CHAPTER 2

THREADS OF RESISTANCE

TRACING THE GENEALOGY OF CONTEMPORARY ANARCHISM

> That night we sat across from each other sipping tea and singing stories, weaving the past into our present; speaking of yesterday as if it had already been entered and meticulously recorded into the history books. I felt the philosophical knife of my life before and my life after Seattle slide deep into my skin. I had broken open; I was seeing new land with views of rebellion and courage, a glimpse that will be with me through the stories of repression and time and survival. That will outlive me. I knew then that I might never have the words to tell this story, our story, a story of re-birth.
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> Rowena Kennedy Epstein, from *We Are Everywhere* (London 2003)

An account of the recent history of contemporary anarchism, in its emergence over the past decades, is not readily available since a thorough history of anarchism in the social struggles in the last thirty years or so has yet to be written. The most recent major history of anarchism – Peter Marshall's excellent *Demanding the Impossible* – dedicates a mere one eighth of its pages to modern anarchism, and essentially leaves off its treatment of the movement in 1968. General accounts of contemporary anti-capitalist resistance are beginning to emerge (Notes from Nowhere 2003, Kingsnorth 2003), and it is clear that the authors are aware of the anarchist dimensions of contemporary struggles. However, little attention has been paid specifically to anarchism's patterns of re-emergence.

What I would like to suggest here is that that the sources of anarchism in its contemporary idiom are largely *discontinuous* with the traditional thread of anarchist movement and theory, as it developed in the context of workers' and peasants' movements in Europe and the Americas during the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. Overall the re-emergence of large movements sharing a broadly anarchist approach is only ephemerally related to the anarchist movement of Makhno, Goldman, Zapata and Malatesta. Instead, the mainspring of today's anarchism can be found in the intersections of several trends of social criticism and struggle whose beginnings were never consciously "anarchist" – in particular the cross-issue formulations of radical ecology, the waves of militant feminism, black and queer liberation movements, and the anti-neoliberal internationalism launched by movements in the global South, most celebrated of which are the Mexican Zapatistas. Analysing these intersections in full is well beyond the limits of the present work. Still, brief mention can be made of several interrelated processes which have contributed to establishing a recognisably anarchist trajectory for current struggles. Implied in all of them is the constant re-definition of anarchism itself, with new areas of attention and new formulations of key ideological positions. These must be incorporated into any account of anarchism that remains sensitive to its evolving character.

Defeat and Stagnation

As anarchist historian George Woodcock argues, the discontinuity of the anarchist movement is perhaps its most conspicuous characteristic. Unlike Marxism, he says, anarchism historically "presents the appearance, not of a swelling stream flowing on to its sea of destiny...but rather of water percolating through porous ground – here forming for a time a strong underground current, there gathering into a swirling pool, trickling through crevices, disappearing from sight, and then re-emerging where the cracks in the social structure may offer it a course to run" (Woodcock 1962:15). In the same passage, Woodcock comments on the harmony between this "protean" quality of anarchism and its own anti-authoritarian sensibilities. However, he does not trace this quality to its socio-political origins, which are important in order to understand the special dynamic of the anarchist movement's reproduction. A key to this dynamic may be gleaned from the most simple exercise in historical correlation: one notices very easily that anarchism's periods of rise and decline consistently parallel periods of increasing and declining intensity of social struggle. The periods in which anarchist movement has been most impressive – in terms of largest numbers, highest intensity of action and appearance of key texts – are always found in years where social struggle peaks, such as those surrounding a great revolution. To see this one need only look at the swelling of anarchist ranks and explosion of anarchist literature in the build-up to the revolutionary periods around 1871, 1918 and 1936. In each of its reincarnations, anarchism takes on very different features, not only in its organisational forms but also in the contours of its critique of present society, in its speculations on alternatives and in its revolutionary strategies. Struggle is the lifeblood of anarchism, it is what gives anarchist politics their dynamism and urgency. However, periods of decline in struggle, as well as massive repression in its aftermath, have spelled stagnation and decline for the anarchist movement, making for the discontinuity just mentioned. The renaissance witnessed today in anarchist activity and ideas is no different.

