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2013

# The Ethics of Solidarity

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Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

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# THE ETHICS OF SOLIDARITY:

# REPUBLICAN, MARXIST AND ANARCHIST INTERPRETATIONS

Leah Hunt-Hendrix

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

OF PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

RECOMMENDED FOR ACCEPTANCE

BY THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Advisor: Jeffrey Stout

January, 2014

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# Abstract

This dissertation traces this history of the idea of solidarity, focusing on its emergence as a political concept in the mid-1800s and following it through several 19th century social movements. Examining the writings of republican, Marxist, and anarchist thinkers, I indicate the way in which the term "solidarity" is used to signal a path between the twin threats of atomistic individualism and statist collectivism. In a period of tumultuous social upheavals, the overthrow of monarchies and the consolidation of capitalism and the nation-state, the invocation of the term expresses a desire for new kinds of collectivities, in which individual freedom and the common good are reconciled. By exploring past debates, I hope that this study can offer a useful intervention in contemporary political thought and practice by illuminating the relational and ethical basis of large-scale social and political change.

# Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been possible but for the unending patience, guidance, and support of Jeffrey Stout. To Jeff I am grateful not only as an advisor, but as a mentor and model of the pursuit of scholarship in the service of justice and charity. I am also thankful beyond words to Eric Gregory and Cornel West, for creating an environment at Princeton of integrity, sincerity, and courage. Eric was an ally as I explored questions of global justice and humanitarianism, and to be a student of Cornel's is to be introduced to a depth of generosity and humility that is rarely beheld. Patty B also provided infinite encouragement and support. The department at Princeton taught me how to challenge boundaries while acknowledging my debts to those who have gone before, and provided a community and a home as I grappled with the relationship between theory and practice.

There are many people who provided the inspiration for this work. Stanley Hauerwas laid the initial bricks in my intellectual formation. Romand Coles taught me to love Derrida, community organizing and agonistic tensions. Jefferson Finch and Adam Hollowell were my true thought partners at Duke. At Princeton, I could not have lasted without the friendship of Philippa Townsend and the late antiquity crew in my first year; Bridget Purcell, Peter Locke, and the inspiration of the anthropologists upon my return from abroad; Emily Dumler, Mel Webb, and Sarah Stewart-Kroeker at the Seminary; and Andrea Sun-Mee Jones, Molly Farneth, Joseph Clair, Shira Billet and the rest of the Religion, Ethics, and Politics cohort. Mika Ahuvia has been my rock and advocate. And I am particularly thankful to Serene Jones, who read and advised me along the way, and has supported my work both inside and outside of academia.

I am also grateful to all those who taught me along the way about what it means to look hard into the face of injustice and to speak truth to power. To Sarah Hegland, Mark Randazzo, Max Berger, Nelini Stamp, Brendan Martin, Betsy Mesard, Maysoon Al-Suweidan, Jimmie Johnson, Jeff Halper, Naila Ayesh, Jee Kim, Farhad Ebrahimi, Billy Wimsatt, Brooke Lehmann, Rebecca Manski, Jillian Buckley, and so many more, I wish I could express my profound sense of gratitude to know you, and to call you friends.

To my brother, Hunter, my parents, and the rest of my family: you are the air I breathe.

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# INTRODUCTION

The office of the Israeli Committee Against House Demolition was cluttered with books, papers, and protest placards. Across from me sat Jeff Halper, a Minnesotan with a scruffy white beard, who had moved to Israel in his youth to learn more about his heritage. Jeff had become involved in workers' rights movements in Israel, and over time, he had also become concerned about the relationship between Israel and the Palestinians. In 1997, he created ICAHD to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinians whose homes were being demolished.

Solidarity is a controversial word in this and many other contexts. It rings of struggle and conflict between "us and them." But it is also a complex and nuanced practice. When I asked Jeff about his efforts to be in solidarity, he commented, "There is that grounded, organic solidarity where you share the same suffering. Like the solidarity Palestinians have with each other. But this is different from political solidarity. That is based on an issue, and it might not be self-evident. It requires a level of analysis. That solidarity is chosen."[1] Jeff distinguishes himself from "liberals" who, he said, would probably sign a petition expressing their commitment to human rights. He also distinguishes his work from humanitarianism, recalling a time when one of his volunteers attempted to give a Palestinian woman a pair of old shoes. The woman refused the shoes, and cried out, "Victims of war are not like victims of earthquakes!" Solidarity was different. It was not simply humanitarian. It was political.

> The political solidarity I'm talking about has a commitment that takes you beyond just signing a petition—it takes you into some actual proactive act of doing something. But there still is a certain distance, I guess. Because in organic solidarity, we're in the same boat. But I'm not in the same boat as a Palestinian. I can go home, and no one is going to demolish my house. I'm privileged. I can leave the country and go back to Minnesota. But commitment plus action gets us into solidarity.[2]

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[1] Jeff Halper, interview by Leah Hunt-Hendrix, Ramallah, July 20, 2009.
[2] Halper, interview, March 27, 2011.

It was this kind of political solidarity that intrigued me. As a commitment that required action, solidarity seemed to be more of a disposition that oriented one's life than an isolated moment. It was a concept that insisted on the possibility of redefining oneself through an elected affinity with another. As I travelled between spaces of transnational activism around climate change, economic justice, and political freedoms, I began to note that the concept of solidarity was central to the discourse, and I became curious about how this vocabulary was connected to a larger political orientation, a particular understanding of politics. I wanted to know: Where does the idea of solidarity come from? What does it look like? How does it differ from compassion or benevolence? What does it mean about the definition of community in a global age? What is its potential? What are its dangers?

……

As a political concept, the term "solidarity" is quite modern. Only in the 1800s does it begin to be widely used, indicating something of an aspirational orientation for political community. In his tract *On Solidarity* (1900), a prominent French politician, Léon Bourgeois, writes that "*solidarité*" seems, on first blush, to be the heir apparent to the third term in the revolutionary trinity: liberty, equality, and fraternity. But what, he asks, does this concept mean? Is solidarity simply the fashionable new term for the old idea of fraternity? Or is it a fundamentally *new idea*?[3] For Bourgeois, and those around him, the concept of solidarity would appear as a remedy for the ills and anxieties of changing times, as the *via media* between the modern, free individual and the traditions of community. By 1914, Léon Duguit would write, "the word 'solidarity' is today singularly abused. There is not a book, a newspaper, a meeting, an

[3] Léon Bourgeois, *Solidarité,* 3rd edition (Paris: Librarie Armand Colin, 1902)

address or a formal speech in which it is not frequently repeated."[4] What did this sudden emergence, in the course of a few decades, signify?

