of Marxist-Leninist urban terrorist groups – Red Army Faction, GRAPO or 17N – who have also claimed to support it (Alexander and Pluchinsky 1992, 132;

Santiáñez 2013, 185). Because these direct action strategies connive with hierarchical power and reject prefigurative (anti-)politics, they received significant criticism from more consistent anarchist theorists and groups (Kinna 2005; Carr 2010; Amorós 2012). Anarchist direct action is infinitely multiform and unbounded; it encompasses different actors and situations and goes beyond an elitist revolutionary vanguard. Its praxis provokes disorder and invention, hierarchy is destroyed, verticality disappears because everything is circulating horizontally, and what is collective also becomes connective. Direct action is therefore not just a concept that is core to anarchism, but is a priority form of revolutionary action and of critical and extreme intervention: it favours the emergence of that which has hitherto been unknown – of forms of subjectivity far removed from the consumerist and gregarious ego, and confronts political and economic powers and their predatory dynamics.

Conceptualizing Direct Action

A theoretical and practical notion that appears in revolutionary trade unionism and in libertarian communism in the 19th century, direct action is one of the most relevant contributions that anarchism offers to (anti-)political science and social practice (Colson 1997). Through unmediated action, oppressed individuals and groups attempt to overturn or destroy that which subjects them. This distinguishes direct action from mediated political strategies: such as voting, lobbying, or rallying – which are activities that pursue certain results through one or more intermediaries. Hence these are vicarious forms of political participation because it is tacitly admitted that one cannot influence directly those areas of the public space but require the assistance of intermediaries. Conversely, however, when direct action is put into practice, it suggests that all those who make up any given society have not only the right, but also, and above all, the capacity to permeate the public space. What specific means are available to achieve this? Blockades, picketing, wildcat strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins, occupations, sabotage or civil disobedience. The (anti-)political repertoire of direct action forms part of the *dissensual habitus* to which Simon Critchley (2008, 112) referred, among the wide variety of tactics employed by anarchism. Therefore, while some of these actions can take on violent forms of (anti-)political resistance, others are essentially non-violent, although they can be illegal.

Thus, here is a dialectical tension in the conceptualization of direct action, as shown in one of the first attempts to clearly define what direct action is. In *L'action directe*, anarchist and revolutionary syndicalist Émile Pouget (1904) emphasised that direct action is a transparent and self-evident notion, but added that it could be either anodyne or very violent: there is no specific form of direct action. From propaganda by the deed to DiY protest groups, from anarcho-feminist activities against pornographic boutiques to Tolstoyan passive resistance, from The Weathermen to Action Directe Non Violente, the direct-action ethos is multifaceted and polyhedral. Despite difficulties, those contemporary authors who have tried to conceptualise “direct action” agree on one point: direct action must be framed within a prefigurative (anti-)political framework; namely, it is a kind of ideal action in which ends and means are indistinguishable because there should always be a correspondence between goals and praxis (Jordan 2002, 153; Franks 2006, 115; Gordon 2008, 4; Graeber 2009, 210).

Contemporary anarchists also stress that they do not take direct action to be a theory *per se*, but rather as a series of practices and actions in common use: direct action is employed as a guide for sabotage, occupation or guerrilla warfare tactics, as a set of ethical precepts or as a prefigurative action developed by oppressed individuals and groups in order to strengthen their revolutionary struggle (Colson 2001; Franks 2003; Taibo 2013; Ibáñez 2014).