By 1939, the anarchist movement was dead. The events of the Spanish revolution and civil war had eradicated the last anarchist stronghold in Europe and elsewhere, and while never completely disappearing from the political stage, the anarchist movement after the second World War could be only protrayed as in a state of utter collapse. Writing twenty years later, Woodcock lamented anarchism as a failed and forgotten cause, leaving behind only scattered anarchist groupsucles and publications which "form only the ghost of the historical anarchist movement, a ghost that inspires neither fear among governments nor hope among the peoples...During the past forty years the influence it once established has dwindled, by defeat after defeat and by the slow draining of hope almost to nothing". (443)

In analysing the waning of anarchism in the twentieth century, three main factors can be brought into account. The first and most important was the physical elimination of the European anarchist movement by both Fascist and Leninist dictatorships.

In Moscow, the black flag flew for the last time on February 8th 1921, during the huge funeral procession of Petr Kropotkin. A month later, the Kronstadt rebellion led by the Social Revolutionaries and Anarcho-Syndicalists was ruthlessly supressed, inaugurating an open season on the Russian anarchists. The final defeat of the Makhnovschina in August that year led Trotsky to boast that "At last the Soviet government, with an iron broom, has rid Russia of anarchism" (Quoted in Voline 1974:308. See also Goldman 1925, Maximoff 1940, Avrich 1973, Arshinov 1974, Skirda 2004). Many anarchist militants and writers, including Nestor Makhno, Alexander Berkman and Emma Goldman fled to exile. In subsequent years the Cheka (and later the N.C.V.D.) rendered impossible any renewal of libertarian dissent, first in Russia and after the war in the entire Soviet bloc (e.g. the swift supression of the 1956 Hungarian revolt). In Italy and Germany, fierce repression under the Mussolini and Hitler regimes quickly decimated anarchist cells and labour unions along with the rest of the left – a project carried to all countries occupied by the Axis. Anarchist militants either escaped to allied countries or joined partisan forces, only to be left few and disorganised in the post-war period (Marshall 1992:451-2 and 481-2, Levy (1989). "The Italian USI, the largest syndicalist union in the world, was driven underground and then out of existence. The German FAUD, Portuguese CGT, Dutch NSV, French CDSR and many more in Eastern Europe and Latin America were not able to survive the fascism and military dictatorships of the 1930s and 40s...In Germany over 1,000 trials for high treason were carried against militants of the FAUD...many of whom didn't survive the concentration camps...The Polish syndicalist union with 130,000 workers, the ZZZ, was on the verge of applying for membership of the IWA when it was crushed by the Nazi invasion" (MacSimóin 1993).

These events came in the wake of a fierce wave of repression in America. For a brief historic moment in 1918", writes Paul Buhle (2005), "Wobblies declared the Russian 'soviets' (literally, 'workers' councils') to be mirrors of their own activity. Then came the red scares of 1919–21 in the United States, followed by the crushing of a vast and powerful Italian working-class uprising and other bitter disappointments...Prosecutorial charges of "criminal syndicalism" mystified later generations of radicals (as well as civil libertarians)", and hundreds aliens were deported under the 1918 Immigration Act designed specifically to criminalise radical alien workers. "During the uprisings of 1919, amid massive May Day parades, a general strike in Seattle, and solidarity actions to prevent war goods being shipped to counter-revolutionary forces in embattled Russia, it nevertheless seemed for an extended moment that persecution only deepened the class struggle. Then it was over. Within a year, the young Communist movement had nearly destroyed itself (with considerable help from police agents) along with the Socialist Party in a round of wild factionalism...a calamitous split in the IWW developed over a complex of internal issues, including centralization of the organizational leadership, and the movement ultimately retreated into an educational/agitational framework".

Anarchism made its last stand in Spain, where the first period of the civil war had brought most of Catalunya under anarchist control, continuing material and political pressure brought the movement to heel within less than a year. For reasons subject to much controversy among anarchist and non-anarchist commentators alike, the central organs of the Spanish movement – the Confederación Nacional de Trabajo (CNT) and the Federación Anarquista Iberica (FAI) – were by and large co-opted by mid-1937 into the statist organs of the Generalitat, which sidelined the anarchist militias and all but abandoned the process of economic collectivisation. Dissenting factions were subsequently put down by the government, increasingly Stalinist in its political orientation and methods, and Franco's victory sent almost all of the remaining active anarchists into exile (Marshall 1992:464-7, Woodcock 1962:363-375. cf. Goméz Casas 1986, Peirats 1977, Orwell 1938).

