

David Held is an Anarchist. Discuss.

Abstract

David Held's international political theory is an echo of many of many of the core ideas at the heart of the anarchist tradition. These include the centrality of the principle of autonomy, a similar critique of the state and the economy based on this principle and a vision for politics that is decentralised, multi-level and federal. The core difference revolves around the centrality of the democratic legal state to Held's work and the rejection of the same by the anarchists. While Held's theory contains many similarities to a broad anarchist politics, he retains the institution which has historically been the antithesis of autonomy – the state. Despite the emollient he adds to the mix while we wait for the state to 'whither away', I will argue that because he has not taken the anarchist literature seriously he is left open to its critique. My argument will be that anarchy, rather than the state, is the precondition of autonomy. My dual aim with this paper is to help bring anarchism in from the cold and to show where anarchist theory and contemporary cosmopolitanism might fruitfully learn from one another. My conclusion is that David Held is not an anarchist, but a more consistent Heldian political philosophy would be.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, anarchism, autonomy, anarchy, international political theory

Introduction

David Held is the Graham Wallas Professor of Government and director of the Centre for the Study of Global Governance at the LSE. He founded Polity Press in 1984 and his prolific output and high profile status, not to mention the timely intellectual contributions of his work, have lent him the ear of progressive policy-makers in the UK and Europe. Held's name has become almost synonymous with the study and advocacy of radical democratic projects, progressive left-globalisation and ethical and political cosmopolitanism.¹ His works, which stretch to many yards on most university library

¹ See for example: D Held, 'Beyond Liberalism and Marxism?', in *The Idea of the Modern State*, ed. G McLennan, D Held and Stuart Hall (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1984), 143, David Held, 'Cosmopolitanism: globalisation tamed?', *Review of International Studies* 29, no. 04 (2003), David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order: From the Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance* (Cambridge: Polity,

bookshelves, present a singular and hugely influential challenge to traditional statist, liberal and neo-liberal approaches to ethics, politics and power and advocate a coherent and philosophically grounded defence of what he calls 'global social democracy'.

It would therefore seem, on the face of it, quite ludicrous to claim that David Held is an anarchist and so I should make it clear from the outset that I do not think that David Held is an anarchist. However, David Held's vision of cosmopolitan democracy approximates anarchist thinking on too many levels to let such a comparison and analysis evade the attention of scholars of cosmopolitanism and of anarchist thought. However, what I will argue is that Held's call for a global social democratic project risks falling foul of the very processes he believes the post-statist project has, or promises, to overcome. In other words, while Held has taken post-Marxist thinking closer to anarchism than ever before, his cosmopolitanism is not anarchistic enough. By ignoring the anarchist critique, his project risks falling foul of the very authoritarianism it is trying to overcome.

The paper is structured in the following way. I begin by outlining in brief Held's international political theory. I will show how Held ties a reading of the historical sociology of the modern state with potentiality to move beyond it. The core principle which Held isolates to help orient normative political praxis is the principle of autonomy. This concept, he argues, takes the best from the Marxist and liberal tradition and in so doing moves beyond both. Held identifies seven 'sites of power', of which I will discuss only two – the state and economy – due to considerations of space. What Held argues is that in the modern era the possibility for autonomy is closed down by a neo-liberal market order and the limitations of the liberal state in a globalised order. He argues that a global social democratic project, based on eight universal principles and structured in accordance with the requirements of autonomy, present a useful and compelling way forward. The problem is the statist framework through which he believes change will be possible.

1995), David Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*

(Cambridge Polity, 2004), David Held and Anthony McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization* (Cambridge:

Polity, 2002), David Held and Heikki Patomäki, 'Problems of Global Democracy: A Dialogue', *Theory, Culture & Society* 23, no. 5 (2006).

This statist trap in Held's thinking is illuminated more than adequately when we approach it from the perspective of anarchist political philosophy. In the second, more substantive part of the paper I will present an anarchist international political theory drawn from a range of contemporary sources but based mainly on the work of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865).² What I will first argue is that we are where we are today, licking our 20th century wounds, precisely because few listened to the anarchist's warnings regarding the combination of populism, the state and economic expropriation in the nineteenth century. I will argue that anarchism always defended the best of socialism and liberalism without subscribing to either and that autonomy is at the heart of the anarchist political philosophy. Indeed, when we look at the concept from this perspective, we gain a quite different understanding of the role of the state in modern society and the means through which we ought to realise a more emancipatory political agency. My argument, in sum, will be that anarchy, *anarkhia*, without leader, or the absence of a sovereign,³ is the precondition of autonomy.

I hope that the following comparison will prove enlightening for both sets of scholars and will raise questions regarding the historic convergence and divergence of contemporary post-Marxist and anarchist thinking. What I will also suggest in this paper is that by reading Held's work against the political philosophy of anarchism it is possible to bring anarchism in from the cold, demystify it somewhat by showing how similar anarchist arguments are to those offered by contemporary left-liberal academic and policy-making elite. Despite the fact that anarchism has not been the subject of 100 years of academic debate in the same way as Marxism has, and despite the fact that in many instances it is theoretically weak, anarchism can contribute in substantive ways to the debate surrounding cosmopolitanism and governance in this post-statist world and I will show how the

² For more see, Alex Prichard, 'Deepening Anarchism: International Relations and the Anarchist Ideal', *Anarchist Studies* (2010 (forthcoming)), Alex Prichard, 'The Ethical Foundations of Proudhon's Republican Anarchism', in *Anarchism and Moral Philosophy*, ed. Benjamin Franks and Matt Wilson (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010 (Forthcoming)), Alex Prichard, 'Justice, Order and Anarchy: The International Political Theory of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865)', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35, no. 3 (2007), Alex Prichard, 'What can the absence of anarchism tell us about the history and purpose of IR?', *Review of International Studies* (2011 (forthcoming)).

³ Uri Gordon, 'Avapxiá – What did the Greeks actually say?', *Anarchist Studies* 14, no. 1 (2006).

cosmopolitan literature might provide a useful framework on which anarchists can hang their own ideas about world politics.

Part 1: A very 19th century promise

At the close of the 20th century, after two (almost three) World Wars and the manifest and sometimes deliberate failure of the state to bring security to our lives, after the collapse of Cold War antipathies and the grand narratives of left and right that had set the terms of political debate for most of the century, political and social theorists have been queuing up to tell us that there had been a profound and irrevocable transformation of political community.⁴ While the trajectory of this transformative process, usually understood as neo-liberal globalization, is still debated,⁵ what is usually taken for granted is that the old 19th century order, characterised by nation states at each other's throats for territory and prestige, governed by nothing more than the whim of royal prerogative, has passed us by. By way of illustration, the European Union is usually held up as the embodiment of this transformation, where pooled sovereignty and cooperation, the defence of universal values (if distinctly particular in application) like human rights and freedom, open markets and social democracy, are said to embody the harsh learning process Western societies have had to go through in the wake of the travesties of Hobsbawm's 'age of extremes'.⁶ The 20th century promise is that we could make the most of this interregnum by rethinking the political philosophy of order that gave us the states that global changes are now allowing us to move beyond. Indeed, the 20th century imperative, the argument from necessity, is that if we do not we risk our global futures. As Held puts it:

The transformation of politics which has followed in the wake of the growing interconnectedness of states and societies and the increasing intensity of international

⁴ See, for example, Francis Fukuyama, *The end of history and the last man* (London: Hamilton, 1992), Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, Mass. ; London: Harvard University Press, 2000), Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical foundations of a Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998).

