In multiple ways, the anti-globalization movement invokes the democratic imaginary. A central element of the movement’s critique of contemporary capitalism is that corporate power organized on a global scale undermines the capacity of citizens and national communities to make independent decisions about social, economic and political priorities. Anti-globalization activists challenge governments that enact international trade and investment agreements which enshrine the interests of multinational capital, arguing that both the means – the restriction of dissent and meaningful participation in decision-making – and the ends – the ordering of society according to the interests of the few – violate even minimal norms of democratic practice, such as majoritarianism and representativeness. Although by no means characterized by a coherent ideological approach, especially to the question of alternatives, the anti-globalization movement can be said to be united in its appeal to citizens’ democratic sensibilities.

Given the central ideological role of democracy in the movement, we clearly need to ask: how democratic is the anti-globalization movement itself? The decision-making processes developed by activists – most notably the use of ‘affinity groups’ and ‘spokes councils’ – are said to be more democratic than those of previous left-wing or working-class organizations, such as trade unions or political parties. Two key ideas in this decentralized notion of democracy are autonomy from central leaders or structures, and the commitment to a diversity of tactics. I will argue that the democratic character of such autonomy needs to be interrogated, particularly in terms of its negative impact on the creation of a space for sustained debate about strategies, tactics and visions. In the absence of
a common, legitimate and widely accepted forum for decision-making, groups
of activists are able to act as vanguards by default, thereby ‘leading’ or directing
the movement without any accountability. Through an analysis of the anarchist
and post-modern roots of a significant section of the movement, I will argue that
organizational practices not only fail to live up to the movement’s democratic
ideals, but also limit its effectiveness and inclusiveness.

POLITICAL IDEAS IN THE ANTI-GLOBALIZATION
MOVEMENT

The issue of democracy is central to the anti-globalization movement, both
in its critique of the current political-economic configuration, and in the prin-
ciples guiding internal organization. The diversity of groups and issues
encompassed by the movement has made it all but impossible for mainstream
commentators to see these common key themes; as Naomi Klein has put it,
observers have been ‘missing the forest for the people dressed as trees’.¹ Even
some participants in the demonstrations held in Seattle and U.S. cities throughout
the year 2000 emphasized how this diversity might impede the effectiveness of
the movement, as ‘perhaps energies were excessively scattered’.²

However, as the website of Stop the FTAA, a clearing house of information
on anti-FTAA organizing throughout the Western hemisphere, makes clear, it
is precisely the negative impact of ‘corporate globalization’ or neoliberalism on
‘nearly every sector of society’ which provides the basis of unity, ‘the possibility
of uniting broad sectors into a mass movement’.³ Furthermore, not only are
people harmed in concrete material terms, they are harmed by processes over
which they have no democratic control. The movement is therefore about
changing both the content of global social practices and relations and the
processes by which communities make decisions about how they are to be orga-
nized. David Graeber, a Yale University anthropologist, self-described anarchist
and active participant in the direct action elements of the anti-globalization
movement, makes this point forcefully in his rejection of the dominant media’s
interpretation of the movement as structureless and lacking ideological coher-
ence. He characterizes the movement’s ideology as particularly evident in its
approach to organization: ‘this is a movement about reinventing democracy. It is
not opposed to organization. It is about creating new forms of organization. It
is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization are its ideology’.⁴

To some extent, this claim sidesteps the important differences over analysis and
strategy – whether to be anti-capitalist, whether to reform international institu-
tions or to create wholly new ones, whether to engage positively with the state
or to reject it as irredeemably capitalist and authoritarian, or whether to accept
violence as a legitimate tactic – differences which pervade the movement and give
rise to a significant element of disunity. There is, however, something important
in what Graeber says: a significant portion of the movement is organizing around
coherent ideological commitments that are reflected in the decision-making prac-
tices governing and linking groups of activists. If it is indeed the generation of new
organizational forms that constitutes the anti-globalization movement’s core
contribution to contemporary Left politics, it is incumbent upon the entire Left to engage with these practices and their underlying ideas, in a way which appreciates and yet does not romanticize them.

An important section of the anti-globalization movement is based on one central value: running throughout the analysis of a variety of groups is a critique and rejection of hierarchy. Although the source and nature of hierarchical organization is defined variously, as rooted in capitalism, patriarchy, racism, homophobia, imperialism, bureaucracy, and/or human domination over nature, common to all is a rejection of any authority that imposes decisions on individuals and communities. This anti-authoritarianism takes as its main inspiration the tradition of anarchist thought, which includes but is not limited to Kropotkin, Bakunin, Goldman, Chomsky and Bookchin, as well as the concrete political experiments of the anarcho-syndicalists of the Spanish Civil War and the North American Industrial Workers of the World (the IWW, or ‘Wobblies’). Anarchism is centrally concerned with the conditions that impede the exercise of ‘maximum individual liberty for all’. Although one may distinguish between libertarian and socialist forms of anarchism, which differ on the issue of what conditions will actually achieve such liberty, at the centre of both is the idea that ‘there is no legitimate authority outside the individual’. It is fair to say that it is the anti-capitalist variant of anarchism which is attracting a significant number of activists and which has been prominent in the large demonstrations of recent memory. As such, the emphasis is placed on the way social inequality – as embodied in private property, the institution of the state, and even organizations seeking the liberation of the working class – reproduces hierarchy and domination.

Anarchists reject the state for both the content and the purpose of its power, as well as its form. Following Proudhon, socialist anarchists disavow state power as it is ‘synonymous with the power of capital’ and therefore an irremediably corrupt institution through which human emancipation could never come. Goldman, for instance, insisted that organized state authority ‘is necessary only to maintain or protect property and monopoly’. State regulation of human behaviour does not promote ‘human liberty, human well-being and social harmony’ in that it has not ‘induced man [sic] to do anything he could and would not do by virtue of his intellect or temperament, nor prevented anything that man was impelled to do by the same dictates’. In the same vein Ammon Hennacy, U.S. anarchist organizer with the Catholic Worker Movement, was fond of saying, when charged with civil disobedience: ‘Ah judge, your damn laws, the good people don’t need ‘em and the bad people don’t obey ‘em, so what use are they?’ Outside regulation of any kind, in whatever form, and from whatever source, is seen as inherently invasive and ultimately counterproductive. According to this analysis, the state can never be made to work for progressive ends. Furthermore, the form of popular participation in state power adopted by capitalist democracies – institutionalized representative democracy – is viewed with profound suspicion.
Other forms of hierarchy, produced by those also seeking the liberation of the working classes, like a party or bureaucratic and centrally directed trade unions, are also equally repugnant to anarchists. Both Proudhon and Bakunin held that all political parties were ‘varieties of absolutism’ and thus were not the vehicle through which the working classes should be organized. This is particularly because, in seeking to capture the state through revolutionary or electoral means, socialists become embroiled in the very oppressive relations they once sought to eliminate. They become caught in a political trap, deceived by the illusion of minor reforms and corrupted by holding state power. For anarchists, the ultimate outcome of the Bolshevik Revolution is a vindication of this position.