The second factor in the continued lethargy after the war was a general relaxation of social struggle in capitalist states – which affected the prospects for all socialist movements. In Europe and the U.S., the post-war industrial boom and economic reconstruction programs such as the Marshall Plan were accompanied by a welfare-statist orientation, and the domestication of the large labour unions. This placed controls on the most overtly exploitative features of capitalist relations of production, and, consequently, on the social tensions arising from them. In the South, anarchist tendencies did surface from time to time in anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist struggles, but only marginally so. The example most often mentioned in this context is that of the Indian struggle for independence, and especially the anarchist influences on Mohandas Gandhi (Marshall 1992:412-7). Still, it was clearly Gandhi's commitment to satyagraha (non-violent/passive civil disobeidence), rather than any anarchist sensibilities, that most captured the imagination of Indians and outsiders alike. Gandhi can indeed be said to have had anarchist leanings, with his continued suspicion of state power, his refusal of an instrumental ends-justifying-means approach, and his call for a village-based economy and a stateless decentralised democracy as ultimate ideals. But his strong puritanical tendencies, his cultivation of his own charismatic leadership, his cooperation with statist Indian National Congress and his failure to directly criticise the Indian government on any occasion after independence, all make Gandhi's anarchist "credentials" ambiguous at best. Generally speaking, most struggles in the South after the second World War were more influenced by nationalism or Marxism than by anarchism (but see Dirlik 1991, Mbah and Igariwey 2001, Adams 2002b).

Third and finally, there were the ideological rigidities accompanying the bi-ploar international framework of the cold war. In the 1950s, the landscape of antagonistic political imagination was dominated by Marxism-Leninism, which had taken not only symbolic ground as a "successful" case of revolution, but also material ground in the form of the Comintern, which marshalled Soviet support for (and sometimes manufacturing of) its own brand of dissent where it was perceived to serve the interests of the USSR. In such a context, anarchism was often seen as an outdated and failed orientation. Some anarchist organs were certainly resurrected after the war – for example the Italian anarchist paper *Umanita Nova*, which runs to this day, and several anarchist federations and unions were restarted. But overall their impact on the political landscape was infinitesimal compared to before the war.

An Haphazard Rebirth

In the 1960s, however, the threads of political antagonism which would weave together to form the new anarchist movement were already beginning to take shape, as different social movements quite independently began articulating some or many anarchist values and attitudes. Woodcock's comments on the movement of May 1968 in France are key to understanding the more general dynamic of anarchist regeneration in recent decades. The traditional anarchist organisations and intellectuals played no real part in the movement, which exemplified

> the way in which anarchist ideas and anarchist tactics can emerge spontaneously in a situation where the actors for the most part do not regard themselves as anarchists and have little knowledge of anarchist history or of the classic libertarian writings...it was among the uncelebrated rank and file of the movement...that the anarchist spirit often appeared in its purest form...an impressive experiment in free organisation, and perhaps the nearest thing to a truly anarchist revolution that history has yet seen. (Woodcock1985:ch.10)

Similarly in the United States,

> In the great kaleidoscope of New Radical trends and organizations that emerged...during the counter-cultural 1960s, there is no doubt that anarchism played an important role, though it is not always easy to establish its presence since explicit statements of anarchistic loyalties were rare and the groups of avowed anarchists remained few and scattered...the basic ideas of anarchism...have come down to the New Radicals...not through direct reading, but in a kind of mental nutrient broth of remnants of the old ideologies which pervade the air. (Woodcock1985:ch.14)

There are several major trends under which events from the 1960s onwards can be organised. What follows is a broad-stroke survey of these trends – though the lack of organised data must leave this account quite open to counter-interpretations.