Since the late 1800s, the idea of solidarity has become prominent in political discourse. And yet, Kurt Bayertz writes, "the phenomenon of solidarity lies like an erratic block of stone in the moral landscape of modernity. Its routine use is well established, but nevertheless it remains something of a foreign body. Because of its range and importance, it is immense, and at the same time unapproachable."[5] There are remarkably few studies of the concept in comparison with the countless treatises on justice, liberty, or equality. Given the importance of the term in the past century and a half, the scantiness of the literature on the topic is surprising, leaving us unprepared to understand what is meant by claims of solidarity when it becomes a prominent discourse among political actors. This dissertation aims to remedy this lack, exploring the history of the idea of solidarity, and what that history means for contemporary political thought and practice.

My aim here is not to offer a typology of the various forms of solidarity, or a sociological analysis of group cohesion, but to focus instead on the *discourse* of solidarity. By discourse, I mean the public conversation or collective use of language to shape practices and ideas. I do not try to determine the *meaning* of "solidarity" or come to a conclusion about its definition, but instead my goal is to uncover what historical discussions about the concept might reveal that could be of use for contemporary political imaginings.

Upon pursuing a deeper investigation into the idea of solidarity, both its contemporary uses and the background of the concept in history, it became clear that the term was often used

[4] Leon Duguit, "Theory of Objective Law Anterior to the State" in *Modern French Legal Philosophy,* Ed. Alfred Fouillée et al., trans. Franklin Scott (The Boston Book Company, 1916), 258.
[5] Kurt Bayertz, *Solidarity* (Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Klewer Academic Publishers, 1999), 9.

by traditions seeking alternatives to liberal political and economic theory and practice. Solidarity has to do with mutual well-being, with political organization, with the relationships of individuals in a community, and with the relationships between communities under the banner of a search for the common good. It was a rejection of the vision of a world composed of atomized, rational, autonomous individuals, primarily seeking their personal freedom and self-interest.

I began with a hope that there might be a single tradition in which the idea was developed and articulated most explicitly. But the result was the discovery of multiple traditions that have now been engaged in over a century of mutual critique and debate. In this dissertation, I will focus on the discourse of solidarity in three traditions: republican, Marxist, and anarchist. At points, these traditions overlap and intertwine, such as in democratic-socialism, which combines republican means with Marxist-socialist ends, that is, the goal of socializing the ownership of the means of production. Marxists and anarchists come together in their pursuit of this socialist aim as well, though they are divided by their views on strategy and ultimate vision. Meanwhile, anarchists may range from collectivist to libertarian, though they agree among themselves about the potential dangers of the state. The internal diversity of these traditions, and the convergences between them, problematizes the framing used here; but for our purposes, the distinctions between these traditions are helpful in illuminating certain standpoints taken around issues of shared concern, such as how to create social harmony, how to build solidarity through social and institutional structures, and how to achieve a balance between liberty and equality.

All of these traditions, which continue today in various forms, radically opposed the status quo and sought to develop the concept of solidarity as an alternative to the liberal, individualistic framework that was gaining traction during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. But while they converge around what they are against, they are distinguished by what

they are *for* and how they envision the attainment of solidarity. Members of these traditions all worried about the effects of industrial capitalism and the modern factory system, and they worried about the detrimental consequences such economic forms would have on society. They were all adamant opponents of the liberal and individualistic political theories, which they saw to be buttressing a flawed economic system. More specifically, they all opposed the idea that freedom was ultimately found in the negative sense of freedom *from* constraints, and they rejected the idea of the free market as the invisible hand. All were highly attentive to the potential for domination when political and economic powers are not sufficiently accountable. All saw a principle of solidarity—a logic of affinity, community, responsibility—as a defense against this domination. Finally, while all of these were rooted in a historical context, that of the nineteenth century, the age of industrialization and the consolidation of the nation-state, they all continue today, in different guises, in new contexts.

Despite these similarities, these traditions are marked by important distinctions. There remains significant disagreement about what solidarity looks like and how it is sufficiently strong for those within the community and hospitable to those without. Differences remain around the role of representation, coercion, the relationship between ends and means, and the ultimate aims toward which these orientations strive. For many, solidarity resembles a call to community, but with this comes all the concomitant problems about who is included or excluded, how boundaries are defined, and how otherness is constructed. Some thinkers and actors in these traditions set their sights on the cosmopolitan possibility of universal solidarity, but the challenge would be to understand how affinity and community function as that community widens and expands.

Along the way, I want to point out the role of religion and the centrality of ethical thought to a concept of solidarity. Indeed, questions about religion and sacredness, the unity of humanity, and the need to cultivate ethical practices were very present in the early discussions among theorists of solidarity in the 1800s. By the 1890s, when solidarity had become a prominent discourse in European thought, the Catholic Church began to make significant contributions to an understanding of economic exploitation as undermining the common good. While solidarity has been a theme of many religions, we will focus on the specific example of Catholic Social Teaching and its relationship to debates between civic republicans, the labor movement, and democratic-socialism, exploring the ways in which the Church has both adapted and propelled new ways of thinking about justice, charity, and solidarity. Solidarity, it turns out, as Durkheim argues, fundamentally has to do with what we hold sacred, a realization that has consequences for theists and nontheists alike.

I should be clear that my motivations are tied to the political context in which I have been organizing for the past several years. As a participant in the alter-globalization and Occupy movements, I have come to believe that communities struggling for change in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries face a crisis of ideology. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, the reign of neoliberalism as the prevailing dogma, and impending economic, environmental, and political calamities, many individuals and groups are searching for new ways of thinking about the construction of society. The alternatives to liberalism that were on offer in the nineteenth century remain today's main options for understanding the possibilities of politics. While the context is different, there are significant continuities. One of our critical tasks is to mine these histories for their lessons, to shake off the aspects that proved problematic, and to lift up the

elements that had potential. I hope that I can at least begin to suggest why there is a need to return to these sources and to situate ourselves in this history as we forge a way ahead.

## LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

As noted, compared to themes of liberty, justice, and equality, there are few studies of solidarity in political theory. Several exceptions include an edited volume by Kurt Bayertz, which brings together contributions from a variety of fields to examine the philosophical contours of the topic, in addition to its sociological, psychological, biological, and political aspects.[6] Sally Scholtz offers an analytical theorization of solidarity as a political concept in *Political Solidarity*.[7] Political solidarity, she argues, differs from social and civic solidarity in its express attempts to bring about political change by uniting individuals in opposition to oppression and tyranny.

Where Sholtz offers an analytical dissection of the different types of solidarity, Steiner Stjerno provides a historical contextualization of the term in *Solidarity in Europe: The History of an Idea*.[8] He describes the development of the concept over time in European intellectual history and demonstrates its role in the discourse of European political parties. Stjerno offers a comparison of the idea of solidarity in Marxism and Christianity. However, given the brevity of his analysis, and his focus on Europe, he is unable to attend to key figures both within and outside Europe who have impacted the development of the concept. While Stjerno ends with an examination of the role of the concept in European political party platforms, I will explore its role in contemporary grassroots social movements, in which the concept takes another turn and gains new content.

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[6] Kurt Bayertz, ed. *Solidarity* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Klewer Academic Publishers, 1999).
[7] Sally Scholtz, *Political Solidarity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 2008).
[8] Steiner Stjerno, *Solidarity in Europe: The History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

The work that is closest in intention to mine, and which I also seek to contest, is Hauke Brunkhorst's *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to Global Legal Community*.[9] Brunkhorst situates solidarity in relation to ancient forms of civic friendship and attempts to develop a conception appropriate to modernity, "a solidarity among strangers," open to difference and based on human rights. While I agree with this effort to emphasize a notion of solidarity in contemporary politics, he argues for a global *legal* framework as the ultimate embodiment of this endeavor. In contrast, I argue that there is a need to hold the tension between the traditions that seek greater solidarity, for they continue to raise questions that Brunkhorst's position fails to answer, questions about power, authority, and representation. Who has the right to determine the global rules? Whose definition of justice will prevail? What are the conditions in which such laws gain legitimacy? What is necessary, besides a legal framework, for the possibility of solidarity? What to do with contestations over sacred value and religious traditions? I will depart from Brunkhorst's formulation of a modern secular concept of solidarity by illuminating challenges posed by contemporary social movements that advocate for a "way of many ways," counter-cosmopolitanism, rather than taking the global community as a static ideal.

What primarily differentiates this study of "solidarity" from the others is its focus on the relationship between theory and practice. My approach to the concept is as a discourse and idea that are historically situated and developed by political actors who sought to solve a major problem in modernity: that of the dissolution of community. The term is not simply a static philosophical concept, which we must strive to better understand as an already existing ideal. Rather, it is a historical concept, developed in relationship with changing social events, and it serves as a key to unlocking how the traditions we have inherited imagined community, justice,

[9] Hauke Brunkhorst, *Solidarity: From Civic Friendship to Global Legal Community*, trans. Jeffrey Flynn (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2005).

freedom, and responsibility. The historical chapters of this dissertation examine how solidarity has been written about, argued about, and practiced in order to gain a better sense of what options are available to restore a sense of community and interdependence to contemporary political life.

In the last part of the dissertation, my exploration of social movements is an attempt to learn from contemporary efforts to develop new theories in tandem with new practices. As Lawrence Goodwyn argues in his work on the independent trade union movement in Poland, *Solidarity*, too little attention is given by academics and scholars to the knowledge created by political actors on the ground, particularly grassroots activists.[10] In line with Goodwyn's work, the social movement chapters in part III embody an effort to let theory be led and informed by engagement with political actors who are invoking the notion of solidarity. The final part of this dissertation will make use of ethnographic methods to engage with contemporary movements that are pushing at the boundaries of political theory. Where activists have themselves been involved in reflecting on their work, I will draw from their written materials, including memoirs, organizational documents, and online resources.

## OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS

While the concept of solidarity as a sociological principle or a political ideal is quite modern, the notion that politics is fundamentally an ethical and relational practice takes us back to Ancient Greece and Rome. Beginning with Aristotle and Cicero in chapter 1 is helpful, not only because of their continued influence on contemporary political thought, but also because of their emphasis on friendship and the good life. For Aristotle, friendship is central to politics

[10] Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarity in Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

because it helps orient the friends toward that which is good for themselves, individually and together. It is the basis of a correct understanding of justice, and it is the context in which persons develop the virtues necessary for the attainment of happiness. This particular ethical orientation, which holds politics and ethics closely together and makes relationships fundamental to a thriving community, becomes the critical foundation for modern debates about the meaning of justice and the possibilities of political community. Cicero, in turn, has gone on to be foundational in the development of the civic republicanism that influences the French and American revolutions and continues to inspire democratic-republican thought around the world today.

In chapter 2, we turn to another kind of "origin": the etymological source of the term "solidarity" and the beginning of its modern usage. In "Modern Elaborations," we look back to the 1600s and 1700s, beginning our genealogy at the founding of the nation-state, centralized banking, and modern law. The term is recovered from Roman law as a way to create collective responsibility, *obligatio in solidum*, in a world that was becoming increasingly characterized by stringent exchanges, new accumulations of wealth, and high levels of poverty. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the term is expanded to argue that we all have a debt to society. Pierre Leroux begins to develop the idea as an alternative to Christian charity and a foundational concept for socialism. But almost simultaneously, it is adopted by organicist thinkers, who use the idea to think about society as a social organism in which harmony is achieved through the fact of difference and differentiation. When the labor movement gains traction in the mid-1800s and the First International comes under the leadership of Karl Marx, the idea of solidarity becomes contested by anarchists, state socialists, and civic republicans who are influenced by organicist ideas, each with their own perspective on how solidarity can be obtained.