Noam Chomsky summarizes the rejection of all forms of hierarchy quite well: ‘democracy is largely a sham when the industrial system is controlled by any form of autocratic elite, whether of owners, managers, and technocrats, a “vanguard” party, or a state bureaucracy’.

The ideal of socialist anarchism is thus the reconciliation of individual(ism) with social(ism). In Goldman’s formulation, the goal is to discover how to be one’s self and at the same time live in oneness with others. Whereas hierarchy prevents this reconciliation, direct action leading to forms of direct self-governance will lead to its realization. Order, for anarchists, comes not from authority, but from ‘freely undertaken cooperation, mutual aid, and improvisation’. In other words, for anarchists, organization must have as its central governing principle the fostering and protection of people’s ability to govern themselves. In practical terms, self-governance usually involves forms of direct democracy.

This anti-authoritarianism has led to the development of three concrete organizational principles in the anti-globalization movement: (1) an adoption of decentralized, autonomous structures; (2) a rejection of leadership; and (3) a respect for diversity, especially in the realm of tactics. Each of these principles is aimed at fostering maximum human freedom and the creativity that flows from such freedom.

Commentators like Rick Salutin, keen to cut through the fog of misperceptions about anarchism that accompanied the fog of tear gas, have rightly emphasized that anarchism is about neither chaos nor structurelessness. Rather, as pointed out previously, anarchists reject particular kinds of structures: centralized, hierarchical structures that impose authority from above. Therefore, significant elements of the anti-globalization movement have developed a variety of decentralized decision-making structures, which tend to be fluid in terms of membership and loose in terms of the extent to which participants are bound by the decisions made. The most popular organizational form composing the backbone of post-Seattle demonstrations is the affinity group, a small group of people united by friendship, a history of political work together, a common issue or identity, or a shared adoption of a particular tactic. The affinity group transforms the traditional demonstration, characterized by passive marching, contained by parade marshals, on a pre-planned route to and from a raft of speeches, and permits individuals to be active participants in the construction of
a diverse mass action. According to Stop the FTAA, ‘[a]ffinity groups challenge
top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take
creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to “be” the action they want
to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity
group’. The affinity group is a concrete challenge to the type of disempow-
ering, centralized decision-making often prevalent in the labour movement.

Coordination of mass action is of course still necessary, but the structures used
to accomplish this are also decentralized. Autonomous ‘affinity groups’ send repre-
sentatives to meet in ‘spokes councils’, in which information is shared, tactical,
strategic or organizational issues are discussed, and decisions are made. A spokes
council, like the affinity groups which are its constituent units, attempts to use
consensus decision-making processes rather than voting and majoritarian rule so
as to ensure that ‘all affinity groups have agreed and are committed to the mass
direct action’. Ultimately, however, unlike in traditional forms of representative
democracy, the decisions of the spokes council are not binding on the affinity
groups, which ‘function as discrete units, with the power to make their own
strategic decisions’. Spokes councils therefore attempt to combine the organi-
ization of common actions with small group autonomy from central control.

Affinity groups are also encouraged to employ consensus decision-making
processes as a way to achieve agreement in which all participants have ‘equal
voice and power’ but also have some chance of having their concerns integrated
into outcomes. This method is held to be superior to majority rule, which
produces outcomes not everyone is able to live with or which fail to meet
everyone’s needs and interests. Instead of a majority making a decision for and
imposing it on the group, minority or divergent views are integrated into a
consensus decision. Group members register varying levels of dissent rather than
voting ‘yes’ or ‘no’, so that proposals may be revised and refined rather than
stopped outright. Only in instances where a decision is held to be antithetical to
the goals and principles of the group can a ‘block’ or veto be registered. In such
instances, rather than the majority carrying the day, the group must find a new
way to proceed. According to Stop the FTAA, consensus

allows people to collectively explore solutions until the best one for the
group emerges. Consensus assures that everyone has a voice in the deci-
sion making process, synthesizing all ideas into one plan that all participants
agree to implement. Since all participants agree to the decision, people are
more invested in carrying out what has been decided. The process
promotes commitment to carry out decisions … It attempts to minimize
domination and empowers the community in the process of making a
decision.

Avoiding the tyranny of the majority, consensus is held to be more democratic
and more effective at building solidarity. While Graeber admits that such
processes can be difficult, this is so because of the way in which liberal democ-
ратic society actually provides so few opportunities for democratic deliberation.
These methods and the structures in which they exist can be said to contribute to the building of democratic capacities which, under capitalism, the vast majority surrender to others to shape, and in ways that serve the interests of the few.25

Decentralization in general is also credited with being not merely democratic, but also effective in the context of increasing attempts by security forces to control and undermine the anti-globalization movement. Decentralized, leaderless ‘coalitions of coalitions’ are less vulnerable to state intervention and repression; as Klein argues,

there is no doubt that one of [the model’s] great strengths is that it has proven extraordinarily difficult to control, largely because it is so different from the organizing principles of the institutions and corporations it targets. It responds to corporate concentration with a maze of fragmentation, to centralization with its own kind of localization, to power consolidation with radical power dispersal.26

As the Rand Corporation has conceded, without a ‘central leadership or command structure’, the movement is ‘multiheaded, impossible to decapitate’.27

The rejection of hierarchy also had led to a suspicion and rejection of leadership. Again, there is a rational strategic basis to a leaderless movement in the context of the ‘hyper-organized security response’ to the anti-globalization movement.28 As Klein points out, having easily identifiable leaders is dangerous, and ‘[t]he systematic police targeting of protest “leaders” goes a long way towards explaining the deep suspicion of traditional hierarchies’.29 However, the rejection of leadership is more profoundly rooted in a philosophical commitment to egalitarianism. In keeping with the emphasis on self-activity, anarchists seek to create conditions in which ‘people [are] exercising political power themselves’ rather than via elected representatives.30

If there is a role for leadership, it is of a completely different sort from that of ‘representatives’ or ‘spokespersons’ who become ensconced in their positions of power. The role of professional anarchist revolutionaries was not, for Bakunin, one of mobilizing the working classes through political party organization, but of ‘arousing and encouraging the oppressed classes … to overthrow the existing order by their own direct action’.31 Such inspirational activity could come in a variety of forms, from propaganda of the deed to civil disobedience, and these distinguish the violent and non-violent traditions that co-exist within anarchism.