⁵ Justin Rosenberg, *The follies of globalisation theory : polemical essays* (London: Verso, 2000), R. B. J. Walker, *After the globe, before the world* (London: Routledge, 2010).

⁶ Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914-199* (London: Abacus, 1994).

networks requires a re-examination of political theory as fundamental in form and scope as the shift which brought about the conceptual and institutional innovations of the modern state itself.⁷

Working within the critical theoretical project of the Frankfurt School, the work of Adorno and Horkheimer and the neo-Kantian political philosophy of Habermas amongst others, Held and his collaborators see this new world order as one which necessitates the rethinking of political order while we at the same time recognise the valuable progress achieved by modern political communities.

Held is trying to square two distinct processes: the first is a historical transformation of global political community, largely the product of war and its aftermath, with the Europe's recent and parochial experiences of social democracy. This attempt to square a global experience with a parochial solution is compounded by the fact that contemporary political community is being reshaped by the forces of globalisation faster than social democracy can become entrenched. The neo-liberal forces that threaten to undermine the achievements of the post-War order must be responded to in order that political control be returned to the people social democracies are nominally supposed to represent. The but the local crisis of social democracy can only be met by global solutions. The purpose of the historical sociology of state formation is thus to show the potentialities immanent in the times we live in. As Held puts it: 'Political space for the development and pursuit of effective government and the accountability of power is no longer coterminous with a delimited political territory. Forms of political organisation now involve a complex deterritorialisation and reterritorialisation of political authority.'⁸ If we are to retain the progressive 'compromise' between labour, capital and the state, which was cemented in Western Europe in the early 20th century, we are forced to do so in radically different political context.⁹

The bulk of Held's own work is directed as providing the philosophical grounds for such a project, one that extends and deepens the 19th century Kantian promise of political progress and enlightenment so

⁷ Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*, 143.

⁸ Held and McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization*, 124.

⁹ Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*.

tragically broken in the twentieth century. The need to fulfil the promise of the enlightenment has never been more pressing because if we fail again we will not be given a third chance in a thermo-nuclear age. We might well ask whether the ideas and institutions that bequeathed the very travesties we are trying to avert are fit for purpose. Indeed, many have also asked whether the enlightenment mind-sets are suitable too. But none have suggested that the travesty of the twentieth century was foreseeable and that there has always been a realistic and practicable alternative to the modern state and the enlightenment rationalities that fuelled the 20th century extremes. More problematic still is the assumption that we had to go through the travesties of the 20th century in order to 'learn' and fulfil the promise of the nineteenth century.¹⁰ From the perspective to be outlined below, we might well suggest that nothing much has changed and the imperative to do so is radically underestimated by Held and others.

Towards Autonomy

In a 1985 piece that prefigured much of his future political theory, David Held argued that the unsatisfactory political choice of the 20th century was between liberal reformism and revolutionary Marxism.¹¹ Neither position, Held argued, was well positioned to respond to the transformation of political community at the end of the 20th century. However, Held argued that it was possible to take much of value from these two traditions which together helped him formulate a sophisticated political theory of theory of autonomy. Held juxtaposed the liberal focus on positive and negative freedoms with the Marxist appreciation for the structural inhibitors to the possibility for their fullest realisation. Liberalism was overly wedded to a narrow understanding of human rationality and responsibility and to the idea of the state as a neutral arbiter in between private interests. Marxists pointed out that liberals were overly willing to ignore the negative structuring effects of the market along class lines and the demonstrable partiality of the state. However, Marxist analysis was unwilling to look beyond the class dynamics of modern society for signs of change or entrenchment and the political subject was overly-narrowly read in labourist terms.

¹⁰ Immanuel Kant, 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose', in *Kant: Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

¹¹ Held, 'Beyond Liberalism and Marxism?'

These debates are now well worn, but Held's contribution was to take the liberal defence of freedom and responsibility and widen and deepen it: this was the core contribution of his 'principle of autonomy'. Held claimed that the principle of autonomy is *not* 'at the heart of any of the models of participatory democracy which place the active citizen exclusively at their centre',¹² and building on the work of Immanuel Kant, and neo-Kantians such as John Rawls, Brian Barry and Jurgen Habermas, Held defined the principle of autonomy thus:

persons should enjoy equal rights and, accordingly, equal obligation in the specification of the political framework which generates and limits the opportunities available to them; that is they should be free and equal in the determination of the conditions of their own lives, so long as they do not deploy this framework to negate the rights of others'.¹³

This principle, he argued, could help us frame and specify the appropriate institutions for the realisation of autonomy and also provide a yardstick against which to identify full and active citizenship in this (post)modern era is constrained. These seven sites of power are: the body, welfare, culture and cultural life, civic associations, the economy, the organisation of violence and the state. These sites of power are those areas of social life in which the life chances of individuals are undermined by pre-existing structures and social processes.

Bearing in mind that Held was alert to the way in which the liberal state is, in practice if not in theory, often deployed in the interests of the few to negate those of the many, and he was also alert to the fact that class was not the only way in which our life chances were curtailed, using this concept to cut through the contemporary political problematique and to do so in a way that would retain the best of both traditions of political theory, should be applauded. The seven sites of power also provide us with a running synopsis of the ontology of contemporary critical theory and the principle of autonomy gives us a parsimonious grammar in which to express the means and parameters for social emancipation.

¹² Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*, 149..

¹³ *Ibid.*, 147.

It is not possible to adequately deal with each in turn in as short a piece as this and so I will focus on two: the state and the economy. Discussing these two will give us a strong enough sense of why subsidiarity and global federalism are important institutional arrangements that can respond to the transformation of political community, respond to the challenges of defending autonomy and help us understand how we might get to a stage where the state might 'whither away'. I say might, because as the following section will show, ignoring the anarchist critique means that Held is left open to it, and one thing that anarchists have consistently argued is that you can't expect the state to get rid of itself. Indeed, any idea that the state might 'whither away' is contradicted by the evidence in Bolivia, the EU and Venezuela to mention three very recent examples.¹⁴

The Evolution of Social Citizenship: Autonomy, the State and the Economy

In order to give an adequate account of the political praxis of autonomy, and in order to show how anarchist thinking antedates Held's considerably, I will focus only on two key sites of power: the economy and state. This is not to say that the other domains are any less important or to suggest that anarchists have not engaged with the other five - far from it.¹⁵ But it is simply not possible to do justice to the richness of the anarchist tradition or David Held's work by casting our net too widely.

What I want to show here is how Held links the state to the economy and both to law and democracy. The framework through which he does this is the evolution of social citizenship from civil and political citizenship in the nineteenth century. As Held rightly points out, the evolution of social citizenship is a progressive change, but not by any measure, as I will argue below. The recognition of legal equality of subjects (civil rights), the positive freedom to vote (political rights), would be impossible without positive entitlements to the economic resources to do so (social rights). Here we can see how

¹⁴ Sara C. Motta and David J. Bailey, 'Neither pragmatic adaptation nor misguided accommodation: Modernisation as domination in the Chilean and British Left', *Capital & Class* 31, no. 2 (2007).