In part II, we look more closely at the debates of the *fin de siècle*, the end of the 1800s. In this part, I explore three sites where the concept of solidarity is developed as a political ideal. In chapter 3, I examine the rise of modern republicanism as a tradition that sought to overthrow the monarchy, emphasizing the importance of community, virtue, and non-domination. In addition to an investigation of the "solidarists," including Léon Bourgeois and Albert Fouillée, I turn to the work of Émile Durkheim, who lays the foundation for the modern field of sociology. One of Durkheim's major contributions was a rejection of the idea of the abstract individual and a clear articulation of how every person, and every thought, is socially constructed. Space, time, numbers, causality—as an anthropologist he would argue that different communities understand each of these concepts differently. Coming to share a conception of space and time, of good and evil, is part of what holds a community together. And often, this happens in the form of religion. Durkheim is best known for his argument that the importance of a religion is not its proximity to an absolute truth, but its ability to hold a community together by creating shared beliefs and practices, by creating solidarity.

Analyzing premodern and modern societies, Durkheim creates a distinction between two types of solidarity. Modernity, he argues, has birthed a new form of solidarity, which is based not on our similarities, but on our differences. Our differences tie us together by making us interdependent. And yet, despite this effect, he admits that modern egoism has become an obstacle. Every society, he writes, is oriented around a concept of the sacred; and in modernity, the individual had become this shared idol. This would seem to provide a way to reconcile the individual and the community: if the community endows that individual with their sacredness, then the individual owes its status to the community, thus making the two interdependent. However, Durkheim illuminates the precarity of this situation and the possibility that society is

being torn apart by this focus on the individual. He begins to advocate for new institutions, arguing that solidarity may not in fact be a given but needs instead to be cultivated.

In chapter 4, I explore developments in Marxist thought at the end of the 1800s. Here we see solidarity take on a more prominent political, rather than simply social, role. Truth and politics will unite in debates about economics, which has long been one of the primary battlefields of ideology. Marxist thinkers would make efforts to contest the hegemony of capitalism and assert solidarity as a contrasting foundation for the basis of economic activity. The workers of the world were called to unite and bring in a new social order.

But even within Marxist circles, there were divergent views about the meaning of the concept. I focus on debates between Rosa Luxemburg, Eduard Bernstein, and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. How solidarity should be cultivated, how the masses should relate to the party, how means should relate to ends: these debates were hugely impactful on the history of communism and socialism. In contrast to the leadership styles of Lenin and Bernstein, Luxemburg would argue for a populist conception of solidarity, which sought to cultivate unity through democratic practices and shared struggle. The lessons from that period resound in today's movements, and Luxemburg's legacy offers much for contemporary efforts seeking to unite a commitment to economic equality with democratic participation.

In chapter 5, I turn to the nineteenth-century anarchist tradition of Proudhon, Bakunin, and Kropotkin. In addition to identifying the problem of capital as a source of domination, thinkers in this tradition attended to the relationship between economics and politics. Instead of seeing the state as a source of defensive power against capital, anarchists identified the danger that those two sources of power work together to dominate communities and individuals.

In response to this problem, anarchists sought a "social revolution" that would work to establish a new society on the basis of local, self-organized communities. This vision can be characterized by what Richard Day calls "a logic of affinity." Solidarity and mutual aid become the basis of social relations, which are not mediated through the state but through the processes of production and exchange. While criticized as utopian, if not dangerous, anarchism has in fact had a rich influence over the past century. It was a significant movement during the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s, until Franco defeated the communities of self-organized workers. It also provided an orientation for the Catholic Worker Movement of Dorothy Day and Peter Maurin, which brought together political radicalism and devout Catholicism. And it continues to be central to the movements of the early twenty-first century, including the alter-globalization movement and Occupy Wall Street, which contest the symbiotic relationship between state power and economic exploitation today.

In part III, I turn to three social movements at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries to explore how these traditions have developed over time. In each of these movements, the idea of solidarity is a central discourse, indicating an effort to create political community in a new historical age. My selection of case studies here does not intend to be comprehensive in any way, but I hope it serves to illuminate continuities and discontinuities in ideas about how community functions in the modern, global age.

In chapter 6, I look at the Polish worker's movement, Solidarność. The Catholic Church played a central role in this movement, and I hope to show how this influence helped to expand the idea of solidarity and clarify its role as an ethical concept. Solidarity had to do not simply with finding similarity and unity, but with taking an ethical stand alongside different and distant

others. The relationship between the Church and the Left created an opportunity to form new language and new concepts about the possibility of collaboration across lines of difference.

In chapter 7, I reflect on the development of the concept in the global justice, or alter-globalization, movement. This movement takes us deeper into what it means to think of solidarity as a concept that bridges across lines of difference. In particular, having come through several decades of identity politics, which emphasized the diversity of ways in which injustice is experienced, activists are seeking ways and means to come together again in transnational networks. But this unity, which is established on the grounds of difference rather than similarity, redefines what it means to be in community. The poems of the Zapatistas, or the charter of the World Social Forum, profess a search for a "way of many ways," which would allow for communities to determine what the "good life" looks like for themselves. Solidarity emerges in the willingness to hold the careful balance between an emphasis on commonality and a recognition of difference.

Situating the alter-globalization movement in relation to the traditions outlined in part II, however, allows us to better understand the differing tendencies that make up the movement. Contesting ideas about what solidarity looks like, and how to create unity in ways that allow for diversity, emerge, in part, because of these competing legacies. While the alter-globalization movement, in its opposition to neoliberalism, contains remnants of a Marxist analysis of capitalism, it is also characterized by a strong rejection of the rigidity of the Old Left. Richard Day will argue that the movement is a reflection of the ongoing relevance of anarchism and the realization of the need to better integrate ends and means in a prefigurative politics of affinity. But we can also witness new concepts and possibilities emerging in these movement spaces, which are breaking off from the nineteenth-century dogmas. Tracing these continuities and

discontinuities will enable a deeper understanding of the context and dynamics that characterize many contemporary transnational movements.