Nonetheless, direct action has been the subject of critical debate both inside and outside anarchism. Some anarchists see direct action as ineffective, contradictory or insufficient. Recently, Joseph Todd has argued that direct action needs to be complemented by effective disruptions to capital (Todd 2016). Joel Olson has underlined that the anarchist direct action methodology is separate from the struggles of the oppressed themselves: “the strategy of building autonomous zones or engaging in direct action with small affinity groups assumes that radicals can start the revolution. But revolutionaries don’t make revolutions” (Olson 2009, 41). In this sense The Invisible Committee, a non-strictly anarchist collective that is very popular in anarchist circles, has emphasized that “no form of action is revolutionary in itself” (2015, 142). Tiqqun, The Invisible Committee matrix, has also predicted the insufficiency of direct action tactics: “you can’t take the global order for an enemy. Not/ directly./ For the global order has no place” (Tiqqun 2010, 213). For the members of the Tiqqun group, every initiative that tries to counteract power in physical and spatial terms is doomed to failure. When radical activities against oppression collide with power structures the results depend on the mass and the inertia of the combatants and on the place where politics are disputed. The disproportion between the driving force of the power apparatus and direct action is all too evident. But it is even more devastating when all traces of confrontation have been removed by the machinery of power. I believe, however, that critics assume that direct action is a strategic tool projected towards the future. However, direct action is not necessarily carried out in order to favour future generations, but rather with and for the beings involved in courageous ways of life. The people’s *today* has annulled and replaced the bureaucracy’s *tomorrow*. So what is against the system is not a future Utopia, but the day-to-day life of those who resist and confront authority (Urdanibia 2008).

An Examination of What Is Human

As dispossession archaeology teaches us, it is vital to pay special attention to structures and authorities that try to subjugate free citizens by imposing some external dominant *logos* upon them (Foucault 2002). Tools for developing skills of resistance, autonomy, initiative and criticism are key political elements of anarchism. Direct action represents one of the instruments anarchists use to implement their anti-hierarchy emancipatory struggle and to counteract the global network of power relations. Direct action is an (anti-)political tactic of confrontation that involves an exercise of freedom, social self-determination and responsibility by individuals or collectives who want to build alternatives to a society based on competition, consumerism, inequality, dispossession and the unlimited production of waste and pollution (Ward 1996). There are two requirements for an action to be considered “direct.” First, there should be neither regulatory nor corrective actors between those who conceive some kind of direct action and the completion of the action itself. That means *spontaneity*, a concept that has nothing to do with uncontrolled and thoughtless action. Second, practical engagement in political struggles, its means, immediate and mediate objectives, voluntary mutual aid, etc., should be defined and decided by those who freely choose to take action. From the action’s conception, right up until the various stages of its development, through to its culmination, no one – be it administrators, committees or activists – should interfere with or hinder the decisions taken. Hence, *autonomy* is the second main feature of direct action.

Different approaches to achieving anarchist goals have been tested. Sometimes anarchists have justified the use of violent action against the arbitrary excesses of existing powers while others have turned away from violent struggle to embrace non-violent action. Manuals of political theory tend to point to the text *Die Reaktion in Deutschland: Ein Fragment von*

einem Franzosen (1842) by Michael Bakunin as the spark that links direct action and violence; the sentence that ends this text is stressed: “the passion for destruction is a creative passion, too” (Bakunin 1973, 58). However, they tend to ignore its deeper content and theoretical context.² When carefully read, one finds that Bakunin does not hoist the flag of violence, but reflects on those who do not believe in freedom. This text – which was written against dilettantes, aristocrats and the bourgeois, and especially against the *reactionary fanatics* who accused Bakunin of heresy – states: “they see in us nothing other than embodied Antichrists, against whom every means is permitted. Shall we repay them with the same coin? No” (Bakunin 1973, 42). It is true that Bakunin admits one can be partial and unfair while fighting for freedom. Nevertheless, as Mark Leier (2009, 114) points out, for Bakunin this is a temptation that must be overcome, rather than defended.

Bakunin (1972, 204), like Kropotkin (2002, 25), did justify the violence of actions carried out against violent state institutions – nonetheless, Marshall (2008, 636) was right when he stated that the defenders of a minimal use of violence have probably predominated in anarchist thought. Colson (1977) has also pointed to the communication channels between *chemistry* and anarchism – the “cataclysmic cosmic dimension” of revolutionary anarchism. Not surprisingly, after 1968 several armed direct action groups which aimed to transform society came into being and proliferated in Europe. In the Spanish and French context, the Iberian Liberation Movement – Autonomous Combat Groups (MIL-GAC) and the Internationalist Revolutionary Action Groups (GARI) were well-known examples of armed anti-fascist groups that professed a non-Leninist revolutionary theory that openly fought all legislation dictated by capital and transgressed the law (Schmidt 2013, 102).