¹⁵ For anarchist responses to and ways of alleviating the issues that arise from these seven sites of power see, for example, the numerous chapters in the following introductory works: Ruth Kinna, *Anarchism: A Beginners Guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005), Jon Purkis and James Bowen, *Changing anarchism : anarchist theory and practice in a global age* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), Jon Purkis and James Bowen, *Twenty-first century anarchism : unorthodox ideas for a new millennium* (London: Cassell, 1997). Nathan J. Jun and Shane Wahl, *New perspectives on anarchism* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2010).

individual autonomy was first sanctified in law. When it was shown that without access to law-making autonomy was only partial, political rights extended autonomy once more. When it was then shown that without the economic wherewithal to engage in a political process the first two sets of rights would be relatively valueless, social rights were instituted.¹⁶ What Held wishes to do is to take this one step further. As John Barbalet has argued, '[p]rivate ownership as capital in the means of production provides an economic function to class distinctions which is totally untouched by the development of citizenship.'¹⁷ In brief, 'the power of private property in the means of production [... is not] strung out on a continuous scale [...] but yields a *clear division between those who do and those who do not possess it.*'¹⁸ Barbalet concludes that 'the development of citizenship rights may change the way in which people identify themselves and it may alter their feelings about social and class inequalities. But that is all.'¹⁹ Finally, '[n]o matter how intense the struggle for citizenship rights, it is the state which ultimately grants them, and it may choose to do so even in the absence of such a struggle. It has to be added that the denial of rights and not simply their extension may at certain times and in certain contexts also enhance a state's rule.'²⁰

As Held puts it: '[o]nce citizens entered the factory gates, their lives were largely determined by the directives of capital... politics was not extended to industry [...] To the extent that modern capitalist relations produce systematic inequalities in economic and social resource, the structure of autonomy is profoundly affected.'²¹ Therefore, '[i]f democratic legal relations are to be sustained, corporations will have to uphold, de jure and de facto, a commitment to the requirements of autonomy',²² which is to say that economic relations would need to be democratised with those likely to suffer from the effects of private actions given control over the processes that have hitherto been denied them. As Held puts it: '[t]he question of particular forms of property right is not in itself the primary

¹⁶ T. H. Marshall and Tom Bottomore, *Citizenship and Social Class* (London: Pluto, 1992).

¹⁷ Barbalet, *Citizenship* (1988), p. 53.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56. (emphasis added)

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 56-57.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 110-111.

²¹ Held, *Democracy and the Global Order*, 182-83.

²² *Ibid.*, 252.

consideration',²³ but reasonable access to the decision making procedures that govern any given property regime is. The question is: how would such access and regulatory control be granted to those most affected by these processes? For Held, the answer to this question lies with the 'democratic legal state'.

For Held the state is 'an independent corporation, made up of an ensemble of organisations coordinated by a determinate political authority'²⁴, which is itself bound by legal rules. States also have a *de jure* monopoly on violence and are historical products peopled by historical subjects, rather than an abstract entity populated by rational egoists. The state has a real and formative role to play in the shaping of the life-chances and opportunities of the groups over which it has jurisdiction. It is not an impartial arbiter, but nor does that mean that it is automatically beholden to particular interests in a given society. The state is also shaped and constrained by law which also emerged out of historical processes of contestation and bargaining with ever widening participation in the law-making process. The purpose of the principle of autonomy and the historical sociology of state formation is to show that this process has become ever more inclusive and that to develop this neo-Kantian process demands further entrenching the principle of autonomy within a framework of democratic public law. For Held,

democratic public law sets out the basis of the rights and corresponding obligations which follow from a commitment to the principle of autonomy. It sets the form and limits of public power – the framework in which debate, deliberation and policy-making can be pursued and judged. Rules, laws, policies and decisions can be considered legitimate when made within this framework; that is, when made bearing 'the democratic good' in mind.²⁵

²³ Ibid., 254.

²⁴ Ibid., 185.

²⁵ Ibid., 205.

This 'democratic good' can be contrasted with 'an unbridled licence for the pursuit of individual interests in public affairs'.²⁶ However, while this is a little way from bourgeois ideology, it is somewhat curious for Held to argue that 'political empowerment' demands 'de jure status'.²⁷ The suggestion is that the state is the only body that can guarantee autonomy and the only way this can be done equitably is within the parameters of law. Moreover, it suggests that law has causal properties over and above the agency of the actors who enforce it.²⁸ This is some way, but not very far from bourgeois ideology, with strong neo-Kantian overtones. We must also hope and pray that those empowered by law to make decisions on our behalf do indeed have the public good in mind, even that their conception of the public good echoes our own or those of the communities we spend most time in. We must also hope that the pre-existing democratic public law does not constrain the range of future possibilities and finally we must also hope that the state makes good its promise to defend autonomy. These issues are compounded by the pressures that arise from the global political economy.

Indeed, it is precisely because states cannot be guaranteed to adequately defend the rights and autonomy of their citizens that the European Court of Human Rights and other such supranational bodies were established as a court of last resort. Held sees these as providing historically significant redress beyond the confines of the nation state but also sees that these institutions themselves lack the legitimacy of more established democracies precisely because so few are entitled to participate in the decision-making process. While the ECHR is a relatively positive example, Held draws attention to the multi-lateral economic institutions of the global economy and their significant legitimacy deficits. Held notes how the legal rules which govern the global economy, for example, routinely favour those who first wrote them, which is to say that life chances are structurally skewed in favour of the affluent North West. Global social democracy would therefore constitute a new compromise between labour, capital and states at the international/global level. The question remains regarding the appropriate institutional frameworks through which to realise this compromise and how they can be shown to defend autonomy.

²⁶ Ibid., 156.

²⁷ Ibid., 101.

²⁸ Cf. William E. Scheuerman, 'Cosmopolitan Democracy and the Rule of Law', *Ratio Juris* 15, no. 4 (2002).

Autonomy, Subsidiarity and Multi-level Cosmopolitan Governance

Held argues that the principle of subsidiarity implies that 'those whose life expectancy and life chances are significantly affected by social forces and processes ought to have a stake in the determination of the conditions and regulation of these, either directly or indirectly through representatives'.²⁹ The problem is that '[p]olitical space for the development and pursuit of effective government and the accountability of power is no longer coterminous with a delimited political territory. Forms of political organisation now involve a complex deterritorialization and reterritorialization',³⁰ which 'points to the necessity of both the decentralisation *and* the centralisation of political power'.³¹ However, despite the recognition of these factors, Held still argues that 'decision-making should be decentralised as much as possible [...] centralisation is favoured if, and only if, it is the necessary basis for avoiding the exclusion of persons who are significantly affected by a political decision or outcome'.³² Thus the state's ideal role is to redress the balance of forces in society in defence of the principle of autonomy. This approach 'yields the possibility of multilevel democratic governance. The ideal number of appropriate democratic jurisdictions cannot be assumed to be embraced by just one level – as it is in the theory of the liberal democratic nation-state'.³³

Multi-level governance and neo-medievalism, combined with the principle of subsidiarity present a vision of politics that is radically distinct from the norm.³⁴ What is strange about Held's formulation is why he retains such a principled commitment to the state – a clearly arbitrary choice given this political ontology and an historically nefarious at that. Also, given that in this complex melange of political orders, sovereignty becomes something of a misnomer. The politics Held describes lacks a

²⁹ Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*, 100.

³⁰ Held and McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization*, 124.

³¹ Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*, 100.

³² *Ibid.*, 101.

³³ *Ibid.*, 102.

³⁴ Andreas Føllesdal, 'Survey Article: Subsidiarity', *The Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, no. 2 (1998), Jörg Friedrichs, 'The Meaning of New Medievalism', *European Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 4 (2001), Gary Marks, Lisebet Hooghe and Kermit Blank, 'European Integration from the 1980s: State-Centric v. Multi-level Governance', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 34, no. 3 (1996).

determinate political centre – a real sovereign. Modern politics is such that sovereignty, while formally or legally identifiable is, in practice and in theory, not to mention historically, quite difficult to locate.³⁵ The EU is but one political system where multi-level governance and shared, balanced power renders the idea of sovereign somewhat enigmatic. Again, given this context, it is at the very least questionable to defend the state as Held does, indeed, as I will show in the following section, it also seems somewhat contradictory. What does the state provide that a more complex institutional arrangement couldn't guarantee?