In chapter 8, I turn to Occupy Wall Street, as an example of a contemporary U.S.-based movement for wholesale social transformation. Once again, far from emerging in a vacuum, this movement displays important continuities with the previous traditions. But in this chapter, I explore conversations about the ends and means of social transformation in greater depth. Occupy was not simply a political movement; it was a movement that sought a revaluation of values, a reexamination of what we hold to be sacred and good. It was a movement *for* solidarity; that is, solidarity was not only the means but also the end. Occupy was an enigma to many onlookers because of its "lack of demands" and apparent lack of strategy. But understanding Occupy as an attempt to more tightly bind together ends and means, to prefigure alternatives rather than seek incremental reforms, helps to clarify the logic that was at work.

… … …

This dissertation charts a path from Greek and Roman thought, to the first uses of the term "solidarity" in the modern period, through French republican thought, into Marxist and anarchist debates, through Catholic Social Teaching, and finally into several contemporary social movements. This broad survey of the topic has the benefit of revealing a debate, among the opponents of liberalism, over what sort of solidarity is worth striving for. My hope is that, through an examination of several traditions that have made this concept central, we can garner lessons for how to continue such a project today, a project that attempts to manifest alternatives to individualism, consumerism, and drastic inequalities of wealth. How might the concept of solidarity function to orient modern pluralistic, multicultural, multi-issue movements? How might it provide resources for those who wish not only to fight against domination and

exploitation, but also to produce alternative social and economic structures? I hope that these pages begin to elucidate some of the challenges and possibilities.

# PART 1: ORIGINS

## CHAPTER 1

### CLASSICAL ANTECEDENTS: ARISTOTLE AND CICERO ON THE POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP

> And the extent of their community is the extent of their friendship, as it is the extent to which justice exists between them.
>
> —Aristotle

In modern political thought, friendship is often considered a category of private relationships. It is a personal relationship, an intimate relationship, one that is the prerogative of the individual to participate in as he or she wills. As Hannah Arendt puts it,

> We (moderns) are wont to see friendship solely as a phenomenon of intimacy, in which the friends open their hearts to each other unmolested by the world and its demands.…This view… conforms so well to the basic attitude of the modern individual, who in his alienation from the world can truly reveal himself only in privacy and in the intimacy of face-to-face encounters. Thus it is hard for us to understand the political relevance of friendship.[1]

What might it look like to recover friendship as a political concept? For Aristotle and Cicero, public friendship, an orientation of reciprocal concern toward one's fellow citizens, was central to the possibility of justice. A just society required that there be just relations between people. And these relations would be strengthened and enduring not only through the laws, but through the cultivation of the right affections, feelings, and virtues in each individual. For Aristotle and Cicero, politics was inextricable from ethics, and ethics had to do with the texture of relationship.

[1] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 24.

The idea of solidarity emerges in the nineteenth century as a modern concept of political friendship. But its conceptual origins bring us back to Ancient Greece and Rome. This chapter begins with an examination of two ancient thinkers who both contribute significantly to modern political thought, though their discussions of friendship are often overlooked. For Aristotle, all human activity is directed toward happiness, or flourishing, and friendship plays a critical role, both as a great pleasure and as a process of formation, which cultivates mutual concern and orients individuals toward the common good. According to political theorist Danielle Allen, "Aristotle's biggest philosophical claim about politics is that our political relationships with fellow citizens are no different from friendships."[2] The habits and practices of friendship are critical for the flourishing of the political community.

Cicero's *De Amicitia* echoes Aristotle's understanding of the central place of friendship in human life. He writes that friendship is one of the greatest gifts of the gods to humans. But for Cicero, the appeals to friendship and virtue are part of an attempt to save the Republican form. Writing just as Caesar was in the throes of turning the Republic into an empire, Cicero tried desperately to restore the idea of the good and virtuous life, against the pursuit of pleasure, glory, and fame. Concerned that the demise of the Republic had to do with the loss of virtue, Cicero hoped that a renewed interest in friendship, virtue, and the cultivation of character would contribute to the restoration of a just political community.

Aristotle and Cicero offer conceptions of politics where some sort of friendship is central to the possibility of justice. Friendship indicates the bond between citizens, a commitment to the common good. As Allen puts it, "this is not an argument that we should all just be friends.… Friendship is not an emotion, but a practice, a set of hard-won, complicated habits that are used

[2] Danielle Allen, *Talking with Strangers* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 137.

to bridge trouble, difficulty, and differences of personality, experience, and aspiration."[3] This perspective forms the basis for multiple political traditions, which, with the onset of modernity, resist the idea of the atomistic autonomous individual and continue to insist upon the importance of community—with its attendant rights and responsibilities—as the basis of politics. Both Aristotle and Cicero will contribute to the development of modern republicanism, Marxism, and anarchism, the three traditions that we will explore in greater depth in the chapters that follow.

As we will see, however, there are obvious limitations to these ancient formulations. Aristotle and Cicero were concerned about the pursuit of the Good. And both were interested in the relationship between the structures of formal politics and the development of individuals as interrelated aspects in the attainment of this good. But neither was concerned with individual freedom in the way that moderns are; neither extended the right to flourish and the ability to participate in political life to all people; both privileged men over women and allowed for slavery; neither had a strong conception of duties to those outside of the political community; and ultimately, they would both emphasize the importance of similarity and commonality, leaving little room for difference. Turning to the idea of solidarity over the course of this dissertation, we will want to explore how difference becomes the basis for community in a modern, pluralistic world.

## I. Aristotle and the Politics of Friendship

Aristotle begins *The Politics* with a definition of the state—the city-state as it existed in Ancient Greece. The state, he writes, is an association, and "every association is formed with a view to some good purpose."[4] The state is the highest form of human association, encompassing

[3] Ibid.
[4] Aristotle, *The Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1252a1.

the family and economic communities, and its purpose is to direct all of its parts to their highest end: the good life. But to understand what he means by the good life, one must return to his ethics.

While Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and *The Politics* are often read separately, as foundational texts for two distinct disciplines, the two works actually follow one another, with the *Ethics* setting up the background concepts to be applied in the *Politics*. In the *Nichomachean Ethics*, Aristotle writes that his hope in proceeding is that "we will perhaps grasp better what sort of political system is best; how each political system should be organized so as to be best; and what habits and laws it should follow."[5] The *Ethics* essentially forms the preface to the *Politics*, showing the way in which contemplation of the good life is inextricably intertwined in the enterprise of understanding existing politics, as well as in the project of imagining an ideal state. To understand how governments rule and what legislation is best, one must understand the ways people are formed by their communities and the ways change takes place.

Aristotle undertakes his quest into the meaning of "the good life" by examining the purpose of activity in general, asking why we do anything we do. All of our actions, he says, have a goal. A carpenter builds and carves to create a desk; a student studies her prose and poetry to get a good grade. But these actions are directed toward more than their immediate purpose. We desire a desk not for the desk itself, but as a place to work, and we work to gain an income, and we seek an income to provide for our families, and we provide for our families because….This chain of reasons cannot go on without end, Aristotle says. Why do we do any of these things? What is the last end? The end we seek for no end beside itself? Aristotle concludes that the human life aims toward *eudaimonia*, generally translated as happiness or flourishing. "Happiness is most choiceworthy of all the goods, since it is not counted as one good among

[5] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1999), 1181b21.

many.… Happiness, then, is apparently something complete and self-sufficient, since it is the end of the things achievable in action."[6] All of the things we do are oriented toward this goal.

But what, exactly, is happiness? This becomes the crucial starting place for inquiry into both ethics and politics. Aristotle writes that "the wellbeing of all men depends on two things: one is the right choice of a target, an end to which action should tend, the other lies in finding the actions that lead to that end."[7] People can err in choosing the correct goals or in choosing the correct means. Happiness will require both understanding the end toward which one must strive and the right means to get there.

At the end of the *Politics*, Aristotle writes that everyone should agree that we need three things to be happy: bodily health, moral and intellectual capacities, and external goods, such as wealth, power, and a good reputation. The problem, he writes, is that different people disagree about the priority of these three sets of goods. Some may say that happiness is a gift from the Gods, who grant them wealth and prosperity. And Aristotle will agree that it does, in part, lie in fortune. But he goes on to assert that, just as the harpist must cultivate the virtues of harp playing to become great at her art, humanity must cultivate the virtues of the soul to become truly happy. He states his position decisively:

> The life which is best for men, both separately, as individuals, and in the mass, as states, is the life which has virtue sufficiently supported by material resources to facilitate participation in the actions that virtue calls for.[8]

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[6] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1097b. Commentators note that the modern English translation of happiness is an imperfect translation, indicating a feeling or sentiment. For Aristotle, it is an activity in accordance with virtue. This involves pleasure and contentment, but these are not the main substance of *eudaimonia*. See Martha Nussbaum, *The Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 6; John Cooper, *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1986), 89.
[7] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1331b24.
[8] Ibid., 1323b36.

The best life, then, is one with just enough external goods such that one is able to pursue virtue. Ultimately, Aristotle will conclude that happiness is complete virtue over a complete lifetime.[9]

Happiness, therefore, is nothing other than a life of virtue. Or rather, virtue is nothing other than the key to happiness. As the moral philosopher and interpreter of Aristotle Alasdair MacIntyre puts it, we can define the virtues as "precisely those qualities the possession of which will enable an individual to achieve *eudaimonia* and the lack of which will frustrate his movement towards that *telos*."[10] To cultivate the virtues, then, is not merely a duty or an obligation, but rather the condition by which one can flourish.

This makes sense when one thinks of happiness in relation not to an isolated individual, but an individual in his or her social context. Happiness is the ability to flourish in that context, given the constraints and vulnerabilities, responsibilities and uncertainties, of mortal, social life. We may say that the happy life requires virtue because it is virtue that provides us with the ability to navigate our sociality and the precariousness of human existence.[11] Aristotle continually emphasizes the contingency of human life, its vulnerability and fragility. Virtue is that which enables a person to weather the storms, to handle the unexpected, to stay steady through uncertainty.

Through the process of cultivating virtue, we come to understand more about what happiness is. It is not a fleeting feeling, but it is pleasurable in the sense that one finds pleasure in what one loves, and the lover of virtue finds pleasure in acting virtuously.[12] Thus, the project of ethics is to develop an understanding of how to achieve the good and happy life through the

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[9] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1099b.
[10] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 148.
[11] Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*, 340.
[12] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 109bb40.

cultivation of the virtues and how to develop the correct desires such that one enjoys living virtuously. And this is true for both the individual and the city. While it is good to seek happiness for the individual, the highest good is the happiness of the community. The role of the legislator will be the cultivation of virtuous citizens, for "we took the goal of political science to be the best good; and most of its attention is devoted to the character of the citizens, to make them good people who do fine actions."[13] Statesmen, he writes, should study the soul, for their job is to create the conditions to cultivate that soul toward virtue and happiness.

The purpose of politics, then, is to *create the conditions* in which individuals can develop the virtues and live happy lives, both individually and together. But here an important distinction must be made. The art of politics is not itself the achievement of the good life. Rather, it is the means to that end; it establishes the context in which individuals and communities can attain the good life for themselves.[14] The highest good—happiness or virtue—is an activity that one lives out day-to-day, and this cannot be legislated, for it has to do with the dispositions that individuals cultivate in themselves. Nevertheless, legislation and political activity are directed toward creating the conditions that make it possible to flourish. For Aristotle, the best state is one that makes happiness, and the development of virtue, possible for all of its citizens.

Over the course of the *Nichomachean Ethics,* Aristotle investigates an array of different virtues, separating out their characteristics and giving them greater definition. After exploring the virtues of prudence, justice, magnanimity, and several others, Aristotle turns to friendship. Friendship, he claims, is, or is like, a virtue. What would it mean to think of friendship as a virtue? Friendship is a state of being that enables us to function well in the world. Like the other virtues, it will require cultivation and training; it is something that can be done well or badly; and

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[13] Ibid., 1099b29.
[14] Bernard Yack, *The Problem of a Political Animal: Community, Justice, and Conflict in Aristotelian Thought* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

it will depend on the intentionality of the agent, involving processes of reason and discernment. Aristotle confirms several of these points when he writes, "loving would seem to be a feeling, but friendship is a state. For loving is directed no less toward inanimate things, but reciprocal loving requires decision, and decision comes from a state; and good people wish good to the beloved for his own sake in accord with their state, not their feeling."[15] In contrast to the feelings of love or good will, friendship is a state that orients one to the well-being of another.