The theoretical assumptions of MIL-GAC were based on the pressing need for the working class to self-organise. Even expropriations or holdups were done with working class and revolutionary objectives in mind. Their creed was basically spontaneity of action and organisation in workplaces – that is, their “anti-trade” unionism. MIL-GAC was therefore a support group for the working class movement of the time, while fighting against permanent organisations. Any reference to MIL-GAC as a “group” should therefore be understood in the sense that they were more of an “affinity group” than a group understood as the embryo of a political organisation or union.³ Its confrontations with the CNT were logical, as was the short-lived attraction it felt to the initial Comisiones Obreras (CCOO, Workers Commissions), which a number of the founders of the MIL-GAC were members of – until the absolute control of the CCOO by the Communist Party became obvious (Tajuelo 1977; Rosés 2002).

GARI, the groups considered to be the continuation of the MIL, were at some point less interesting because of their lack of theoretical production. GARI activity was more or less limited to sharing the views of those MIL-GAC members who had been imprisoned in Spain. By resorting to dynamite in its escalation of violence, GARI had the French police on tenterhooks. Yet politically speaking they were always isolated, and lacked the means to accomplish their objectives in military terms (Dartnell 1995, 78). The existence of both groups, and in particular their activity, was the tangible effect of the abuse of capital. Thus their direct action tactics were the result of class struggle. The eventual suppression of both groups, which certainly involved tragedy, did not represent the failure of the ideas that they defended, but only the serious inadequacy of the *means* used to defend them.

Ultimately, direct action is not an attack on the enemy: above all, it is an examination of what is human, a commitment to individual and collective possibilities. It is also an antidote to

passivity and submission, regardless of whether the acting group is victorious or not. All direct action has to avoid restraining subjectivity because its objective must be to apply it. Tellingly, direct action and mutual aid coincide.

Worker's Councils, Unions, and Revolutionary Action Models

Direct action tactics must not only protect people's individual tendencies, but alter and transform social reality. The main reason for this is that today's States, transnational corporations and class-divided societies attempt to abolish all rights acquired through conflicts and workers' struggles, thus making exploitation without limits possible – the elimination of both the minimum wage and unemployment benefits, an increased ease of firing workers and the implementation of policies of social deterioration. I argue that a collective and international workers' instrument for organised struggle is urgently needed in order to stop the greed of capital and the irresponsibility of the exploiters.

In recent years, however, there has been increasing criticism of the union's emancipatory force: bureaucratisation, the professionalisation of their leaders, plus a consequent separation from their worker base have been identified as key points in the stagnation of trade unions and their outright deterioration. When a conflict breaks out, trade unions are not only incapable of struggling against capital, but they also cannot channel the energy of the rebellion into a revolutionary assault on the status quo: tools to generate confrontation have been replaced by programmed acts negotiated with the State and the Employers' Association (Adams 2011, 130; Fernández de Rota 2011, 140). The subsumption of unions to institutional machinery has consolidated the vertical structure of unions' federations and has eliminated any spark of spontaneity. All these facts lead to one question: is it possible to reintroduce direct action tactics – as advocated by anarcho-syndicalists and theorists of workers' councils – into trade union structures? As alternative institutions outside the structures of traditional unions, parties and government, workers councils and almost all anarcho-syndicalist unions have rejected bureaucratic unionism and have stressed awareness of the goals of the struggle and the self-direction of workers. Alongside the self-action and self-reliance of the workers, anarcho-syndicalism and theorists of workers' councils have developed action models for the expropriation of the expropriators and forms of self-government that could reinvigorate class struggles (Guérin 1965, 126-131; Rocker 1989, 90; Pannekoek 2003, 65).

Nevertheless, entrenched unions oppose worker control as well as any self-activity that transfers the capacity of acting from union headquarters to the workplace (Ness 2011, 319). Furthermore, the vulnerability of unions results from – inter alia – capital's implementation of practices that destabilize workers (Orero 1979, 165). This scenario has rapidly created tension and frustration among workers. In Spain, disputes over the methods and aims of the anarcho-syndicalist movement led to a division of contemporary Spanish anarcho-syndicalism into two different unions, the CNT (National Labour Confederation) and the CGT (General Labour Confederation). After the death of the dictator Franco in 1975, the CNT was refounded and it re-emerged with new strength. However, it was not long before this impetus faded away because of police harassment and internal difficulties of all kinds, leading to an unfortunate split that continues today. The division of contemporary Spanish anarcho-syndicalism into two different unions was due mainly to the CNT's constant refusal to cooperate with the post-Francoist trade union bureaucracy, which refused to develop a plan for struggle based on direct action and autonomous experience (Calero 2006, 367).