This ensuing 'multilevel citizenship' would be constituted by 'respect for shared rules and principles'³⁶ The nine principles of cosmopolitan governance that Held outlines and believes could be universally shared are the following: egalitarian individualism, active agency, personal responsibility and accountability, consent, collective decision making, democratic voting, inclusiveness and subsidiarity, avoidance of serious harm and sustainability.³⁷ These principles 'can form the basis for the protection and nurturing of each person's equal significance in the moral realm of humanity'.³⁸ The moral individualism of this selection of principles is well highlighted by Heiki Patomäki,³⁹ and Held rightly I believe responds that the moral worth of collectives are usually the pretext for the erasure of individual rights.

³⁵ Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, sovereignty, and the making of international law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), Joseph A. Camilleri and Jim Falk, *The End of Sovereignty? The politics of a shrinking and fragmenting world* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1992), Michael Keating, *Plurinational Democracy: Stateless Nations in a Post-Sovereignty Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty : organized hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), Harold Laski, *Foundations of Sovereignty and Other Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1921), Harold Joseph Laski, *Studies in the problem of sovereignty* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1917), Adriana Sinclair and Michael Byers, 'When US Scholars Speak of 'Sovereignty', What do they Mean?', *Political Studies* 55, no. 2 (2007).

³⁶ Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*, 114-15.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 171.

³⁸ Held and Patomäki, 'Problems of Global Democracy: A Dialogue': 116.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

My summary of Held's argument has been unavoidably brief but I hope it gives an accurate account of his wider political philosophy. I have drawn attention to Held's attempt to move between and beyond the traditional left/right dichotomy of the late 20th century, his illustration that history has brought us to a point where it is possible to conceive of political orders that supersede the state precisely because they are here in nascent form and are necessary. I have tried to show that in order for us to conceptualise the legitimacy of these movements beyond statism in the contemporary world order a political theory that has the principle of autonomy at its heart and seeks to embed politics in a discourse of rights and responsibility is crucial to Held. Indeed, the world-historical imperatives of the time we live in demand nothing less. The catastrophic effects of unbridled capitalism, both economic and environmental, the failure and moral bankruptcy of authoritarianism and the extension of a global framework of legal redress demand that we strike a new compromise between state, labour and capital that today must be global in scope. The question I will now ask is whether a compromise that includes the state and capital will ever respect the principle of autonomy. I will not argue that labour is the only revolutionary subject, the only political body that can bring lasting change and secure autonomy in all its multi-faceted dimensions, but I will argue that the state and capital cannot deliver on the promise Held outlines.

Part 2: After Global Social Democracy: Anarchism, Autonomy and Post-Statist Politics

The first question we need answered is how does Held represent anarchism, because if I am to claim that Held has anarchist tendencies, could we not account for this by reference to his reading of anarchism? After all, Andrew Linklater, another key proponent of cosmopolitan democracy and one of the foremost theorists of the transformation of European political community, is well aware of these synergies. 'The anarchist tradition' he argued, 'has long-argued for the despatching state monopoly powers to local communities and transnational agencies in order to recover the potentials for universality and difference which were stifled by the rise of the modern territorial state', and, he continues, this calls for more research into anarchist conceptions of citizenship and community in a post-Westphalian era.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community*, 196.. See also, Richard Falk, 'Anarchism and World Order', in *Nomos XIX: Anarchism*, ed. J. Roland Pennock and John Chapman (New York: New York University

Held does not share these views. In *Models of Democracy*, David Held quite explicitly and deliberately ignores the anarchists.⁴¹ When Held does engage with anarchism or the anarchists, he reverts to somewhat prejudicial stereotype. Anarchists, he argues, 'those notorious for attacking Starbucks at the 1999 Seattle WTO meeting [...] do not seek common ground or a new reconciliation of views [and...] in this respect they are no different from the extreme neo-liberalisers who put their faith first and foremost in deregulated markets'.⁴² Elsewhere he argues that 'the radical anti-globalist position' which he implies is synonymous with anarchism, 'appears deeply naïve about the potential for locally based action to resolve or engage with, the governance agenda generated by the forces of globalization. How can such a politics cope with the challenges posed by overlapping communities of fate?'⁴³ For Held, as I hope I have already demonstrated, the answer to these sorts of questions is generally cast in statist terms. By way of illustration, and in perhaps Held's only direct reference to anarchist political philosophy, he makes the point that 'Marx, it should be emphasised, was not an anarchist' and therefore envisaged a long period of state-controlled society before it should/could/would eventually 'wither away'.⁴⁴

As far as it has been possible to determine, these short quotes constitute the full extent of Held's engagement with anarchism. But are they fair? The answer, I will argue, is a categorical no. Held's ignorance on these matters undermines the originality of his own position and lends intellectual support to the anarchist position. However, my aim here is not to develop a points tally, but to show how each might benefit from an engagement with the latter. The crux of the matter for Held is that by not paying closer attention to the anarchist critique of global social democracy he is left wide open to

Press, 1979)., Thomas G. Weiss, 'The Tradition of Philosophical Anarchism and Future Directions in World Policy', *Journal of Peace Research* 12 (1975).,

⁴¹ David Held, *Models of democracy* (Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell, 1987), 6.

⁴² Held and McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization*, 115.

⁴³ Held, *Global Covenant: the Social Democratic Alternative to the Washington Consensus*, 162.,Held and McGrew, *Globalization and Anti-Globalization*, 130.

⁴⁴ Held, 'Beyond Liberalism and Marxism?', 227.

it. The problem for anarchist thought is that having obviated the need to analyse 'the global' in any detail, they leave themselves open to charges of naivety.

The narrative to follow takes Andrew Linklater's observations seriously and explores some of their implications for cosmopolitan theory. If the anarchists have indeed long argued for the dispatching of state monopoly powers, when did they begin to do this and why? I will set out in unavoidably brief terms the anarchist response to the rise of the nation state and autocracy in the nineteenth century. I will then suggest that we might usefully position anarchist political philosophy somewhere between and beyond liberalism and Marxism. I next point out that autonomy has always been at the heart of the anarchist tradition; that anarchists always judge the legitimacy of institutions to the extent that they can protect and enable autonomy; that capital, the state and labour have all at one point or another been questioned from this very basis. I will then show that anarchists have routinely argued that the state system is not fit for purpose, that it has passed its use by date, and that a new global politics would involve radical conceptions of subsidiarity, multi-level governance, federalism and stateless citizenship. What I will show is that if we start from anarchism, Held's call for global social democracy looks no less naïve than the original call for social democracy in mid-nineteenth century France and is likely to sustain rather than overturn exploitative and exclusionary global social orders. This is not the place to outline solutions, but a range of questions and suggestions for further reflection, for mainstream cosmopolitans and anarchists alike, will close the analysis.

A very 19th century warning

While considerations of space make it difficult to develop the argument in detail here, it is important to note that, singularly amongst 19th century social philosophies, anarchism was anti-statist. Marxists, social democrats, liberals, monarchists, imperialists, revolutionary nationalists and so forth were all driven by the desire to capture the state and wield the instruments of state power in their favour against other prevailing interests. Indeed, such is the dominance of this paradigm that for many politics is synonymous with the state and a non-state politics seems unimaginable. Anarchism was from the outset a warning, based on observations of the failure of state-based projects to yield the sorts of emancipation people craved. Indeed, anarchists were also fully aware that any emancipation

that retained private title to large scale property would be no less exploitative, for many of the reasons Held outlined above.