We can begin with the proliferation of direct action in social movements. Direct action was an omnipresent hallmark of anarchist political expression for over a century, inherent in its insurrectionary traditions, in sabotage and contestation "at the point of production" (a refrain coined by IWW militants, and in the formation of communes, free schools and militias. While the civil rights movement and the movement against the Vietnam war mainly employed methods of civil disobedience, direct action (in the sense defined in the previous chapter) returned to prominence throughout the 1970s and 1980s. One of the primary sites for this was the nonviolent blockades against nuclear power and weapons, which drew together pacifists, early environmentalists and feminists, though not the traditional Left (Touraine et.al 1983b, Midnight Notes 1985, Welsh 2001). The Abalone Alliance, which in the early 1980s forced the Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant in California to shut down, saw a prominent involvement of women who explicitly called themselves anarcha-feminists. Through their involvement "the anarcha-feminists were able to do a great deal to define the political culture that the Abalone would bequeath to subsequent incarnations of the direct action movement. That political culture helped to create more space for internal differences in the Abalone, and in later organisations, than there had been in the Clamshell [Alliance]. It strengthened the role of the counterculture within the direct action movement, and it opened the movement to the spirituality that later became one of its most salient aspects...anarchia-feminism reinforced the commitment to a utopian democratic vision and a political practice based on the values it contained." (Epstein 1991:95-6). Direct action under its "constructive" aspect can be seen in the numerous self-organised urban and rural communities that were set up in Europe and North America in this period. More violent direct action was also present, primarily against the Franco regime (Christie 2005) and in the bombings of the Angry Brigade in Britain (Vague 1997, Sellwood 2005). From the 1980s onwards, direct action also became the primary method of political expression for radical ecological movements, as in the wilderness defence of Earth First! (Wall 1999) or broader social and environmental struggles such as the British anti-roads movement (Plows 1998).

At the same time, many activists were increasingly departing from the top-down models of organisation that characterised the old European Left as well as in American groups such as the National Organisation of Women, the large anti-Vietnam War coalitions or Students for a Democratic Society (and, later, its wannabe "revolutionary cadre" the Weathermen). From the 1970s on, movements increasingly began to organise themselves in a decentralised manner without (formal) structures or leaders, inspired by critiques of political centralisation that emanated in particular from the New Left in the late 1960s and feminist circles in the 1970s (Cohn-Bendit 1968, Bookchin 1972, Lewis and Baideme 1972). Anti-nuclear blockades and sabotage actions, for example, were often organised through the cooperation of decentralised affinity groups, reproducing the model used by the Iberian Anarchist Federation in the 1930s. At the same time, the involvement in these actions of Quakers and feminists (anarcha- and otherwise) introduced consensus methods and “spokescouncil” structures for decision making – until then quite alien to anarchists, but today enjoying a prominent, if contested, position in anarchist organising (Kaplan 1997). Later, “autonomist” movements in Italy and Germany would extend the decentralised logic of collective action in antagonism to the state, further cementing this aspect of an anarchist political culture (Katsiaficas 1997).

Another no less significant source of anarchist regeneration was the increasing linkage among multiple forms of oppression in the discourse of political activists. Since the late 1960s, social movements have been increasing their emphasis on the intersections of numerous forms of oppression, taking struggle beyond what were previously specific agendas (as with the cooperation between elements of the SDS and the Black Panthers). Later black women, marginalised in overwhelmingly white feminist circles and often facing blatant sexism in the black liberation movements, began mobilising in autonomous black feminist (or, in Alice Walker’s term, “womanist”) movements heralded by the founding in 1973 of the National Black Feminist Organization and of Black Women Organized for Action (Roth 2004, Collins 2000). These movements were soon to highlight the concept of “simultaneous oppression” – a personal and political awareness of how race, class and gender compound each other as arenas of exclusion, in a complex and mutually-reinforcing relationship. The 1980s saw an increasing diversification of the gay rights movement in both Europe and North America, with lesbian and bisexual organisations tying feminist and gay liberation agendas, and claiming their place in a hitherto predominantly male field (Armstrong 2002, Martel 1999, Taylor and Whitter 1992). With the advent of the HIV/AIDS crisis later that decade, these agendas took a further radical turn when activist groups like the American ACT UP introduced a strong emphasis on direct action and focused on the pharmaceutical corporations keeping HIV medication at unreachable prices (Shepard and Heyduk 2002, Edelman 1993). These dynamics were carried forward under the umbrella of Queer Nation, founded in summer 1990, which emphasised diversity and the inclusion of all sexual minorities. By the mid-1990s, queer women and men of colour had founded their own organisations and were structuring their struggles explicitly around the intersections of racism, heterosexism, patriarchy and class.