There is today perhaps no more vital expression of the rejection of leaders in favour of egalitarian participation than that of the Zapatistas. Sub-Commandante Marcos symbolizes this new form of political ‘leadership’, which merely communicates what is decided by the group, rather than acts in its place. In the statement read by Marcos which emerged out of the 1996 Encuentro, the Zapatistas emphasized that what was being created was not an ‘organization’ but ‘a network of voices that resist the war Power wages on them … that not only speak, but also struggle and resist for humanity and against neoliberalism … that covers the five continents and helps to resist the death that Power promises us’.
This network ‘has no central head or decision maker; it has no central command or hierarchies. We are the network, all of us who resist’.32

Decentralized, leaderless structures are believed to allow for the maximization of diversity in the movement. Rather than being made to receive ‘from above’ a set analysis or appropriate strategy, individuals and small groups are to be supported in the choices they make about how to understand and express their opposition. This commitment to multiplicity and individual choice must be seen in a broader context of anarchist spontaneism – in which Bakunin envisaged ‘spontaneous uprisings of the oppressed classes, peasants as well as industrial workers, in widespread insurrections in the course of which the state would be abolished’.33 For the creative energy of the people to be fully expressed via direct action, it is antithetical to place a priori limits or constraints on the forms of political expression and activity. In fact, to engage in practices of self-policing like parade marshalling or non-violence agreements is seen as authoritarian, a means of controlling difference and dissent within the Left, of maintaining the legitimacy of leaders in the eyes of the state and capital, and ultimately of ‘cooperation in [the Left’s] own disempowerment’.34 This ethos is nowhere more evident than in the acceptance of a diversity of tactics by an enormous array of groups, some of which have been central organizers of demonstrations.

Diversity of tactics, like the association of anarchism with structurelessness, has also been widely misunderstood. Emphatically not a pro-active advocacy of violent tactics, it instead involves two important elements: the acceptance of tactics ranging from popular education to direct action, and the refusal to condemn or stop others who opt to employ violent or confrontational tactics. Cindy Milford, an anarchist academic and faculty member at the Institute for Social Ecology in Vermont, argues that the adoption of the ‘diversity of tactics’ principle is not only inclusive, but broadens the definition of ‘radicalism’:

> By embracing on an equal footing ‘education’ and ‘action,’ thereby also breaking down the supposed theory versus practice divide, the conflation of ‘militancy’ with ‘radicalism’ was shattered. One wasn’t a revolutionary because one was a priori a militant; and this indirectly affirmed that not all revolutionaries can afford to take the same risks – just compare a healthy eighteen year old to a wheelchair-bound octogenarian.35

Diversity of tactics is also held to reflect the real diversity which exists amongst those in the movement, and which is needed to construct a democratic, broadly representative and majoritarian movement. However, it fosters a heterogeneous movement that is radical in content as well, seeming to address what has been a central and problematic tendency in Left politics, that of compromising radical analysis and goals in order to attract and keep a mass membership.36 As Milford argues regarding the use of this principle in Quebec City,

> rather than an assertion of difference for difference’s sake – potentially implying a diverse movement emptied of content – what emerged in practice was an explicitly radical movement that was diverse. One could argue
that the convergence of anti-capitalists in Quebec City wasn’t diverse enough, of course. Yet it provided the first real guide of how to go about nurturing inclusiveness and unity in a way that is at once qualitative and sincere, and moreover, that allows the particular and universal to complement rather than crush each other as part of a social movement.37

Diversity of tactics is also consistent with the anarchist commitment to spontaneism: the people, as an untapped well-spring of creativity, must not be hindered in their search for effective tactics. Moreover, it is argued that the very dynamics of protest, the tactical fluidity on ‘the street’, requires certain tactics that may become necessary not be ruled out of bounds in advance. As one anarchist contributor to the debate on tactics has put it, ‘[d]iscussions about tactics don’t translate easily into well-defined actions on the streets’.38 Maximum freedom for people to respond to rapidly changing situations must be preserved.

The commitment to diversity is not merely an outgrowth of classical anarchist ideas, and the anti-globalization movement is not a direct and unmediated descendant of Bakunin and Goldman. It is also profoundly influenced by the intervening historical development of postmodernism and post-Marxism which has had an enormous influence on progressive political thought over the past two decades, especially in the universities. Post-Marxists attempt to account for radical transformations occurring vis à vis the international political economy, political actors and emancipatory strategies, primarily in the form of what have been called the ‘new social movements’. For example, Laclau and Mouffe point to the ‘structural transformations of capitalism’ as the source of new forms of domination, new agents and new political spaces, which Marxist theory is deemed unable to account for. For them, advanced industrial countries have moved into a post-industrial period in which there has been a ‘decline of the classical working class’ due to processes of deindustrialization, ‘increasingly profound penetration of capitalist relations of production in areas of social life’ resulting in commodification and massification, and a rise in ‘forms of bureaucratization which have characterized the Welfare State’.39 Combined with this was the impact of the experiences of state socialism, the domination of popular struggles by vanguardist Party elites in both the North and the South, and the institutionalization of social-democratic parties and trade unions and their absorption into the operation of the Keynesian welfare state. For post-Marxists, these Left practices resulted in a rigidification of theory and acceptable political practice, and widespread disillusionment stemming from the perception that the major Left institutions have failed to pursue radical social change while clinging to the old rhetoric.40

These processes, according to Carl Boggs, have ‘undermin[ed] traditional social and political forces’ while spawning ‘newly emergent forms of opposition’.41 Emerging from these conditions is a ‘more diversified, complex and contradictory horizon of experiences’, making it impossible to believe in unified and class-based identities.42 Instead, in the post-Marxist view, individuals occupy a multiplicity of subject positions, and there is no way to determine a
priori how they come to understand themselves in relation to others and the world. Identities cannot be read off structures; instead, identity formation is a fluid, conflictual and constantly changing process. Similarly, occupants of these subject positions cannot be assumed to participate in any particular mode of collective action or struggle. Instead, resistance and emancipation, in keeping with the diffuse and multifarious forms of oppression, can occur in a variety of spaces, especially in the realm of culture and the symbolic in which identities themselves are constructed.