The CNT and CGT's different ways of understanding anarcho-syndicalism is one of the episodes of the class struggle of our times, and has led to a controversy between the pre-eminence of subjectivity or of collectivity – or, more specifically, between anarcho-individualism on the one hand and libertarian communism or anarcho-syndicalism on the other hand. Yet the anarcho-syndicalism of the confederations of revolutionary trade unions can not only ensure the imposition of collective contracts, the defence of those affected by occupational injuries, the protection of migrants, and the internationalisation of the personnel of today's high-mobility societies but can also fight to encourage an environmentally-friendly mode of resource management through direct action tactics.

Green Anarchy or the Science of the Whole

The capitalist social order is based on greed, fantasy and fear, and its sacrament is the hypnotic and ridiculous commodity. It supposedly protects citizens but ultimately extorts and blackmails ordinary people. Gigantic anonymous multinational corporations are defined by a bulimia-like appetite for possession and annihilation, which impoverishes human and animal life and poisons water, the air and our very blood. This monstrous model – alienation as a planetary framework – is offered to citizens as an archetype so they can model their egos in the image and likeness of the catastrophe that disguises private economic profit as wealth. Violence and toxicity (material and ideological) are the true attributes of society, and dominate and crush us. Nowadays, ecology is the science of the whole, and it must be cultivated intensely, both theoretically and practically, by individuals and organisations.

Due to its critical frame and its integrative-reconstructive approach to reality, ecology “leads directly into anarchic areas of social thought. For, in the final analysis, it is impossible to achieve a harmonisation of man and nature without creating a human community that lives in a lasting balance with its natural environment” (Bookchin 1986, 80). Anarchism is the political tradition closest to ecology and, conversely, anarchism is moulded by ecological concerns (Carter 2003, 70). In this sense, radical environmental direct action groups like the Earth Liberation Front and the Earth Liberation Army, animal rights movements like the Animal Liberation Front, anti-technology cells like *Círculo de Ataque-Punta de Obsidiana*, and anonymous eco-vandals have developed social and ecological methods of struggle in order to effect pro-environmental policy changes (Anderson 2004; Green Anarchy 2008). Acts of sabotage against industrial plants or animal exploiters by means of damage to and destruction of property, arson attacks against oil and steel plants and high voltage power stations, or explosive attacks against high-pressure gas pipelines form part of the (anti-political) direct action repertoire of contemporary eco-activism.

Again, direct action plays a lead role in the struggle for a better world to live in. Our planet must no longer be treated as a storehouse of resources that, if appropriately subjugated to manufacture, merely satisfy demand. In the face of this dispossession, there is no choice but to develop the means and channels of international resistance and ecological consciousness. Revolutionary direct action must also avoid the limitations of any “enlightened” euro-ethnocentrism, for in today's mobile and changing societies, activists must pay attention to internationalism and to the dispossession of migrants.

Poetry as a Space of Direct Action

When the First Workers' International was founded, reports on the living conditions that capitalism imposed upon workers did not come from the working class alone, but also from

artists like Rimbaud and Baudelaire, to name just two remarkable cases. Initially, however, the paths available for social criticism were all completely independent from one another. This was a terrible blow for revolutionary expectations and for the emancipation of workers, not only because the forces that emerged in parallel did not work together, but also because they regarded each other with much suspicion. This favoured the rule of capital and the conversion of workers' complaints into mere reiterative rhetoric.

Anarchism was the movement that put most emphasis on the role that culture could play in the emancipation of the human being.⁴ However, anarchists formulated their works and their aesthetic theories as instruments of social revolution, and they never lost sight of the necessity of making their works into ideological weapons (Litvak 1981, 287). Gustav Landauer, for instance, believed quite literally that poets and poetry should form the basis of the revolution – “we need again, and again and again, the revolution, we need the poets” (Landauer 1997, 293). This meant that social revolution should not be limited to economic, political and material demands, but should also include revolutionary art. In this regard, Kropotkin wrote that artists “will be an integral part of a living whole that would not be completed without them” (Kropotkin 2002, 105).