Despite this distinction of friendship from the ephemerality of feelings, emotions and sentiments do play a role in this ethical theory, as noted above. On Aristotle's account, acquiring the virtues requires attention to one's habits and practices and how one's actions contribute to the formation of one's character, including how one ultimately reacts and feels about certain things. While not all feelings indicate virtues, the cultivation of virtue does require the cultivation of the right kinds of feelings. Alasdair MacIntyre writes, "Virtues are dispositions not only to act in particular ways, but also to feel in particular ways … it is to act from inclination when one is properly formed. Moral education is an *education sentimentale*."[16] As L. A. Kosman explains, *praxis* and *pathos*, action and passion, are all subjects of ethical inquiry. How one engages the world and experiences suffering, pain, anger, love, and hope, is all a part of what it means to live well. Ethics for Aristotle is about the dynamics of relationship, how we move through life and relate to those around us.[17]

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[15] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, 1157b30.
[16] MacIntyre, *After Virtue,* 149.
[17] L. A. Kosman, "Being Properly Affected," in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 103-116.

Even though justice is the highest of the virtues, friendship remains prior to justice because it includes justice, and more. For Aristotle, friendship is greater than justice, for "friendship asks us to do what we can, not what is due."[18] Or again,

> Friendship would seem to hold cities together, and legislators would seem to be more concerned about it than about justice…. If people are friends, they have no need of justice, but if they are just they need friendship in addition; and the justice that is most just seems to belong to friendship.[19]

Friendship is a justice beyond justice, as Jacques Derrida will say. It structures the political community by becoming the bond between citizens and providing a connection that exceeds obligation. Friendship cultivates a sense of mutual concern. It involves feelings of affection and care. But it also involves particular habits, habits of listening, generosity, and wisdom. Friends are encouraged to learn about one another so that they can pursue what is best for one another in appropriate ways. Friendship expands our sense of what we desire for ourselves, as we begin to make our friend's and our own good equivalent. It is in this way that friendship paves the road to virtue.

Friendship is also politically important because of the context it creates for making decisions. By orienting individuals toward the common good, it facilitates the development of practical reasoning. As Sabina Lovibond explains, what people with practical wisdom know is not codifiable; it is not about adherence to a rule. Rather, it is an ability to be sensitive to what matters in a given situation and to respond appropriately. Practical wisdom revolves around "the appreciation by an agent of particular features of her situation that have evaluative significance of the kind relevant to ethics … [and] the ability to apply such awareness to the formation of a

[18] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* 1163b15.
[19] Ibid., 1155a25.

rationally defensible view about what should be done."[20] An emphasis on practical wisdom, therefore, marks an important distinction from the rule-based efforts of modern political theory, which aims to make justice manifest through law. For Aristotle and his modern heirs, law plays a crucial role, but it will never be able to capture all the relevant details of a situation. Ethics, therefore, must involve the development of a capacity to notice and determine what is being overlooked, what particulars require attention, and why it is that what proves just in one situation may not prove just in another. Friendship is key to this determination.

## II. CICERO AND THE ROMAN REPUBLIC

Aristotle's attention to friendship and virtue is central to a perspective that sees politics as a branch of ethics, as enveloped in the broad enterprise of seeking the good life. Several centuries later, Cicero would follow in this tradition, writing on many of the same topics that Plato and Aristotle undertook, translating their Greek into Latin. Like Plato and Aristotle, Cicero was concerned with theories of the state and the moral education of the citizenry. But his contributions offer a distinctive understanding of the relationship between friendship and politics.

Walter Nicgorski argues that there is a close affinity between Cicero's *De Re Publica,* his writings on the Republic, and his *De Amicitia*, his reflections on friendship. While the texts were written a decade apart, both show Cicero's concern about the relationship between virtue and politics, or more specifically, the cohesion of the Roman Republic:

> For Cicero, friendship's meaning is not exhausted in some kind of service to politics; it is a good in itself and a possible aid to even greater things. Yet friendship likely is the most important instrument in the micropolitics of Roman life where constitutional development and leadership turn on political alliances and the give-and-take of personal interactions and relationships. Those alliances and interactions seem to have become

[20] Sabina Lovibond, *Ethical Formation* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 27.

> terribly corrupted in the late Republic into forms of servile clientelism, bitter factionalism, and outright conspiracies for power and control.[21]

For Cicero, the potential of the Republic was dependent on the character and virtue of its citizens and statesmen, and on the health of the friendships between them. True relationships were integral to a stable political community. While one could not be a friend to everyone because of the constraints of time and space, Cicero notes, friendship represents the kind of orientation that should shape personal and political interactions.

Between 510 BC and 29 BC, Rome was ruled as a republic, with an intricate constitution that created opportunities for many citizens to share in governance. Cicero's life was dedicated to protecting the republican form. In both theory and practice, in his writings and activities, the Republic was Cicero's constant concern. But just three years after Cicero wrote the *De Re Publica*, Caesar would cross the Rubicon and begin the civil war that would lead to the fall of the Roman Republic and its transition into an empire. Writing in the years prior to these events, Cicero predicted that this collapse would be due to the vices of Rome's citizenry and leaders and their rapacious desire for wealth, power, and fame. And he would entreat them to contemplate the virtues and the goods in life that are not instrumental but inherently good, good in themselves.

The Roman Republic was characterized by an intricate series of checks and balances, which allowed for the participation of many and the leadership of the few. Rome was ruled by a ladder of executive magistrates and a series of assemblies. Two Consuls were elected by the citizenry for one-year terms and alternated in executive authority month by month. Under the Consuls were eight Praetors, who acted as judges and governed the provinces, and twenty Quaestors, who were elected to take care of financial affairs. The Senate played the central role

[21] Walter Nicgorski, "Cicero's Distinctive Voice on Friendship: De Amicitia and De Re Publica," in *Friendship and Politics,* ed. Richard Avramenko (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008), 105.

of managing domestic and foreign policy, and the Tribal Assemblies and Plebeian Councils spread decision-making power into non-aristocratic hands. As Cicero's writings show, the Roman republican ideal of liberty required a certain set of institutions and laws to protect the citizenry from domination. This was not a populist orientation, but one that sought checks and balances between monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic forces.