It is the very ‘new social movements’ whose emergence and politics post-Marxists attempted to explain – feminism, environmentalism, post-colonialism, student activism, and pacifism to mention but a few – which now form important elements of the anti-globalization movement; their multiplicity defines the movement and its politics. Indeed, the anti-globalization movement is not one movement, but rather, as Klein says,

thousands of movements intricately linked to one another, much as ‘hotlinks’ connect their websites on the Internet … Thanks to the Net, mobilizations are able to unfold with sparse bureaucracy and minimal hierarchy; forced consensus and laboured manifestos are fading into the background, replaced instead by a culture of constant, loosely structured and sometimes compulsive information-swapping.43

In their multiplicity, these movements insist on the generation of diverse, if mutually supporting and interconnected, forms of political and cultural expression and organizing; to do otherwise would be to return to the failed institutions of the Left. Instead, what is being created resembles what Mouffe terms an ‘expansive hegemony’, characterized by a ‘chain of equivalences between all the democratic demands to produce the collective will of all those people struggling against subordination’.44 It is, in the language of post-Marxism, a ‘decentred’ politics of protest in which there is no overarching coalition or leadership to speak on behalf of protesters, and which signifies for some a political maturation that goes beyond the ‘narrow sectarianism’ of earlier Left formations.45

ANTI-GLOBALIZATION ANARCHISM IN ACTION: SOME CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

There is little doubt that the practices described above have generated an extraordinary amount of energy and creativity in protests, to an extent unseen even in the massive labour-organized Ontario Days of Action and other political strikes that swept the globe in the late 1990s.46 Perhaps most importantly, the demonstrations kicked off by Seattle have elicited a longed-for sense of possibility, of the potential to actually change the decisions of the powerful. On the ground, thousands of (especially young) people have become activists, and have developed a sense of ownership over the movement due to their ability to participate in decision-making in a way not possible in established Left institutions.

That said, there are reasons to think that the expectations generated by the
anti-globalization movement will remain unfulfilled. This is not only because of
the robustness of structures of economic and political power, which are more
flexible and responsive than movement theorists like Klein give them credit for.
It is also because the democratic potentials claimed by the movement for decen-
tralization, leaderlessness and diversity are limited by important theoretical and
practical contradictions.

a) Decentralized decision-making: consensus or morass?

The elevation of decentralized decision-making to an absolute virtue derives
from both the anarchist-inspired commitment to the individual’s liberty and
direct control over events that affect her, as well as the postmodern acceptance
of the existence of multiple identities that require direct, unmediated represen-
tation. Both anarchism and postmodern identity politics reject the unitary class
subject which socialists are said to posit, as well as the assumption of common
interests accompanying this idea. From this standpoint, decentralization is merely
a reflection of the diversity of actually existing interests and identities, and it is
the form of organization that allows for both a direct and radically plural form
of democracy. Thus Klein argues that decentralization in the anti-globalization
movement is ‘not a source of incoherence and fragmentation. Rather, it is a
reasonable, even ingenious adaptation both to pre-existing fragmentation within
progressive networks and to changes in the broader culture’.47

But this begs the question of whether such fragmentation – of identities, issues,
organizations, loyalties, and ideologies – is something to be celebrated uncriti-
cally and internalized into the structures of the Left. Decentralization may indeed
represent a creative accommodation to the current fragmented state of the Left
and of society more generally, but this accommodation often implicitly accepts
the fragmentation as natural, positive, even to be embraced as the height of
democratic individualism. But the fragmentation of identities can be seen not
only as an expression of ‘liberated individuals’, but also of the fragmented
consciousness which capital actively and diligently works to foster, so as to break
down forms of collective action which posit a universal interest. Seen in this
light, the differences which exist amongst workers are not inherent or primor-
dial, but the outcome, in terms of real material experience and consciousness, of
capital’s structuring of the labour process and the economy more generally in
stratified ways.48 While not wanting to rehabilitate the ‘unitary class subject’, one
must still ask whether an effective Left alternative to capitalism can be built by
an organizational form which exhorts people to congregate on the basis of iden-
tities which emphasize differences over commonalities.49

Structural decentralization itself expresses a form of fragmentation that has not
always facilitated the development of broader forms of solidarity. Local unionism
in North America, for instance, though grounded in the immediate material
reality of people’s lived experience of work, long constituted a serious barrier to
the development of bonds of identification beyond the level of the workplace,
bonds which could fuel a workers’ movement capable of contesting the ravages
of early industrial capitalism.50 Yet the autonomy to make local decisions has
often been treated as sacrosanct, even where such decisions may conflict with the needs and interests of others. This powerful though limited definition of community is reproduced in the affinity group model, a unit that retains a kind of sovereignty regardless of the implications of its decisions for other affinity groups. Insistence on absolute freedom from higher levels of legitimate authority and decision-making can have serious negative consequences, both for effectiveness and for the democratic capacities of others.

It is therefore not clear whether the decentralized model is able to process and manage differences effectively, or to actually reach consensus on a variety of important questions, many of them rather fundamental ones facing the contemporary Left. The affinity group structure is an important form of grassroots participation, but it can also function as an evasion of the problems which have always plagued mass organizations, and which do not disappear with radical decentralization. These problems involve questions of the relationship between different levels of organization, the role of leaders and their relationship to the mass base, the process by which decisions are made democratically, and most importantly, what ‘democratic process’ actually means. These issues – in addition to the substantive questions of analysis, goals and strategy – have always been a source of conflict within the Left, and have resulted in the tendency towards splintering into factions and ‘sectlets’, and the affinity group structure makes it possible to circumvent these admittedly often tiresome debates: as Klein points out, although with a positive tone, ‘[i]f somebody doesn’t feel like they quite fit in to one of the 30,000 or so NGOs or thousands of affinity groups out there, they can just start one of their own and link up’. The affinity group model can thus be seen as reproducing a debilitating sectarian tradition: smaller and smaller groups are formed by those who already agree with one another, who can’t stand such and such a group’s philosophy or so-and-so’s leadership, sidestepping the fundamental issue of learning how to work together in the midst of such differences. While affinity groups offer an opportunity to develop democratic capacities, the tendency towards radical individualism can limit these skills and can lead to an easy retreat to those with whom one already agrees. While allowing for the ultimate in diverse expression, the proliferation of affinity groups fails to address the need for building genuine agreement on a wide variety of issues, whether tactical, strategic or ideological.