Our interest here is to highlight the fact that, for anarchists, poetry has been understood as a means of agitation through the word and, therefore, as a form of direct action: “the people, the thinkers, the poets are a powder keg, loaded with spirit and the power of creative destruction” (Landauer 2010, 170). The poetic word thus becomes a tool for combat that has a revolutionary and propagandistic function on the one hand and an ethical-aesthetic dimension on the other – “I want my verses to be bombs that explode at the feet of the idol, such as Religion, Fatherland or Money,” wrote the anarchist poet Alberto Ghirardo (Glöckner 1995, 133). When half a century later Leo Ferré sang *at poetry school one does not learn at all: one fights!*, he was proclaiming the same core principle: revolutionary direct action poetry can electrify the masses, strengthen the methods of struggle, and inject fresh ideas through the influence of thought and pen.

In addition, anarchist poetry has been able not only to question the logic of the sign in general, but also the grammatical and syntactic conventions of individual languages. Poetry understood as a rhythmic expression linked to improvisation and lack of constraints bears a resemblance to free jazz, and stretches the boundaries of the anarchistic anti-hierarchical model to breaking point.⁵ Words spontaneously created under the pressure of feeling, the political context, and the pulse of music rebel against any form of hierarchy and prevent the *despot's* speech from becoming a paralysing force imposed on the collectivity. When anarchist poets are able to establish systems of distribution and correspondence – in a Baudelairean sense – constant translations between two or more systems are required and confrontation with institutionalised language rules is stressed. In this regard, I would like to note Herbert Read's (1938, 15) efforts to join the two shores, poetry and anarchism, which are only separated in appearance: “I believe that the poet is necessarily an anarchist, and that he must oppose all organized conceptions of the State, not only those which we inherit from the past, but equally those which are imposed on people in the name of the future.” Poetry, as a space with qualitative meaning, creates new myths that generate significance and effective ways of acting which enrich our life on this Earth, and help end the cycle of dissatisfaction and submission through the endless exercise of direct action.

References

Adams, Jason. 2011. "The Constellation of Opposition." In *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, edited by Duane Rousselle and Süreyyya Evren, 117-138. New York: Pluto Press.

Alexander, Yonah, and Pluchinsky, Dennis. 1992. *Europe's Red Terrorists: The Fighting Communist Organizations*. New York: Frank Cass.

Amorós, Miguel. 2012. *Salida de emergencia*. Logroño: Pepitas de Calabaza.

Anderson, Jon. 2004. "Spatial Politics in Practice: The Style and Substance Of Environmental Direct Action." *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* 36 (1): 106-125.

Bakunin, Michael. 1972. *Bakunin on Anarchy*. Edited by Sam Dolgoff. New York: Vintage Books.

———. 1973. *Selected Writings*. Edited by Arthur Lehning. London: Jonathan Cape.

Bookchin, Murray. 1986. *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*. Montreal: Black Rose Books.

———. 1995. *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*. Stirling: AK-Press.

Calero, Juan Pablo. 2006. "Reconstruir un sueño." In *Historia del anarcosindicalismo español*, edited by Juan Gómez Casas. Madrid: La Malatesta.

Carr, Gordon. 2010. *The Angry Brigade: A History of Britain's First Urban Guerrilla Group*. Oakland: PM Press.

Carter, Neil. 2003. *The Politics of the Environment: Ideas, Activism, Policy*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Christie, Stuart. 2000. *We, the Anarchists! A Study of the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) 1927-1937*. Hastings: The Meltzer Press.

Colson, Daniel. 1997. "La science anarchiste." *Réfractations* no. 1 (Winter).
<https://refractions.plusloin.org/spip.php?article262>.

———. 2001. *Petit lexique philosophique de l'anarchisme: De Proudhon à Deleuze*. Paris: Le Livre de Poche.

Critchley, Simon. 2008. *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance*. London: Verso.

Dartnell, Michael Y. 1995. *Action Directe: Ultra Left Terrorism in France 1979-1987*. London: Frank Cass.