However, bearing in mind that we are today still reeling from the travesties the ensued from the establishment of totalitarian states, it is worth bearing in mind that the anarchists were warning the left and right of the potential travesties ahead. Proudhon, the first self-professed anarchist, was among the few to fear the militarization of the French state, in fact coining the term militarization.⁴⁵ At first, like many he thought Napoleon III would be a progressive force in European society, but he soon saw that the new alliance between the bourgeoisie and Napoleon III, coupled with the centralisation of economic and military development, adventurism in Italy, Mexico and the Crimea, nationalist populism and the rhetoric of France's manifest destiny in Europe was a worry.⁴⁶ Bakunin, writing in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War and the execution of 20,000 working class men and women in Paris in 1871 (and the expulsion of tens of thousands more), which Proudhon never lived to see, was even more worried by what he saw in Prussia, which had taken on the Napoleonic model with renewed vigour. Bakunin worried hugely what the rise and the alignment of the working class with the Bismarkian state would yield in terms of political freedom and autonomy and saw as clear as day the deification of the new centralised German state.⁴⁷ Kropotkin, inspired by Darwin but fearful of the linking of Darwinism to racism and to statism in the early 20th century, was inspired to his *magnum opus Mutual Aid: A factor of evolution* to off-set the tendencies towards statist ethnocentrism and the splicing of a crass Darwinism with the national interest. The preface to the 1914 edition clearly warns of the dangers that were to follow.⁴⁸ Writing then in the aftermath of WWI and the rise of the Nazi party, Rudolf Rocker linked linking nationalism, culture, religious mysticism and statism in Germany to

⁴⁵ Volker R. Berghahn, *Militarism: The History of an Intellectual Debate 1861-1971* (Leamington Spa: Berg Publishers, 1981), 1.

⁴⁶ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *Du Principe Fédératif et de la Nécessité de reconstituer le parti de la révolution. (inc) Si Les Traités de 1815 ont Cessé d'Exister, Oeuvres Complètes de P-J Proudhon* (Paris: Ernest Flammarion, 1867-1870).

⁴⁷ Mikhail Bakunin, *Statism and Anarchy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴⁸ Peter Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989).

inevitable disaster.⁴⁹ And these men were not alone. Emma Goldman was critical of the Bolsheviks and Kropotkin, in a series of private letters to Lenin lambasted him for betraying the aspirations of the Russian people.⁵⁰ British and American abstention during the Spanish Civil War, for example, when the anarchists fought the combined might of Mussolini's fascists, Hitler's Nazis and Stalin's henchmen in the name of democracy and freedom, ought to be seen as a moral stain on the historical conscience of so-called democracies. When read together the works referred to here constitute an 'I told you so' of historic proportions. And yet, despite the millions that were sent to their deaths either in war or through the highly mechanised and centralised killing of civilians by the state (a process that would have been practically impossible on that scale without one), the anarchists were seen to be the crazy lunatics. And now, today, when the left warn of the dangers of centralisation and the lessons we are supposed to have learnt from the past, we conveniently forget that the most prophetic were the ones most states silenced by force.

Are anarchists liberal socialists?

So what about this move between and beyond liberalism and Marxism that Held, and most of New Labour, also advocates? Is this at all original? I do not want to claim that the anarchists prefigure New Labour, but a few words on the ideological positioning of anarchism will open up this debate a little further. Consider, first of all, David Apter's argument that 'the virtue of anarchism as a doctrine is that it employs a socialist critique of capitalism with a liberal critique of socialism'.⁵¹ The socialist critique of capitalism revolved around the structuring effect of a capitalist economy, while the liberal critique of socialism centred on the negative effects of state centralisation and direction of economic forces. This, it would seem to me would have been a fruitful place for Held to begin his inquiry. Indeed, Richard Falk, a peerless scholar of world politics, has also argued that anarchism is 'alive to the twin

⁴⁹ Rudolf Rocker and Ray E. Chase, *Nationalism and culture*, [2nd American ed. reprinted] / [with a new preface and bibliography] ed. (Sanday: Cienfuegos Press, 1978).

⁵⁰ See for example, Emma Goldman 'My Disillusionment in Russia' available at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST_ARCHIVES/goldman/disillusion/toc.html [Accessed 17/05/10]; Peter Kropotkin 'Letter to Lenin (21 December 1920)' Available at http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/ANARCHIST_ARCHIVES/kropotkin/kropotlenindec20.html [Accessed 17/05/10]

⁵¹ David E. Apter, 'The Old Anarchism and the New-Some Comments', *Government and Opposition* 5, no. 4 (1970): 397-98.

dangers of socialism and capitalism if pursued within the structure of statism'.⁵² Anarchism aims to develop what is valuable in liberalism, including the centrality of freedom and autonomy, and socialism, including the critique of capitalism, without retaining the state. Monique Canto-Sperber, Professor of Moral Philosophy and previously director of the École Normale Supérieure, has argued that Proudhon was what she has called 'the first liberal socialist'.⁵³ The key here is to see anarchists as trying to balance the demands of individuality and community, the relationships of communities with one another, and the necessity of political freedom with social control. The key in each of these is a critique of the structuring effects of the state and a capitalist economy.⁵⁴

These very general comments are worked out in practice in very different ways. Perhaps part of the reason Held and the wider public associate anarchism with bomb-throwing zealots is that there is no universally agreed ideological core to the movement. Indeed, anarchism as a movement is one which develops theory from practice and anarchist practices emerge from the contexts in which political subjects find themselves. What is central to an anarchist politics is not so much ideological and theoretical purity, but as Gordon points out, commitments to non-hierarchical organisational structures, a DIY or do-it-yourself, unmediated or non-representational political practice, counter-cultural politics that have the explicit commitment to avoid unnecessary harm to the eco-system and all within it, and a political language which builds praxis around a discourse prefigurative politics, anti-domination, direct action and resistance.⁵⁵ How these tendencies would play out in concrete situations is impossible to predict or direct and for this purpose it might seem as though anarchism lacks a coherent politics. But this looseness is also a practical benefit. Where other political philosophies have died on their Procrustean beds, anarchism has witnessed a re-birth.

⁵² Falk, 'Anarchism and World Order'.

⁵³ Monique Canto-Sperber, 'Proudhon, the First Liberal Socialist', in *The Gimeon Conference on French Political Economy 1650-1848* (Stanford University: 2004).

⁵⁴ There is, admittedly, a tendency in some quarters to conflate Nozick, Rothbard and others with anarchism, but anarcho-capitalism is an oxymoron. Capitalists are sovereigns of all they possess and the labour of others falls into this category. Capitalists cannot be anarchists precisely because they are the supreme authority in this relationship. This is not the place to discuss this further, but it is important to make the distinction. I will elaborate on the precise positioning of anarchism in relation to liberalism and Marxism below.

⁵⁵ Uri Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 12-21.

Anarchism and Autonomy

The second claim to originality that Held makes is that he is quite unique in putting autonomy and active citizenship at the heart of his political philosophy.⁵⁶ Much of this claim rests not on his definition of autonomy, which is central to the anarchist tradition, but of citizenship. As David Graeber has argued recently, drawn from extensive ethnographic analysis within the newest direct action social movements, “autonomy” [is] simultaneously the greatest anarchist value, and the greatest dilemma’.⁵⁷ Anti-representation, direct action, a commitment to anti-authoritarianism, and the lived memories of the past 200 years of the failures of states and capital to deliver the sorts of social emancipation anarchists crave, have led to very real hostility to the established forms of representation and political agency. This commitment to autonomy can be illustrated in a number of ways and centrally, we need to understand how this might be construed in terms of republican citizenship. Crucially, in order to do this we must abandon the notion that rights and responsibilities demand the state and understand ‘active citizenship’ to involve political and economic reciprocity within any determinate group.