In important ways, the autonomy of affinity groups can also lead to incoherent and ultimately ineffective strategic interventions. While Klein emphasizes the ingenuity and flexibility of autonomous affinity groups, she also illustrates precisely how such decentralization can undermine the groups’ goals in her recounting of events from the April 2000 Washington D.C protests against the IMF and World Bank. Affinity groups blockading street intersections were informed that delegates had bested them and entered the IMF/World Bank headquarters at least an hour before they set up. The subsequent decision made in the face of this intelligence was both ‘impeccably fair and democratic’ and completely nonsensical: as each intersection had autonomy, each was empow-
ered to decide whether to continue their blockade or to join the main march at the Ellipse. As Klein says, ‘[s]ealing off the access points had been a coordinated action. If some intersections now opened up and other, rebel-camp intersections stayed occupied, delegates on their way out of the meeting could just hang a right instead of a left, and they would be home free. Which, of course, is exactly what happened’.52 In other words, strategic and structural decentralization can be profoundly contradictory, allowing for both the autonomous expression of democratic will and the undermining of the achievement of the goals of that will.

Klein’s illustration of incoherence at least involved some decision being taken, ineffective though that decision was. However, the affinity group structure and the consensus decision-making model often used can and do lead to strategic paralysis in the midst of circumstances requiring rapid responses. Ellie Kirzner provides a dramatic demonstration of ‘the vulnerability of the affinity-group structure’ in her account of attempts to organize a blockade of the Grande Allée entrance to the Summit of the Americas zone in Quebec City. The gate was able to let Summit participants in and out of the cordoned-off area unhindered for most of Friday, mere blocks away from the confrontations between police and demonstrators marching with the anarchist groups Convergences des Luttes Anti-Capitalistes (CLAC) and the Comité d’Acqueil du Sommet des Amériques (CASA). In the absence of a central body collecting, coordinating and distributing information, it was already midnight when

a cluster of affinity groups – about 400 people in all – discover the oversight. They march to within two blocks of the gate and sit down in the road for a meeting. One speaker establishes the essential: ‘We need to keep this action yellow. No throwing things,’ he says pointedly to the Black Bloc’ers on the periphery. Some sweet soul announces he’s spent all day with his wire cutters making a hole in the isolated Plains of Abraham perimeter, but he says he’s getting nervous and could anyone come and help him? One francophone speaks passionately in favour of a silent sit-in – ‘Everyone just shut your mouths,’ he proclaims, though it’s evident no one can do it. They can’t decide whether to block this route or some other; they can’t agree on whether there are enough escape routes or how close to the fence to sit. In fact, they are so busy deciding what their consensus is that cars are inching around the supposed blockade. ‘There’s a car coming,’ yells one frustrated protestor. ‘Can’t we just block this one fucking car?’ By 1 am, after a valiant struggle against the centrifugal pressures to party, the group throws in the towel and becomes just one more clutch of people dancing to the drums and pipes on Boulevarde René Lévesque.53

What is centrally important to understand here is that affinity groups and especially consensus decision-making require particular conditions to be fully effective, conditions that are rarely present in contexts where time is of the essence.

Decentralization itself is also not inherently democratic, as its democratic character depends greatly on the specific nature of relationships between people and groups. While such structures may indeed enhance participation, they do not
inherently guarantee that relationships of mutual accountability between affinity groups, and between central coordinating bodies and affinity groups, are developed, sustained and robust. Without this kind of mediation, how can broader bonds of solidarity, trust and mutual obligation be created? Without mutual accountability, one’s allegiance can remain primarily local, vested in the affinity group, and without regard for the effects of one group’s actions on others.

Moreover, it is not entirely clear that the structures of decentralized coordination are sufficient to ensure equal and effective participation. Consensus produces its own tyranny, that of *endurance*, in which ‘the last ones left at the table get to make the decision’.\(^54\) The conditions and resources required to engage in consensus decision-making – especially time and energy – are themselves not equally distributed. While it is possible to compensate for such maldistributions, as often as not they are seen not as structural inequalities but as manifestations of the various levels of commitment of the participants.

It appears that consensus is not always consistently used by groups committed to its practice, implicitly indicating the limits of the process. The CLAC, for instance, in their ‘Consulta’ around organizing for the recent G8 Summit in Kananaskis, reverted in one important decision to majority rule. In their report on the parallel protests being planned for Ottawa, the organizers indicated that the decision to operate the days of action on the basis of respect for diversity of tactics, and to insist that these actions embody ‘a clear anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist analysis’, was ‘accepted by more than 75 per cent of the delegates present’.\(^55\) On such questions as tactics, strategy and analysis, it is clear that compromise positions cannot always be reached. So decisions with which some do not agree, and yet which will affect them fundamentally, will and must be made. And yet, decision-making processes like majoritarian rule contradict the anarchist spirit which infuses groups like the CLAC, which insist that no-one should be made to submit to decisions with which they fundamentally disagree. It is clear that it is not always possible for a movement such as this to adopt such libertarian notions of democracy; what is risky, however, is the inculcation of a cultural commitment to democracy defined as consensus, even when it is clear that such a model will not always be possible. The implications of the contradiction between the ideal of consensus and the reality of the need for majoritarian forms of decision-making will foster splits, disunity, and demobilization of some sectors, as readily as will the kinds of top-down decision-making that are under critique.

\(b\) *Leaders who aren’t leaders, or vanguardism through the back door*

The commitment to a leaderless movement, to a movement where everyone is a leader, is often more slogan than reality: despite decentralization and broader forms of participation, leaders always emerge in movements for a variety of practical reasons. Not least of these reasons is the fact that, given the reality of wage labour under capitalism, the vast majority must work at jobs that are poorly remunerated, intense, stressful and alienating. While this is a major reason why resistance to globalization has emerged, it also explains why so many are unable to engage in the ongoing activity of political work. And while it should certainly
be the goal of the Left to carve out more time and space for workers to develop their capacities to engage in such activity, the current realities are such that leaders who are committed to full-time political work are needed and have indeed emerged.

What is then problematic in the politics of the anarchist-inspired elements of the anti-globalization movement is not that leaders exist, but that they are denied. Such denial, twinned with an uncompromising ideological rejection of leadership *tout court*, results in leadership unbound by structures of accountability, and/or the castigation of those who take on necessary leadership functions. As Barbara Epstein argues,

> Anti-leadership ideology cannot eliminate leaders, but it can lead a movement to deny that it has leaders, thus undermining democratic constraints on those who assume the roles of leadership, and also preventing the formation of vehicles for recruiting new leaders when the existing ones become too tired to continue. Within radical feminism a view of all hierarchies as oppressive led to attacks on those who took on the responsibilities of leadership. This led to considerable internal conflict, and created a reluctance to take on leadership roles, which weakened the movement. Movements dominated by an anarchist mindset are prone to burning out early.56

Such dynamics not only drive people away from political activism; they also make it difficult to answer some rather important questions about leadership – what should its precise role be? What should be the relationship between leaders and other movement participants? Such questions are evaded if ‘leaderlessness’ is posited as both ideal and reality.