Fernández de Rota, Antón. 2011. "Acracy_Reloaded@post1968/1989: Reflections on Postmodern Revolutions." In *Post-Anarchism: A Reader*, edited by Duane Rousselle and Süreyyya Evren, 139-150. New York: Pluto Press.

- Forrester, Viviane. 1999. *The Economic Horror*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 2002. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- Franks, Benjamin. 2003. "Direct Action Ethic." *Anarchist Studies Volume 11* (1): 13-41.
- . 2006. *Rebel Alliances: The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchisms*. Edinburgh: AK Press and Dark Star.
- Freeden, Michael. 1996. *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Glöckner, Wolfgang K. 1995. "Sean mis versos bombas que estallen a los pies del ídolo. La poesía como forma de 'acción directa'." In *El anarquismo español y sus tradiciones culturales*, edited by Bert Hofmann, Pere Joan i Tous, and Manfred Tietz, 129-138. Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert-Iberoamericana.
- Gómez Casas, Juan. 1977. *Historia de la FAI*. Bilbao: Zero.
- Gordon, Uri, 2008. *Anarchy Live! Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*. London: Pluto Press.
- Graeber, David. 2009. *Direct Action. An Ethnography*. Oakland: AK Press.
- Green Anarchy. 2008. *Green Anarchy: An Anti-Civilization Journal of Theory and Action*, no. 25. <http://greenanarchy.anarchyplanet.org/files/2012/05/greenanarchy25.pdf>.
- Guérin, Daniel, *L'anarchisme*. Gallimard, Paris, 1965.
- Gurucharri, Salvador and Ibáñez, Tomás. 2010. *Insurgencia libertaria. Las Juventudes Libertarias en la lucha contra el franquismo*. Barcelona: Editorial Virus.
- Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich. 1952. *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, edited by Johannes Hoffmeister. Hamburg: Felix Meiner.
- Ibáñez, Tomás. 2014. *Anarquismo es movimiento*. Barcelona: Editorial Virus.
- Jordan, Tim. 2002. *Activism! Direct Action, Hacktivism and the Future of Society*. London: Reaktion Books.
- Kinna, Ruth. 2005. *Anarchism: A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Kropotkin, Peter. 2002. *The Conquest of Bread and Other Writings*, edited by Marshall Shatz. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Landauer, Gustav. 1997. "Eine Sprache an die Dichter." In *Zeit und Geist: Kulturkritische Schriften 1890–1919*, edited by Rolf Kauffeldt und Michael Matzigkeit. Munich: Klaus Boer Verlag.
- . 2010. "Revolution." In *Revolution and Other Writings: A Political Reader*, edited by

Gabriel Kuhn, 110-188. Oakland: PM Press.

Litvak, Lily. 1981. *Musa libertaria: Arte, literatura y vida cultural del anarquismo español (1880-1913)*. Barcelona: Antoni Bosch.

Marshall, Peter. 2008. *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism*. London: Harper Perennial.

McLaughlin, Paul. 2002. *Mikhail Bakunin: The Philosophical Basis of His Anarchism*. New York: Agora Publishing.

– – . 2007. *Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism*. Hampshire: Ashgate.

Ness, Immanuel. 2011. “Workers’ Direct Action and Factory Control in the United States.” In *Ours to Master and to Own: Workers’ Councils from the Commune to the Present*, edited by Immanuel Ness and Dario Azzellini, 302-321. Chicago: Haymarket Books.

Neumann, Osha. 2008. *Up Against the Wall Motherfucker: A Memoir of the 60’s with Notes for the Next Time*. New York: Seven Stories.

Olson, Joel. 2009. “The Problem with Infoshops and Insurrection: US Anarchism, Movement Building, and the Racial Order.” In *Contemporary Anarchist Studies: An introductory anthology of anarchy in the academy*, edited by Randall Amster, Abraham DeLeon, Luis A. Fernández, Anthony J. Nocella II, and Deric Shannon, 35-45. New York: Routledge.

Orero, Felipe. 1979. “CNT: ser o no ser.” In *CNT, ser o no ser: La crisis de 1976-1979*, 43-212. Barcelona: Ruedo Ibérico.