Let us consider this first of all at what is commonly known as the macro level. From the nineteenth-century onwards, Anarchists were resolutely against the doctrine of unity that characterised the process of nation state building and sought to articulate a discourse of rights and political participation that obviated the need for a state. The political philosophy of unity that characterised the nineteenth century, tended to exhibit three clear tendencies: the idea that order rested on overwhelming power; that the terms of consensus were to be defined by the sovereign power and that all challengers were to be put down by force since force was the defining characteristic of the struggle for power. From England’s relationship with Scotland, Ireland and Wales, through to innumerable other examples of what we might call internal imperialism, the discourse was the same – ‘Unity or Death’ as Mazzini once said of his vision for the Risorgimento. Nationalist struggles and the wish-dreams of the state-socialists were the same – the capture of state power would usher in the Promised Land: the

⁵⁶ Held, 'Beyond Liberalism and Marxism?'

⁵⁷ David Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography* (Edinburgh: AK Press, 2009), 266, David Graeber, 'The New Anarchists', *New Left Review* 13 (2002).

proletariat 'must ... conquer for itself political power in order to represent its interest in turn as the general interest, which immediately it is forced to do.'⁵⁸

The anarchist alternative was to defend the autonomy of the plural social and political cleavages of society and show up the doctrine of political unity for what it really seemed: in the case of Italy at least, 'simply a form of bourgeoisie exploitation under the protection of bayonets'.⁵⁹ This pitched Proudhon in particular against many of the countervailing political tendencies of his time, however, Proudhon looked to the autonomy of states in the international system as model for the autonomy of all social groups. On what legitimate basis could one state or group of people, in the case of Italy the Sardinians, legitimately override the autonomy of the plural regions that went to make up the Italian peninsula? Proudhon pointed out that 'the idea of universal sovereignty, the dream of the middle ages and formulated in Charlemagne's pact, is the negation of the independence and the autonomy of states, the negation of all human liberty, something in which states and nations are eternally unified in refusing.'⁶⁰ He also argued that the tendencies afoot in Europe would bring history to an end by stifling the political and cultural diversity that made up the rich tapestry of the continent. 'Unity is death' he argued against Mazzini.⁶¹

Mazzini is also an interesting counter example to understand anarchist organisation and tactics. While the secret Carbonari societies that agitated for Italian unification were originally a template for Bakunin's secret societies in his pre-anarchist years, this vanguardist method of anarchist organisation has been abandoned as authoritarian. Moreover, the rejection of doctrine and strategic unity, the so-called 'diversity of tactics' approach that has come to characterise much 21st century anarchism, is more fluid and more able to respond to the exigencies of time and place. This tendency has roots as deep as the tradition itself. Proudhon was also diametrically opposed to Karl Marx on

⁵⁸ Marx, (1977) pp. 169-170.

⁵⁹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *La Fédération et l'Unité en Italie* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1862), 25.

⁶⁰ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *La Guerre et La Paix, recherches sur la principe et la constitution du droit des gens*, Nouvelle ed. (Paris: Editions Tops, 1998), 293.

⁶¹ Proudhon, *La Fédération et l'Unité en Italie*. For more on this see also Prichard, 'Deepening Anarchism: International Relations and the Anarchist Ideal'.

precisely this point. His famous letter to Marx rebuffed his offer of collaboration precisely on the grounds that he feared Marx's authoritarian and vanguardist positions would undermine the autonomy of the very people his programme was designed to emancipate.⁶² And how prescient the anarchist critique of Marxism soon became.

As I have argued elsewhere, Proudhon's ideas are deeply neo-Kantian or liberal in relation to the moral and political autonomy of the individual,⁶³ and these commitments have lasted to the present day. For example, as Robert Paul Wolff has argued, anarchism is the most consistent form of neo-Kantianism when it comes to autonomy. The argument here is that laws not freely acceded to are arbitrary impositions on the will of naturally free individuals. Taking Kant far further than Kant would have allowed,⁶⁴ Wolff has argued that a rational individual is one wholly responsible for his or her actions. But this can only be the case if said individual has complete control over the conditions which structure our life chances. How can we be responsible for outcomes we have no control over? The modern nation state, the single most significant zone of exclusion in history, therefore curtails rather than enhances autonomy. For example, voting (or not as the case may be) once every five years does not make me responsible for the actions of the state I was involuntarily born into. The same argument applies to the capitalist system. How can I be responsible for the economic outcomes generated by capitalism if I have had not input on the decision making process that structure the world economy. In sum, Wolff has argued that '[t]he primary obligation of man is autonomy, the refusal to be ruled.'⁶⁵ Anarchy, the absence of the sovereign, by this analysis at least, is the precondition of autonomy.

Anarchism, the State and the Economy

⁶² Pierre Hautmann, *Marx et Proudhon: Leurs rapports personnels 1844-1847* (Brussels: Editions Économie et Humanisme, 1947).

⁶³ Prichard, 'The Ethical Foundations of Proudhon's Republican Anarchism'.

⁶⁴ Kant, *On the Duty to Obey the Sovereign*

⁶⁵ Robert Paul Wolff, *In Defence of Anarchism* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998), 18.

This can be spelt out in more detail and I will now link this political philosophy to a theory of citizenship more explicitly. Proudhon's polemic sounds out as clearly today as it did nearly 200 years ago:

To be GOVERNED is to be watched, inspected, spied upon, directed, law-driven, numbered, regulated, enrolled, indoctrinated, preached at, controlled, checked, estimated, valued, censured, commanded, by creatures who have neither the right nor the wisdom nor the virtue to do so. To be GOVERNED is to be at every operation, at every transaction noted, registered, counted, taxed, stamped, measured, numbered, assessed, licensed, authorized, admonished, prevented, forbidden, reformed, corrected, punished. It is, under pretext of public utility, and in the name of the general interest, to be place[d] under contribution, drilled, fleeced, exploited, monopolized, extorted from, squeezed, hoaxed, robbed; then, at the slightest resistance, the first word of complaint, to be repressed, fined, vilified, harassed, hunted down, abused, clubbed, disarmed, bound, choked, imprisoned, judged, condemned, shot, deported, sacrificed, sold, betrayed; and to crown all, mocked, ridiculed, derided, outraged, dishonoured. That is government; that is its justice; that is its morality.⁶⁶

Can the extension of ever deeper citizenship rights, within the parameters of a democratic legal state, really overcome the barriers against autonomy? What form of citizenship does a non-statist politics imply? It is clear from Held's writings that stateless citizenship is not only possible but extant, so in many ways this question is moot. There is, however, the need to ask why a stateless citizenship is preferred and what this means in practice. As Steffen Böhm, Ana C. Dinerstein and André Spicer have pointed out, within the new social movements autonomy is king. However, it is autonomy of a particular kind, one born from a particular experience of the failure of the state, capital and labour (the trinity at the heart of Held's social democratic promise) to deliver on its promises.

⁶⁶ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *General Idea of the Revolution in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. John Beverley Robinson (London: Freedom Press, 1923), 293-94.