CLAC and other anarchist organizations that have been central in preparing anti-globalization demonstrations in fact have leaders who are involved in defining what the movement should be about and what concrete actions should be taken. Take, for instance, this account of the way that information was distributed amongst affinity groups in Quebec City:

> In the name of ‘security concerns,’ the place of the spokes council was not to be announced until the last minute. It seemed one had to already be privy to the organizers’ communications network to find out where the meeting was. This prevented many out-of-town people, and probably even local people, from finding the meeting where the action plan was to be discussed. The next day many people were not aware that if they did not want to be in a militant ‘red’ zone, they should not be in the non-violent direct-action oriented ‘yellow’ zone. It was an amazing, spontaneous, wonderful, and perhaps even historical moment when the red zone emerged out of the yellow zone to tear down the fence! The only problem was some people were not prepared to be in the thick of the police violence that followed. There were people who didn’t realize what they were getting themselves into by being in the yellow zone.57
In other words, decisions were made which not only affected who could participate in spokes councils, but also shaped people’s decisions about how to intervene in the demonstration. However, there was no effective mechanism providing feedback or for holding decision-makers accountable. Other decisions are made to define the terms of a particular discussion or debate; for instance, in CLAC’s call to participants wanting to organize around G8 they state that ‘[t]he Consulta is explicitly aiming to build on the above basis of unity, and not to fundamentally alter the main political and organizing principles’.58 These principles have already been decided, but by whom? With what recourse?

Such ideas and practices also lead to some contradictory positions. Take, for instance, Cindy Milford, who writes admiringly of the ‘libertarian anti-capitalists’ who ‘took a leadership role to bring down’ the widely despised Quebec City fence. For her, that act of ‘taking leadership’ was valuable as it both ‘gained the respect and admiration of other demonstrators, much of the local populace, and a healthy cross section of the broader Canadian public’ and allowed ‘the anti-authoritarian contingent … to come into its own as a strong and visible force, rather than a marginal, marginalized, or even feared element’.59 Such an assessment is entirely consistent with the anarchist tradition of both spontaneism and of professional revolutionaries ascribing to themselves the role of inspiring the masses to act. In other words, there are some actions which, by their very nature, put individuals into leadership roles – calling a meeting, defining the parameters of a debate, deciding which information to distribute, attempting to pull down a fence. Even anarchists find it difficult to repudiate such actions, as they are often undeniably useful. From this it is clear that even anarchists will ‘lead’, and that, implicitly, leadership is necessary. However, when individuals or groups ‘take a leadership role’ in a context that denies that leaders exist or are necessary, such acts are a form of vanguardism. While not Leninist in the sense of actively organizing the exploited masses and instructing them in revolutionary theory, such interventions imply that some understand better the current conditions of struggle and seek to catalyze the people to act in particular if not in exactly predetermined ways.

Such ‘leaderless leadership’ removes any possibility of holding people accountable for their actions. The community is left to express preferences rather than having agreed-upon evaluative mechanisms or processes. However, leadership per se cannot be deemed acceptable merely because it engages in actions that one likes or agrees with – what can be done when they engage in less agreeable actions? Leadership acting on its own cannot be judged acceptable post facto just because it happens to represent the (in this case rather vaguely defined) ‘will of the people’; in other contexts this might be called ‘virtual representation’ (à la Edmund Burke) or caudillismo (à la Latin American authoritarianism). Heroism on the part of a self-selected few, though perhaps admirable and inspirational, does not help to develop the capacities of the many to make decisions about their activism or the social structures in which they live. This is why leadership as a function must be openly acknowledged rather than fantasized away – so that forms of leadership accountability can develop.
c) A diversity or a hierarchy of tactics?

The refusal to make decisions that have some binding force on the whole community or to have forms of legitimate leadership thus results in a vanguardism by default. This is most readily seen when it is combined with a commitment to diversity of tactics. Not only do some groups emerge as a self-selected avant garde, they do so by deploying tactics which are not only defined as the ‘radical’ leading edge but which, by their very nature, make the practice of other tactics next to impossible. Yet the deployment of such tactics is not only justified in democratic terms (‘we should not decide for people what they can and cannot do in a demo’), but also in moral terms. Whether intentional or not, the morality of radical, often physical confrontation, comes to be used as a form of covert coercion of those who would argue for a collectively agreed-upon set of tactics and more visible forms of discipline.

Debates about the ‘diversity of tactics’ within the coalition of groups organizing the Quebec City demonstrations, depicted in the recent National Film Board of Canada documentary View from the Summit, are particularly instructive here. While representatives from Operation SalAMI argued for a non-violence agreement, Jaggi Singh of CLAC countered that such an imposition would be undemocratic and exclusionary. He went further in his justification, claiming that activists have an obligation to be ‘in solidarity with those who are on the front line, who are willing to take the risks’. However, important and rather undemocratic things are implied here. First, as Guardian journalist Andy Beckett points out, a hierarchy rather than a diversity of tactics is being formed: ‘People who are prepared to take risks, or who possess useful skills, can come to dominate, or even have contempt for, the more cautious and amateurish participants’. There is in fact a narrowing of the definition of what constitutes radicalism or even resistance, an implicit moral argument which privileges risk-taking, regardless of whether the majority believes such risks are worthwhile, effective, or justified. It is those who ‘take risks’, and by extension ‘take leadership’, who define the leading edge and make a claim to the support of others unwilling or unable to engage in such actions. As L.A. Kauffman warns, a growing ‘mystique of insurrection’ defines and celebrates ‘militant acts on the front lines’, independent of connections to more grounded, concrete political struggles and communities.

The practical result of the diversity of tactics position is inevitably to involve those who had chosen other tactics – classic civil disobedience, satirical street theatre and self-expression of alternative values – in the confrontational relationship between police and the anarchist vanguard hoping to demonstrate ‘the violence inherent in the system’. As opposed to Milford’s claim that the diversity of tactics expands what it means to be anti-authoritarian and anti-capitalist, Judy Rebick argues that the reality is more exclusionary, and actually narrows the scope of tactics for all: ‘The problem with the “diversity of tactics” argument is that a tiny group who wants to throw stones at cops can put thousands of people into danger who have not chosen to be in danger. In Quebec City and Genoa, organizers created a safe or Green zone … but when police violence escalated no one was
safe’. André Drainville’s account of the result of the attack on the wall in Quebec City amply demonstrates the elimination of the tactical middle ground and of the possibility for forms of resistance that did not involve physical confrontation:

Carnivalesque happenings – the most fragile indicators of a sense of place and event – were swept away: the Funk Fighting Unaccountable Naughty Korporations were gassed out of their efforts to reclaim the streets, the Lanarkists were not given much time to catapult stuffed toy-animals into the security perimeter, the Ilôt Fleuri was charged by police and the Saint-Jean Baptiste neighbourhood – a green zone no more, as of Saturday – was inundated with tear-gas. The only puppets seen were on the People’s march as it walked away from the security perimeter.