In addition to creating linkages in theory and practice between different forms of domination, another type of linkage was that between the issues around which social movements were rallying, pointing beyond specific grievances and towards a more basic critique of social structures. The simultaneous rise in recent decades of multi-issue movements campaigning on diverse agendas – economic justice, peace, feminism, ecology – was accompanied by linkages among these agendas which mitigated what would otherwise have been a fragmentation of political energies, and provided platforms for solidarity and cooperation on the ground. Movements progressively came to see the interdependence of their agendas, manifest along various axes such as ecological critiques of capitalism, feminist anti-militarism, and the interrelation of racial and economic segregation. Special importance must be given in this respect to ecological movements, whose agenda – by its very nature encompassing the entire spectrum of interaction between society and the natural environment – supplied it with a cross-cutting perspective that inevitably touched on multiple social, economic and ideological spheres.

At the same time, movements came to endorse some kind of a "theoretical pluralism" which disemphasised unity of analysis as a measure of appropriate political affiliation, which and contributed to the possibility of diverse ad-hoc coalitions. This was perhaps the result of the intriguing circumstance whereby several movements simultaneously purported to provide overarching, totalising perspectives as a vantage point for their analysis and action, as in the case of certain strands feminism, radical or "deep" ecology, and post-war developments of Marxism such as Italian autonomist theory. The rise of such paradoxically "competing holisms" and their own versions of the sources of the world's problems (patriarchy, industrialism and/or anthropocentrism, continuing class divisions etc.) sometimes led to entrenchment and unwillingness to acknowledge other viewpoints. In other cases, however, movements turned away from aiming at a single analysis and towards a "theoretical pluralism" that was prepared to accord equal legitimacy to diverse perspectives and narratives of struggle. This displaced theoretical unity in favour of a bottom-up approach to social theorising, valorising articulations of oppression that take place from within the specificities of each site thereof.

Finally, we should mention the strong links between the new anarchism and social spaces in the western subculture. Throughout the 20th century anarchist ideas had attracted subcultural and artistic movements such as Dada, Surrealism and the

Beats. Since the 1960s, this attraction took on a much larger scale with the advent of the "counterculture" phenomenon. Many students of social movements point to counterculture as "providing the mulch in which the seeds of radical protest are germinated and nurtured" (Plows 1998:140. cf. McKay 1996, Hetherington 1998, Martin 2000). The "punk" subculture shares an oppositional attitude to mainstream society, and thus an affiliation with more than just anarchist symbolism (O'Connor 2003). Radical environmental groups such as *Earth First!* borrow from many "spiritual" traditions including paganism, Buddhism, and various New Age and Native American spiritualities. Under the auspices of these orientations, militancy can come to be framed as a willingness to defend what is "sacred", helping to consolidate one variant of the mythologies that hold political cultures together (cf. Taylor 2002). An especially interesting integration of cultural production and political resistance was displayed by the British group *Reclaim the Streets* (RTS). Fusing the environmental direct action movement's anti-roads/anti-car agenda and the recently-criminalised rave subculture of the early 1990s, RTS began organising illegal street parties that rendered vast areas car-free for the day, maintaining self-organised "temporary autonomous zones" which inaugurated the combination of party and protest that would go on to characterise mass mobilisations in subsequent years (McKay 1998, cf. Feral Faun 2001). Besides initiating multiple spaces of alternative cultural and social reproduction – from communes and squats to festivals and 'zines – subcultures also provided radical activism with a more rooted social base from which to operate, replacing the declining position of traditional working class communities in this role.

An International Movement

While the processes leading up to the mid-nineties are very difficult to portray in more than cursory terms, the last decade offers us a much clearer picture of the context in which anarchist tendencies have developed. The reason for this is that unlike previous decades, the recent one has seen for the first time the emergence of a global network of resistance, in which struggles of an anarchist bend have enjoyed unprecedented connectivity and opportunities for mutually transforming cross-fertilisation. Initially mobilising against neoliberal economic globalisation, this global network would soon encompass a much broader and more radical set of agendas, resulting in today's so-called "movement of movements" in which a new anarchism is finally congealing into recognisable form.