Pannekoek, Anton. 2003. *Workers’ Councils*. Oakland: AK Press.

Peirats, José. 1971. *La CNT en la revolución española II*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico.

Π O. 1996. *24 Hours: The day the language stood still*. Melbourne: Collective Effort Press.

Pouget, Émile. 1904. *L’action directe*. Nancy: Réveil ouvrier.
<http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k84028z>.

Read, Herbert. 1938. *Poetry and Anarchism*. London: Faber and Faber.

Rocker, Rudolf. 1989. *Anarcho-syndicalism*. London: Pluto Press.

Rosés, Sergi. 2002. *El MIL: una historia política*. Barcelona: aliKornio ediciones.

Salaün, Serge. 1985. *La poesía de la guerra de España*. Madrid: Castalia.

Santiáñez, Nil. 2013. *Topographies of Fascism: Habitus, Space and Writing in Twentieth-Century Spain*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Schmidt, Michael. 2013. *Cartography of Revolutionary Anarchism*. Oakland: AK Press.

Taibo, Carlos. 2013. *Repensar la anarquía. Acción directa, autogestión, autonomía*. Madrid: Catarata.

Tajuelo, Telesforo. 1977. *El MIL, Puig Antich y los GARI. Teoría y práctica 1969-1976*. Paris: Ruedo Ibérico.

Termes, Josep. 2011. *Història del moviment anarquista a Espanya (1870-1980)*. Barcelona: L'Avenç.

The Invisible Committee. 2015. *To Our Friends*. South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e).

Tiqun. 2010. *Introduction to Civil War*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

———. 2011. *This Is Not a Program*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Todd, Joseph. 2016. "Occupations, assemblies and direct action – a critique of 'body politics'." *Red Pepper*. <http://www.redpepper.org.uk/occupations-assemblies-and-direct-action-a-critique-of-body-politics/>.

Urdanibia, Javier. 2008. *De si la servidumbre es voluntaria*. Denia: Los Cuadernos de los Solsticios.

Ward, Colin. 1996. *Anarchy in Action*. London: Freedom Press.

Zibechi, Raúl. 2010. *Dispersing Power: Social Movements as Anti-State Forces*. Oakland: AK Press.

¹The author would like to thank Javier Urdanibia for his time and help. Some of the ideas outlined in this work came to fruition through a fruitful process of collaboration with Javier.

²McLaughlin (2002, 69) claims that *Die Reaktion in Deutschland* is inspired mainly by the work of Bruno Bauer, *Die Posaune des jüngsten Gerichts über Hegel den Atheisten und Antichristen: ein Ultimatum*. Nonetheless, I believe that *Die Reaktion* is one of the best examples of the influence that Hegel's philosophy had on Bakunin. In fact, Bakunin's text seems to take the Hegelian programme, which so influenced him, to its ultimate consequences. As Hegel writes in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1952, 144), "*Durch den Kampf auf Leben und Tod*": it is through a struggle for life or death that one manages to maintain freedom.

³The affinity group is a cellular structure linked with other groups for the purpose of collective direct action. Contrary to what one might think, libertarian "affinity" is not ideological but essentially sympathetic: it involves different temperaments, different forms of sensitivity, different traits and the different ways [of being] of those who support it (Colson 2001, 20). For more than fifty years in Spain, affinity groups were the most efficient organ for propaganda, human relationships and anarchist praxis (Peirats 1971, 324; Christie 2000, 28). They consisted of approximately ten members who shared a common social, political and ethical vision. The direct action tactics of affinity groups are well documented (Gómez Casas 1977; Bookchin 1986; Termes 2011). An attempt to reintroduce the affinity groups' (anti-)political repertoire was driven in North America by Up Against the Wall Motherfuckers in the 1960's (Neumann 2008, 60).

⁴During the Spanish Civil War, for example, approximately 8,500 poems were published on the Republican side, most of which were written by anarchists (Salaün 1985, 304).

⁵Consider, for example, the work of anarchist poet Π O: "'Howw yoo speling/ 'Pichka maa'tra'?!/ 'Guess! i say./.....Make it up! I...do./ What's tha use/ of 'learning' (then)?, he sez'" (Π O, 1996: 488).