In part a result of the security apparatus’ ultimately reductionist view of protesters as all posing the same threat, in part the outcome of choices made by a small minority of demonstrators, ‘diversity’ of tactics quickly becomes narrowed to a bipolar choice between ‘genuine radicalism’ and cowardly retreat to spaces which are said to pose no challenge to power. For the sake of including some, diversity of tactics means that ‘a much larger group is de facto excluded because they can’t afford to risk arrest, violence or a backlash in their membership’. In this view, the flow of solidarity is unidirectional and radicalism is narrowly defined by a self-selected vanguard.

Indeed, with the focus on physical forms of confrontation, the intended diversity in demonstrations has in fact become, as David Moberg characterizes it, a repetitive ‘monotony of tactics’:

Police [in Quebec City] began firing tear gas both at the rock throwers and into the surrounding crowd. While most people fled the stinging gas, a few militants picked up canisters and threw them back at the police. For the rest of the day on Friday, then for most of Saturday afternoon and evening, there was a give and take of protesters advancing on police, usually with a few people throwing things, then the police firing tear gas – as well as water cannons and rubber and plastic bullets – and then moving out to disperse the crowd.

The possibilities for sorting through the question of tactics, let alone strategy and vision, are ultimately seriously limited by the decentralized structure of the movement. It is not so much that a particular set of values must be adopted, but that, as Epstein argues, some ethical guidelines are needed and must be adopted. Even Milford agrees that such relations of accountability are required, both for democratic and strategic reasons: ‘Without a bit more definition to the diversity principle, and a way to make people accountable to any parameters decided on, the anti-capitalist movement is wide open to stupidity or sabotage – or at least more than it needs to be’. But this of course begs the central question: how does a movement of autonomous affinity groups, who reject both the legitimacy and practicability of forms of authority, set, not to mention enforce, ethical guidelines? Without a willingness to accept that more regularized and centralized
structures are needed, that forms of legitimate authority are possible and not inherently opposed to democracy, that some forms of leadership need to be developed, such principles will remain mere exhortations, not norms upon which a community can be built.

CONCLUSIONS

The movement’s commitment to diversity of tactics – and to bracketing off discussion of the relative merits of such tactics – promotes a disconnection between tactics and broader strategic goals. Because tactics are off-limits, to be chosen by individuals or small groups, there is little opportunity to engage in discussion about what actions will be most likely to achieve goals, or even to define what those goals are. An unnamed anarchist writing in the Ireland-based Red and Black Revolution wonders about the extent to which confrontational tactics are carefully considered: ‘The decision about which tactic to use isn’t based on what’s best for advancing anarchism, it’s about how exciting it is to mask up and break things, against how boring it is to try to persuade people. If the Black Blocs continue at summit protests, will it be because people have weighed up their pros and cons and decided they are the most effective tactic, or because people like to dress up in gas masks and bandanas?’ Rather harsh words, perhaps, but the question is important – how, in the absence of a discussion over tactics, can such evaluations be made?

Ultimately, the ‘diversity of tactics’ principle obviates the need to engage in political debate and struggle within the Left. The work of persuading, of arguing over key issues amongst an ever-broadening group of people is made unnecessary by agreeing to disagree. While this may have allowed a temporary coalition of disparate groups to gather together, it is unlikely to form the basis for a more lasting and durable coalition between the more institutionalized elements of the Left and those who are inspired by direct action and anarchist political ideas. The vaunted Teamster-Turtle alliance, formed in the electric days of Seattle, will not endure if methods to bridge these gaps are not developed. In many ways, such an alliance is not an option – but it is central to the ultimate success of the anti-globalization movement, for as Kim Moody points out, it is only the pulling together of ‘the mobility and audacity of the movement in the streets with the social weight and numbers of the organized working class’ that will lead to fundamental change, to ‘dismantl[ing] the mechanisms of capitalist globalization’. Rebick also believes that an alliance between the two wings of the movement is absolutely necessary, and that a permanent split is simply a dead end:

Neither wing of the movement can be effective without the other. The radical wing has created the energy, dynamism and attracted the youth that has put the anti-corporate movement back on the map after the failure of the old left. The institutional wing provides resources, continuity, credibility, establishment contacts and a broader base. Each group thinks they are justified in their disagreements with the other. But the cost of allowing disagreements to turn into permanent splits is too high.
Understanding the ways in which this coalition is now hindered is thus central to the future of the movement.

The nature of the tensions that exist between organized labour and the anarchist-inspired elements of the anti-globalization movement merit examination in a separate essay. However, several things can be said about the way that the anarchist approach to democratic decision-making, the critique of leadership, and the unwillingness to make collective and binding decisions about tactics (and other issues), make coalition-building with the labour movement quite difficult.

Kim Moody is right to point to the conservatism of the labour leadership itself as one important barrier to such a coalition. Moody contends that it is not because organized labour shies away from confrontation with the state – the many strikes involving engagement with the police are a testament to such willingness. For him, it is the dominance of business unionism in the North American labour movement that prevents a coalition from solidifying. In other words, the union leaders fear confrontational tactics they cannot control; if left to their own devices, union members would engage in a more radical politics. This analysis may indeed be true to some extent; certainly, the development of flying squads in many union locals in Ontario is evidence of a willingness of union members to engage in more radical forms of direct action. It would also explain why the Quebec union leadership and their marshals at the Saturday parade in Quebec City were unwilling to let members choose whether to march left to the wall or right to the parade grounds and away from confrontations (even though many union members did just that and marched to the wall to get gassed). There is no question that, as Epstein argues, major political shifts within the labour movement are required for such a coalition to gel.