On New Year's Day 1994, a rebellion of Indigenous peasants erupted in Chiapas, Mexico's southernmost and poorest state. Undertaken by the *Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional* (EZLN), the rebellion coincided with the coming into effect of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This agreement would lead Mexico to accept, as a condition for loans, "Structural Adjustment Programs" that would include land privatisation (including a constitutional amendment revoking the protected status of indigenous communal lands or *ejidos*), deep cuts in social spending, and a flooding of Mexico with imported corn and maize that would ruin local producers. Moreover, the Mexican government signing NAFTA was effectively a single-party dictatorship, with the Partido Revolucionario Institutional (PRI) holding power since 1929. Articulating as their chief aim, at the time, the overthrow of the PRI government and its replacement with a democratically elected one (EZLN 1993), some 2,000 guerrillas, supported by the local population, occupied San Cristobal de las Casas and six other towns in the Chiapas highlands. Under the slogan *¡Ya Basta!* ("enough already!"), they fought furious gun battles with government soldiers for 12 days before being driven into the mountains. Negotiations began soon afterwards, but the Zapatista communities rejected the loosely defined agreements. In February 1995, the new president Ernesto Zedillo launched a large military offensive against the EZLN, but talks resumed later that year, ending with the signing of the San Andres Accords, which gave indigenous peoples the right to govern themselves in autonomous communities within Mexico. The government, however, reneged on its signature and the EZLN suspended talks. This was followed by a campaign of intimidation of Zapatista communities by the Mexican Army and pro-government paramilitaries. On December 22, 1997 paramilitaries entered the refugee community of Acteal and killed 45 people, most of them women and children. In June 1998 two more massacres occurred. In March of 1999 the Zapatistas held an international indigenous rights *Consulta* (illegal referendum), in which 3 million Mexicans from Mexico, the US, and elsewhere around the world voted in a large majority for the implementation of the accords. With the defeat of the PRI in 2000, new president and ex-Coca Cola executive Vicente Fox declared he would solve the conflict in Chiapas "in 15 minutes". The Zapatistas demanded to make their case for implementation of the San Andres accords in person at the Mexican legislature, along with the Indigenous National Congress. The resulting *ZapaTour*, which entered Mexico City on the 11th of March, was greeted along the roads and in plazas by hundreds of thousands. The Mexican congress, however, refused to hear the Zapatistas, and reforming the San Andres accords passed the diluted "Indigenous Rights Bill". This was rejected by the Zapatistas, continuing the struggle of the indigenous communities (Holloway and Peláez 1998, Campa Mendoza 1999, Marcos 2001).

The Zapatista struggle initiated a process that would extend far beyond Mexico. This happened in two major ways: first, a consolidation of international networks of struggle for which the EZLN was, in part, directly responsible; second, the introduction (chiefly through the writings of the EZLN's major spokesman, Subcomandante Marcos) of a new form of internationalist discourse emphasising diversity, autonomy and solidarity. Resistance to NAFTA before its signing had already created coalitions of several hundred grassroots groups in Mexico, the United States and Canada, and newly available electronic means made their communication more rapid than ever before (Brooks and Fox 2002). The anti-NAFTA network also connected very diverse struggles throughout the continent – peasants, farmers, industrial labourers, environmental, human rights and social justice groups – overcoming their previous disjunction. Thus is it easy to understand why solidarity with the Zapatistas spread like wildfire among anti-NAFTA groups. Much has been made of the Zapatistas' use of the Internet to spread their communiques and create ties of solidarity with groups in and outside Mexico (Cleaver 1998, Midnight Notes 2001). But even more important in terms of network-building was was their subsequent hosting of an "International Encuentro Against Neoliberalism and for Humanity" in Chiapas in 1996. The call for the meeting was addressed "To all individuals, groups, collectives, movements, social, civic and political organizations, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, all the lefts known and to be known; non-governmental organizations, groups in solidarity with struggles of the world people, bands, tribes, intellectuals, indigenous people, students, musicians, workers, artists, teachers, peasants, cultural groups, youth movements, alternative communication media, ecologists, tenants, lesbians, homosexuals, feminists, pacifists" (EZLN 1996).

"Against the international of terror representing neoliberalism", the Zapatistas wrote, "we must raise the international of hope. Hope, above borders, languages, colours, cultures, sexes, strategies, and thoughts, of all those who prefer humanity alive. The international of hope. Not the bureaucracy of hope, not the opposite image and, thus, the same as that which annihilates us. Not the power with a new sign or new clothing. A breath like this, the breath of dignity". In July of 1996, over 3,000 people from five continents met at five sites in Chiapas. The discussion at each site was dedicated to a different topic: politics, economics, culture and media, civil society, and identity and community. One common theme that arose from the workshops was the need to develop a "network of struggles" to combat neoliberalism and build alternatives to it. Attendants of the *Encuentro* were able to draw parallels between the various processes of neoliberal globalisation which were sweeping the continents, whose primary aspects are well familiar by now: privatisation, cuts in social spending, aggregation of production at the hands of multinational corporations, disregard for environmental protection, cultural homogenisation, occupational precariousness etc.

