

informal, invisible and liberatory forms of collective power.

Perhaps future editions will better address these difficulties. In the meantime, *Getting Free* nevertheless remains a valuable source for enriching and sharpening anarchist discussions of strategies for social change.

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Wobblies & Zapatistas: Conversations on Anarchism, Marxism and Radical History

Staughton Lynd & Andrej Grubacic

Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2008. 261 pp.

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Wobblies & Zapatistas is an ambitious and well-intentioned book that promises much but in the end, unfortunately, delivers very little. The subtitle suggests a collection of conversations between Andrej Grubacic, a younger intellectual who is esteemed in anarchist circles but not as well known outside of them; and Staughton Lynd, a veteran Marxian activist much revered on the American Left for his work in the civil rights, labor, and anti-war movements. In fact, the book offers nothing of the sort, but instead reads very much like a series of interviews, with Grubacic asking the questions and Lynd providing the answers. Worse still, it often comes across as very valedictory, even hagiographic, if only because such a disproportionate amount of space is devoted to anecdotes about Lynd's career as an activist. (The point isn't that Lynd's career isn't extremely impressive – who would doubt that? – but that such details would be more at home in an autobiography than in a book about 'anarchism, Marxism, and radical history.')

Strangely, it is almost as though Grubacic himself shares my concerns. Although he repeatedly broaches the subject of anarchism throughout the book in sophisticated but extremely clear language, Lynd seldom seems to engage him

directly. Instead, he tends to wander off into anecdotes which, though interesting without fail, often seem only distantly related to Grubacic's original question. Unlike Grubacic, moreover, Lynd's own style of writing, though not without a certain charm and romantic folksiness, tends to be extremely imprecise. For example, he repeatedly characterizes Marxism as a 'concern for economic survival' (48) or, more generally, as an analysis of the economic structures of society. This is, of course, utterly ridiculous. Most political theories have ideas about political economy – i.e., analyses of the economic structures of society – and who *isn't* concerned about economic survival? Time and again Lynd appears either reluctant or altogether unable to provide a clear definition of Marxism.

Lynd does not fare much better regarding anarchism. Very early on in the book, he makes the startling insinuation that the Haymarket anarchists were not anarchists at all (11-14). Elsewhere he continuously accuses the 'new anarchists' of being 'summit jumpers' (e.g., 47), a claim that is anachronistic if it was ever true at all. At his absolute worst, he rehearses some of the most exhausted Marxist clichés, as when he likens contemporary anarchists to the utopian socialists of the nineteenth century and impugns them for lacking a 'blueprint' for post-capitalist society, etc. Sometimes Grubacic poses absolutely brilliant questions which Lynd simply dismisses or answers circuitously. (In my view, one of the best examples of this is found on pages 98-99.)

It is precisely Grubacic's questions, by the way, that are the saving grace of this volume. Even more frustrating than Lynd's inability or unwillingness to answer these questions is Grubacic's inability or unwillingness to respond to Lynd. Because this is truly an interview, not a conversation, he just moves on to the next question. Judging by the critical and scholarly acumen of the questions, however, there is little doubt that Grubacic would have had quite a bit to say were he given adequate opportunity.

Although I believe the book fails at what it sets out to do, it is scarcely worthless. Staughton Lynd's reflections on, and anecdotes about, Zapatismo, the IWW, civil rights, liberation theology, solidarity unionism, etc. are incredibly valuable for their own sake, as are Andrej Grubacic's penetrating questions about anarchism and Marxism. The problem is that these elements do not come together to form a coherent whole. *Wobblies and Zapatistas* is not a conversation, nor even a set of

interviews. On the contrary, it is a series of (mostly) unanswered questions from an anarchist cobbled together with a series of (partially) unsolicited reflections and stories from a Marxist. The result leaves very much to be desired.

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Anarchism and Authority: A Philosophical Introduction to Classical Anarchism

Paul McLaughlin

Ashgate 2007, 202pp including index

Arguing about the nature of anarchism is a popular anarchist pastime, and Paul McLaughlin here offers a provocative intervention in that debate, in the form of a 'philosophical introduction to classical anarchism'. While I don't in the end find his answer convincing, he does a good deal of valuable work in the course of arguing for it.

According to McLaughlin, anarchism is *scepticism about authority*. That is, the defining centre of anarchism is: philosophical not (necessarily) activist; critical rather than ethical; and focussed on questioning a particular species of supposedly-legitimate power, especially as claimed by the State.

The conceptual Part I of the book draws on recent work in political and legal philosophy, especially by Richard De George and by Leslie Green, to clarify both of the main terms of McLaughlin's definition. First, the *scepticism* in question is neither Pyrrhonism (the essentially conservative suspension of judgment between competing knowledge claims) nor Descartes' strategic adoption of sceptical tropes as the first stage of his project of reconstructing knowledge. Rather, anarchist scepticism is Socratic questioning: faced with an assertion of authority, anarchists demand a justification. Second, *authority* is a form of domination (which is a species of social power, which is itself a species of power understood naturalistically as effective capacity). It is defined as involving a right to command (from the point

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