Some social movement theorists have registered the importance of autonomy as a central aspect of many new social movements. For example, Offe (1987) points out that one of the distinguishing features of 'new social movements' is their focus on 'non-institutional' politics and their attempts to craft a voice and practice that are autonomous of existing bureaucratic structures such as unions, corporations and the state. Similarly, Scott (1990) argues that one of the central aspects of the ideology of new social movements is the 'autonomy of struggle', which involves 'the insistence that the movement and those it represents be allowed to fight their own corner without interference from other movements, and without subordinating their demands to other external priorities' (1990, p. 20).⁶⁷

Again, note that the three main domains in which contemporary social movements wish to remain autonomous are precisely those three domains which were supposed to make up the social democratic compromise – state, capital and labour. In each of these three cases autonomy is sacrificed to the ruling body, be it the capitalist, the politician or union president. Clearly variation exists, but as a general principle this is how it is considered within the anarchist movement, which has recently come to make up the mainstay of the grassroots of the new social movements.⁶⁸

How do we conceptualise the civic nature of these groups? First of all, it is worth pointing out that we are all simultaneously members of plural groups, some of which are more important to us than others. Within these groups we have varying levels of formal membership and varying demands on our time. However, groups function on the basis of the reciprocity that underpins them.⁶⁹ Cooperation is emergent and the precise form of the group, its structural location and the character of the individuals

⁶⁷ Steffen Böhm, Ana C. Dinerstein and André Spicer, '(Im)possibilities of Autonomy: Social Movements in and beyond Capital, the State and Development', *Social Movement Studies* 9, no. 1 (2010): 18.

⁶⁸ Richard Day, *Gramsci is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), Barbara Epstein, 'Anarchism and The Anti-Globalisation Movement', *Monthly Review* 53, no. 4 (2001), Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power: The Meaning of Revolution Today* (London: Pluto Press, 2002).

⁶⁹ For more on this, see for example, Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, 'Achieving Cooperation under Anarchy: Strategies and Institutions', *World Politics* 38, no. 1 (1985)..

of which it is composed, will define its character and the organisational structure most appropriate for it. However, while conflict of varying sorts is ubiquitous, democracy is not typically the most common means of organising social activity. Consensus and compromise is. This process of social ordering demands a sense of obligations and duties, formed from the vagaries of context and character. We are, by the very fact of our social natures, always negotiating our rights and responsibilities vis-à-vis one another. Sometimes these agreements are formalised, though mostly they are not. These natural groups make up the building blocks of Proudhon's political ontology and, I believe, should underpin realistic anarchist politics, since it is these primordial groups which form the core of society and yet have least control over it. For Proudhon the economy, conceived in its classical Greek sense of *oikos*, was the domain in which our rights and duties were most keenly felt and most routinely denied by an overarching authority – capitalist or state capitalist. As he argued:

It is not in the fraternity of revolutionary citizens but in the reciprocity among producers that unity is to be sought. Nor is it in the sharing of uniformity of status as citizens that unity is found but, precisely to the contrary, in the diversity of skill and situation that, in making individuals complementary to one another, also makes them cooperative.⁷⁰

Elsewhere he continues,

Thus we need not hesitate, for we have no choice. In cases in which production requires great division of labour, and considerable collective force, it is necessary to form an ASSOCIATION among the workers in this industry; because without that, they would remain related as subordinates and superiors, and there would ensue two industrial castes of masters and wage workers, which is repugnant to a free and democratic society.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Cited in Richard Vernon, *Citizenship and Order: Studies in French Political Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 74.

⁷¹ Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *De la Capacité Politique des Classes Ouvrières* (Paris: Slatkine, 1982), 216.

This call for association is mirrored throughout Proudhon's works by a concern that all natural groups become aware of their political capacity, formalise it through a regularised decision making procedure and *act*. It is the specific form that the direction of this group action takes which determines whether it is anarchist or not and only participatory and direct decision making procedures can affect this. As Richard Vernon has pointed out, citizenship, 'as a political value, was merely an arrest of the spirit of liberation, whose ends were not political at all'.⁷² For Proudhon, it is in the social economy that such liberation could be truly found.

Anarchism, Federalism and Governance

There is very little in anarchism that pertains to 'international politics' as such and in many respects this is a function of the political and social ontology I have outlined above. States are groups of people, more or less clearly identifiable, but not to be confused with the society upon which it is dependent for its sustenance. Anarchists have also traditionally rejected a vision of political order as directed 'from above' while IR has always been about the denial that international politics can be either explained or shaped 'from below'. While this is changing, we should not therefore be surprised that anarchism has very little to say about world politics considered structurally. However, for Proudhon the social ontology he worked with mapped directly onto a radically decentralised set of institutions. For him, the principle of federation not only captured how groups might coordinate their activities through a commutative pact, but also captured how individuals and groups *actually* cohere through sovereign-free unspoken acts of reciprocity and solidarity on a daily basis.⁷³

For Proudhon, if we were to formalise the relative autonomy of towns, regions, cities, trades unions and all other social groups, we would also have to recognise their relative autonomy to do so. Having recognised this autonomy it would be contradictory to deny its expression and so politics would be naturally subsidiary, in the sense that it would be governed 'from the bottom up'. The arbitrary boundaries of the jurisdictions of states overlap far more complex inter-national, regional and

⁷² Vernon, *Citizenship and Order*, 66, Richard Vernon, 'Obligation by Association? A Reply to John Horton', *Political Studies* 55, no. 4 (2007).

⁷³ P. J. Proudhon and Richard Vernon, *The principle of federation* (Toronto ; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1979).

communal relations. Cosmopolitan, multi-level governance is something that takes place in the way in which communities interrelate on a daily basis. The formalisation of these processes would involve taking back powers that are rightly the prerogative of groups other than states. This secular neo-medieval world order where there are 'no gods, no masters' is the quintessential anarchist community.⁷⁴ The freedom or autonomy of groups would be the precondition of social dynamism and change and the defence of the autonomy of groups a moral imperative. It would also, in many senses, be the recognition of the realities of social life and a removal of those institutions which have historically consistently undermined the autonomy they claim to defend – namely the state and capital. Anarchist schemas for organising order in anarchy are legion and so a list will have to suffice here. We might well start with Proudhon's *Principle of Federation* (1863) and Bakunin's defence of a United States of Europe in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War.⁷⁵ We can look at the way in which anarchist society was organised in Spain in the 1930s,⁷⁶ or more contemporary dilemmas of organisation and its relation to anarchic ends today.⁷⁷ We can find evidence of non-hierarchical

⁷⁴ Daniel edt Guérin and Paul trl Sharkey, *No gods, no masters*, Complete unabridged ed. ed. (Oakland, CA ; Edinburgh: AK Press, 2005).

⁷⁵ William H. George, 'Proudhon and Economic Federalism', *The Journal of Political Economy* 30, no. 4 (1922), Thomas O. Hueglin, 'Yet the Age of Anarchism? ', *Publius* 15, no. 2 (1985), Dimitrios Karmis, 'Pourquoi lire Proudhon Aujourd'hui? Le fédéralisme et le défi de la solidarité dans les sociétés divisées', *Politique et Sociétés* 21, no. 1 (2002), Yves Simon, 'A Note on Proudhon's Federalism', in *Federalism as Grand Design: Political Philosophers and the Federal Principle*, ed. Daniel J. Elazar (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987).

C. Berneri *Peter Kropotkin. His Federalist Ideas* (1942) available at

http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/coldoffthepresses/bernerikropotkin.html [Accessed 15/05/10]

Colin Ward, 'The Anarchist Sociology of Federalism' *Freedom*, June/July 1992. Available at

<http://library.nothingness.org/articles/anar/en/display/334> [Accessed 15/05/10]; Michael Bakunin 'Federalism,

Socialism, Anti-Theologism' available at

<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/various/reasons-of-state.htm> [Accessed 15/05/10] Cf. V.