However, there are also hindrances that emerge from the anarchist wing. A complete rejection of labour movement institutions, leadership and desire for immediate reforms will make it difficult to find middle ground, with both union leaders and members. Some ‘relaxation of anti-bureaucratic and anti-hierarchical principles on the part of activists in the anti-globalization movement’ will also be necessary, if a permanent split is to be avoided. This is vital if the movement is to move beyond demonstrations and expressions of opposition and onto building a movement not only capable of ‘transforming structures of power’ but of discussing how that transformation might be carried out. In a situation of radical autonomy, however, there will always be limits on the bonds of solidarity that will be built. By failing to acknowledge the existence and need for leaders, mechanisms of accountability will remain undeveloped. By accepting diversity of tactics a priori, the evaluation of such tactics and their relationship to strategy is short-circuited. As Michael Albert argues, ‘without stable and lasting institutions that have well-conceived and lasting norms and roles, advanced relations among disparate populations and even among individuals are quite impossible’ – which is equally true for any alternative social structure capable of replacing ‘corporate globalization’.
NOTES


2 Alexander Cockburn, Jeffrey St. Clair and Alan Sekula, Five Days That Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond, London: Verso, 2000, pp. 2-3. In an interview with New Left Review, John Sellers, director of the Ruckus Society, a U.S.-based organization that trains activists in non-violent direct action and other methods of political campaigning, discusses how fragmentation was exhibited at the demonstration at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles in 2000. When asked if there had been ‘too many messages’ in LA, he responded that ‘[w]e were driven into a false competition between messages, between campaigns, with far too little time to talk about a people’s platform which has lots of diverse planks to it. They were all based on social justice, but they were different and there was no chance to talk properly about any of them’ (John Sellers, ‘Raising a Ruckus’, New Left Review, 10 (July-August), 2001, pp. 75-6).


5 It is important to clarify what I take to be the various sections of the anti-globalization movement. For the most part, I am discussing the element of the movement, engaged in direct action tactics of various kinds, that rejects the possibility of transforming institutions, as opposed to the more institutionalized opponents of globalization – labour movements, political parties, and non-governmental organizations which have engaged in both demonstrations and attempts at reforming and participating in the structures which are authoring globalization (be they national states or international organizations). As well, my focus tends to be on the dynamics within the North American section of the movement.


12 Geoffrey Ostergaard, ‘Michael Bakunin’, in T. Bottomore, et.al., eds., A


16 Shulman, ‘Preface to Part One’, p. 29.

17 Salutin, ‘Anarchism’. It is worth mentioning that not all anarchists agree with this position. In an interesting debate on Znet, the website of the U.S.-based anarchist-leaning Z Magazine, Michael Albert engages a number of anarchist interlocutors who challenge his advocacy of ‘different kinds of structures’ as authoritarian and Leninist. In this exchange, Albert’s critics express their belief that no forms of authority, in which individuals are made to abide by decisions with which they do not agree or which constrain them from exercising their individual will, can be legitimate; Albert, claiming the anarchist tradition as his own as well, attempts to differentiate between forms of authority which are based on power hierarchies, and those which are not. He maintains that the critique of hierarchy does not obviate the need for regularized decision-making forms and norms, in which legitimate and authoritative decisions can be made. It is difficult to ascertain which view is more widely espoused in the anti-globalization movement. See Michael Albert, et. al., ‘Albert Replies to Critics of His Anarchism Essay’ on ZNet, http://zmag.org/anardebate.htm.


19 Stop the FTAA, ‘Affinity Group’.

20 Ibid.

21 Klein, ‘Farewell’, p. 5.


23 Stop the FTAA homepage.


28 See Lyle Stewart, ‘Getting spooked: the anti-globalization movement is gaining momentum, but law enforcers are quickly catching up’, This Magazine, 34 (5) (March-April), 2001, pp. 24-8, for an analysis of the impact that the criminalization of anti-globalization activism is having on the politics of the movement.

29 Klein, ‘Farewell’, p. 3.
Salutin, ‘Anarchism’.  
Milford, ‘Something Did Start’.  
Munson, ‘Against Generalization’.  
Boggs, *Social Movements*, p. 4, p. 5.  
Laclau and Mouffe, *Hegemony*, p. 80.  
Klein, ‘Farewell’, p. 4.  
There is evidence that sections of the movement are attempting to deal with its overly fragmented nature. The World Social Forum is perhaps the most large-scale manifestation of an attempt to foster analyses and identifications which bridge nationalities, issues and particular interests. Other less dramatic indications are also there: the Ottawa Coalition to Stop the FTAA, for instance, has renamed itself Global Democracy Ottawa in the process of organizing protests against the IMF/World Bank and G20 meetings in November 2001, expressing a broader vision and set of goals. See the Global Democracy Ottawa homepage, http://www.gdo.ca.  
52 Ibid.
54 Sellers, ‘Raising a Ruckus’, p. 76.
59 Milford, ‘Something Did Start’.
60 Magnus Isacsson, dir., View from the Summit, National Film Board of Canada, 2002. Other justifications for such tactics are also used. Maude Barlow, when asked by the media to comment on the confrontations in Quebec City, argued that they were the expression of anger of a generation of disenfranchised youth; as their anger was socially created, society therefore bears responsibility for its results. Roger Burbach also subscribes to this interpretation: he argues that ‘the anarchists and the anti-globalization protests provide an outlet for the pent-up frustrations and sense of alienation of a new generation’; see Burbach, ‘North America’, p.168; Rachel Neumann, ‘A Place for Rage’, Dissent, Spring 2000. Others rightly put the ‘violence’ entailed in anti-globalization protests in the context of the organized violence of the state at these protests and the structural violence of inequality under capitalism, to which the former simply does not compare. See opinion ranging from the ACME Collective, ‘N30 Black Bloc Communiqué’, and Barbara Ehrenreich, ‘Anarkids and Hypocrites’, both in E. Yuen, et.al., The Battle of Seattle: The New Challenge to Capitalist Globalization, New York: Soft Skull Press, 2001, to Leo Panitch, ‘Violence: A Tool of Order and Change’, Monthly Review, 54(2) (June), 2002. While these positions are valid, they also sidestep the question of whether the movement’s tactics should ultimately be determined by anger.


65 Rebick, ‘Qatar’.

66 Such an analysis in part underpins Operation SalAMI’s call for a commitment to ‘strategic non-violence’. They argued in their statement on the Quebec City demonstration that ‘[n]onviolent direct action through the use of affinity groups also allows for genuine diversity of tactics, a real plurality in political views, and a spirit of respect for each other. To build participatory democracy we need trust, we need assurances that nobody simply because he/she ‘feels like it’ or wants to ‘show us the way’ will take it upon themselves to hurt other people or put our lives at risk through some irresponsible act of destruction or violence’ (Operation SalAMI, ‘FTAA 2001: The Quebec Odyssey’, http://www.alternatives.ca/salami/HTML_an/ftaa_2001.html, emphasis in original).


68 Milford, ‘Something Did Start’.


71 Rebick, ‘Qatar’.

72 Epstein, ‘Anarchism’.

73 Albert, ‘Albert Replies to Critics’.