Not only were these processes of encroachment happening on a global scale, so were the seeds of resistance to them. Recognising this, the Zapatistas' closing remarks at the *Encuentro* called for the creation of an intercontinental network of resistance which, "recognising differences and acknowledging similarities, will search to find itself with other resistances around the world. [It] will be the medium in which distinct resistances may support one another. [It] doesn't have a central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist" (EZLN 1997). A Second Encuentro was held a year later in Spain, with nearly 4,000 participants from Europe, the Americas, Africa, and Oceania (PGA 1997). The following year, representatives of these movements met in Geneva to launch the ongoing network, named Peoples' Global Action.

PGA is quite a unique and paradoxical animal in the social movement field. With no membership, material resources or centralised structures, it represents an attempt to create a network that combines global scope and local autonomy, high effectiveness in action and thorough decentralisation in structure. Yet it is precisely this set-up which has enabled the groups who undertook the PGA banner – as distant and diverse as Indian peasants, Dutch squatters and Maori indigenous-rights activists – to cooperate in organising the "global days of action" up to and including Seattle which effectively re-ignited the present, post-Cold War cycle of anti-capitalist resistance and brought local struggles into mutual awareness and solidarity. Initially directed at the World Trade Organisation, which was seen as the primary forum for implementing the neoliberal agenda, the global days of action began with the WTO's Second Ministerial Conference in Geneva, in late May 1998. This day saw over 200 different protests and direct actions around the world, including half a million people demonstrating in Hyderabad, India. Activists in some 20 cities from Sydney to Tel-Aviv organised "Global Street Parties" inspired by the actions of RTS in Britain. In

Brazil the anti-WTO march was accompanied by the looting supermarkets and government food stores by landless peasants, while in in Geneva itself ten thousand people attended a protest that included attacks on banks and a McDonald's outlet.

The protest events of June 18th 1999, during the G8 summit in Cologne, took place in well over 100 cities and 40 countries. In the City of London the J18 actions caused millions of pounds in economic damage to corporate and financial institutions. PGA had its second global conference in Bangalore that August, hosted by an Indian farmers' union known for torching genetically modified crops. Here the next global day of action was coordinated, to coincide with the WTO meeting in Seattle.

On November 30, 1999, the opening ceremonies of the third ministerial of the World Trade Organization were successfully blockaded by 15,000 people taking direct action. Thousands of labour union members broke out of their 50,000-strong permitted march, and joined students, environmentalists, people of faith, and local citizens in resisting the hegemony of the WTO despite massive police attack. At night, local youth joined anarchists in attacks on corporate property, evading the police for hours. "The next day the streets were patrolled by the National Guard, and a 'no-protest zone' was invented by the mayor, yet thousands took to the streets again, over 600 were arrested, and the tear gas and plastic bullets continued to fly. The ministerial ended in failure, as Southern delegates, taking encouragement from the streets, declared the proceedings exclusionary" (Notes from Nowhere 2004:204-8). The events in Seattle, according to Jeff Juris (2004:111),

> not only energized processes of networking and convergence around the world, it provided a new model for organizing highly confrontational, mass-mediated direct action protests and counter-summits against multilateral financial and political institutions. Before the anti-WTO protests had even concluded, plans were in the works for the next big action against the World Bank and IMF in Washington, D.C. the following April 16, while European activists were already talking about how to respond to the World Bank and IMF fall meetings scheduled for Prague on September 26...Over the next few years, this virtual web would expand and become physically embodied through a series of mass actions.

Although there has been much intramural criticism of the "summit-hopping" habits of some activists, and a consequent realisation of the need to ground resistance in local action and alternative-building, the importance of the "days of action" cycle between Seattle and Genoa cannot be ignored. Not only it they enact a radicalisation of political discourses in mainstream society that has survived to the post-S11 world; it is also through the embodied and virtual networks of the now-global direct action movement that the key cultural codes identified in the previous chapter as material to contemporary anarchism were transmitted, recombined and absorbed by local groups. This collective process of re-articulating a shared political identity through cultural proliferation, and the forging of concrete solidarities during action and discussion, represent the "coming together" of the contemporary anarchist movement.