I. Lenin 'On the Slogan for a United States of Europe' available at

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1915/aug/23.htm> [Accessed 15/05/10].

⁷⁶ Sam Dolgoff, ed., *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' Self Management in the Spanish Revolution 1936-1939* (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1974).

⁷⁷ Gordon, *Anarchy Alive!: Anti-Authoritarian Politics from Practice to Theory*, Graeber, *Direct Action: An Ethnography*.

organisation in infoshops and autonomous spaces,⁷⁸ in wider debates about union/social/trade federations, in the history of labour movements,⁷⁹ women's movements,⁸⁰ debates about sexuality and identity,⁸¹ nature and environmentalism,⁸² and so on. What is consistently argued is that the state cannot defend autonomy because its very *raison d'être* is predicated on denying that autonomy. The structures of modern political power cannot be reformed – they must be abandoned. Global social democracy, from the perspective outlined here, has failed to deliver. At the heart of this failure is the inability of states to adequately represent the interests of those it presumes to govern.⁸³ Those responsible for reconstituting contemporary post-statist politics would do well to look to anarchism for inspiration. The evident fact that they are unlikely to do so tells us much about the priorities of those who deign to represent our interests.

Conclusion

So why is anarchy the precondition of autonomy? The simple answer is that if one is ruled directly or indirectly by a political or economic sovereign, one cannot be said to be autonomous in one's actions.

⁷⁸ Tom Goyens, 'Social space and the practice of anarchist history', *Rethinking History* 13, no. 4 (2009).

⁷⁹ David Berry, *A history of the French anarchist movement, 1917-1945* (Westport, Conn. ; London: Greenwood Press, 2002).

⁸⁰ Martha A. Ackelsberg, *Free women of Spain : anarchism and the struggle for the emancipation of women* (Oakland, Calif. ; Edinburgh: AK Press, 2005).

⁸¹ Jamie Heckert, 'Sexual/Identity/Politics', in *Changing Anarchism: Anarchist theory and practice in a global age*, ed. Jon Purkis and James Bowen (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2004).

⁸² Elise e Reclus and Béatrice Giblin-Delvallet, *L'homme et la terre : histoire contemporaine* (Paris: Fayard, 1990).

⁸³ David Bailey, 'Governance or the Crisis of Governmentality? Applying critical state theory at the European leve', *Journal of European Public Policy* 13, no. 1 (2006), David J. Bailey, 'The Transition to 'New' Social Democracy: The Role of Capitalism, Representation and (Hampered) Contestation', *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 11, no. 4 (2009), Jesse S. Cohn, *Anarchism and the crisis of representation : hermeneutics, aesthetics, politics* (Selinsgrove, [Pa.]: Susquehanna University Press, 2006), Motta and Bailey, 'Neither pragmatic adaptation nor misguided accommodation: Modernisation as domination in the Chilean and British Left'.

What I have tried to show here is that any historical weight that David Held tries to use to prop up his analysis of the propitious historical times we live in galling vis-à-vis the warnings of the anarchists in the nineteenth century. Indeed, this shift in the debate on the left suggests that anarchism deserves a serious audience from all quarters. The challenge for those who wish to argue an anarchist case is to do so with conviction and sophistication. I would suggest that in the area of political philosophy and political theory, this explosion of cosmopolitan literature, in particular David Held's work may be a good place to begin to think about anarchism in relation to global politics. As I have shown, there is general agreement on the centrality of the principle of autonomy, the desire to move between and beyond the tired old antinomy on the left, the desire to provide robust defence of the ethical worth of the individual alongside a sense of communal solidarity. There is also general agreement on the means by which autonomy can be best defended – radical democracy – even if there is still room for debate regarding the most appropriate institutional structures through which it might be realised.

In this regard, we need to ask whether a new compromise between labour, capital and the state is really adequate to the demands of our contemporary historical juncture. If society is plural then surely our institutions ought to reflect that. A new stitch-up between state, capital and labour, with the latter the minor and somewhat inadequate party would be a *ménage à trois* that elides the very real diversity of modern politics. The state is both 'too big and too small', as Andrew Linklater has argued. It is too big to be able to respond to the micro and too small to respond to the macro political issues of the day. While this suggests, as Held rightly argues, that a multi-level governance polity, subsidiarity and even a neo-medieval political system might be necessary, it is hard to see how the state and those who would use it for their inevitably partial ends, can be legitimately left standing. Indeed, this is precisely why anarchist political philosophy is a politics of action. As I have argued, anarchist autonomy and self-organisation fractals into myriad forms, each, to the extent that it is possible, outside the formal structures of the state. This autonomy is central to showing that life without the state is not only possible but central to adequately defending autonomy. Indeed, much the same argument has been made in relation to the economy. Here, where capitalists have reigned sovereign over their employees and unions mollify the stark injustices of this economic dictatorship, anarchists seek autonomy in an infinite variety of anti-capitalist social forms. With each break away group, new collective, cooperative or federation, society becomes more complex, more enmeshed and the

complexity of the balances of power militate against the inappropriate monopolisation of power by any one person or group(ing). This is the quintessential post-sovereign politics and one which has not been given the attention it deserves by critical theorists across what's left of the left.

There are more immediate reasons for this imperative to revisit anarchism. It is perhaps an understatement to say that at the time of writing these are interesting times in which we live in the UK. The collapse of New Labour, the drive for refreshing electoral system and a seemingly comprehensive break from 20th century politics has been compounded by a hung parliament, the tendency for politicians to slip into the old rhetoric of 'the national interest' and 'the people' as if appealing to a unified and disaggregated mass somehow bought legitimacy to public policy. We live in new times but we do not have the grammar of politics necessary to express how we might adequately respond to it. While abroad, the integration of the global economy and the institutionalisation of political processes beyond the state, utopian in the 1970s, have seemingly become cemented, commentators still try and offer grand solutions in the tired and outdated idiom of 'global social democracy' or of a 'world government'. Traditional lines of thinking on right and left seem to find little support in broad swathes of the population in most modern democracies, particularly within those groups who are least apathetic and most active in their opposition to 'politics as usual'. If apathy and disengagement are the norm, why are new forms of political engagement seen as utopian? In this situation, options can once again be put on the table. The arguments set out here and in this forum are one step in this direction. We no longer live in the nineteenth century, but we are still dealing with and attempting to deal with the legacy of statism, state-led capitalism and the radical neo-liberal rejection of states and embrace of profit. In this context, when none seem to have ideological predominance, anarchism can contribute much of promise. In this regard, the political centre ground is defined in relation to the poles. By bringing anarchism to the fore it becomes possible to rearticulate a radical left politics in an unconventional idiom and should a future 'third way' come into being, it will be a third way is cognizant of a more representative articulation of the options available in moving between and beyond liberalism and Marxism. Finally, in response to Heiki Patomäki's probing critique of the latent militarism and Eurocentrism of his work, two more issues I have not had the space to draw attention to here, Held responded that '[d]espite these many differences between us, I think we'll be marching together all the way to the 'barricades' and we'll probably find ourselves on the

same side! We'll be arguing as usual, but also recognising that we have a huge common project – global democratisation. See you there!⁸⁴ I think, with the social democracy conspicuously absent in this plea for comradeship, we might indeed be on the same side. See you there!

⁸⁴ Held and Patomäki, 'Problems of Global Democracy: A Dialogue': 130.