Cicero believed that hand-in-hand with the protection of individual liberty was the protection of the Republic itself. If personal liberty depended on just institutions and just laws, a threat to the Republic constituted a threat to liberty as a whole. For Cicero, it was up to the people of Rome to sustain the Republic. Thus, he begins *De Re Publica* with an exhortation to patriotism. This civic virtue was hoped to preside over factionalism, over the tendency for groups to be set against each other in the pursuit of narrow self-interest. It would be anachronistic to think of this as the attempt to create a collective identity, to create a visceral attachment to the Republic as an extension of one's self. But there was a sense in which, for both Aristotle and Cicero, friendship among citizens, extended even to those whom one does not know directly, is critical for the well-being of the political community. Patriotism, in this sense, was a love of fellow citizens and country, which was particularly important during chaos and unrest that characterized Cicero's moment.

A decade after *De Re Publica*, Cicero writes *De Amicitia* to expound further on his philosophy of friendship. Like Aristotle, it was deeply important for Cicero that every individual participate in the good life, improve his faculties, and cultivate the virtues. But this was also understood to involve responsibilities to one's community: "for the fact that every human being possesses a spark of the divinity means that he is also bound by an essential, indissoluble bond

with all his fellows, and this in turn demands that he must treat them decently."[22] Friendship gives insight into what virtue looks like, what it looks like to seek the good of others.

For both Cicero and Aristotle, friendship is an intimate relationship; and for both, it represents one of the most meaningful and beneficial aspects of human life. Friendship is not a good we seek for our personal advantage. It is not an instrumental good - something we hope will lead toward something else, something better. Friendship is a good in itself. Both use the concept to illuminate the fact that it is most natural to desire to love and be loved and to cherish community. But with the knowledge that friendship is closely tied to virtue and happiness, the question for both, essentially, is: what are the laws and structures that enable the most just and happy *polis*? What is the relationship between the cultivation of ethics and the constitution of the political community?

Aristotle and Cicero's discussions of the relationship between friendship and politics differ in ways that reflect their respective political contexts. Where Aristotle was concerned about a relatively small *polis*, Cicero was worried about a tumultuous republic, which he was watching begin to crumble under the weight of overextension and hubris. For the one, some kind of friendship, even if not the closest and most intimate kind, could exist between citizens in an immediate way.[23] For the other, because of the size of the Republic, more emphasis needed to be placed on an abstract affinity between citizens, a shared love of country, than on their concrete relationships. In the following chapters, I will want to explore how Aristotelian and Ciceronian reflections on friendship, virtue, and politics are taken up by nineteenth-century thinkers, inspiring overlapping but divergent traditions.

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[22] Michael Grant, "Introduction," in *On the Good Life: Marcus Tullius Cicero* (London: Penguin Classics, year), 9.
[23] I have not been able to address the different types of friendship in Aristotle's account, such as friendships of pleasure, use, and virtue. His many distinctions lie outside the realm of our present concerns.

## III. Inheriting Friendship

Building off of these legacies, modern theorists and political practitioners have continued to emphasize the importance of the bonds between citizens, civic friendship, and the affective sense of participating in a common project. But the political theories of Aristotle and Cicero were tangled and untangled during the early modern period in Europe, and, as Quentin Skinner has shown, gave birth to several different legacies. The writers of the Early Renaissance returned to the ideas of republican Rome as they began to mount attacks against the monarchy. In their arguments for a republican form of government, they mixed a concern for the liberty of individuals from the encumbrance of the authorities with a concern for the flourishing of the virtues. Quoting the fourteenth-century statesman Leonardo Bruni, Skinner writes that "'the popular form of government' should be treated as 'the only legitimate form', on the grounds that it not only 'makes possible true liberty and equality before the law for the whole body of the citizen', but also 'enables the cultivation of the virtues to flourish without any suspicions being aroused.'"[24] The Roman Republic was the model for the unity of virtue and politics, which would become greatly influential during the Renaissance.

Skinner shows that at least two kinds of "republicanism" emerged during the early modern period. The first, with roots in Aristotle, emphasizes the idea that participation in civic life is an inherent good, part of what it means to live well. The cultivation of virtue and the development of moral and intellectual capacities are *intrinsically* good, and it is in our civic relationships, in our public and common activities, that we learn more about what it means to be fully human.

[24] Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 79.

Skinner separates this "humanist" tradition from the republican tradition that finds its roots in Cicero. Looking to classical Rome, whose politicians and historians emphasized the fragile nature of civic virtue, the possibilities for corruption, and the problem of rule by any one grouping—by the demos, the aristocracy, or the monarchy—this Ciceronian tradition sees liberty as an intrinsic good and orients itself toward the prevention of domination. But this latter civic republican tradition sees participation in political activity as *instrumentally* good, as it ensures protection from tyranny and domination. Given the inevitability of conflict, it also validates having an authority with the ability to use legitimate force to protect the peace of the community when necessary. The stability of a political community is understood as connected to the virtue of citizens, but it is more determined by a well-functioning political system, with authorized representatives who will rule in the interest of the pubic, backed by coercive power. In this context, *order* becomes one of the most significant ends of political practice. The cultivation of the virtues and the establishment of a mixed, republican government are the means by which freedom is ensured. David Held calls the former, Greek version, "developmental republicanism," while the latter, Roman version he defines as "protective republicanism."[25]

But the Aristotelian heritage can be seen to deeply influence non-republican traditions as well. As we move into our study of the discourse of solidarity, we will see that while this former tradition becomes more prominent in the Marxist and anarchist traditions, the latter is more prominent among the French republicans and reformists. However, while there are divergences, these traditions remain closely tied together by their shared emphasis on civic virtue and the importance of friendship and community in political life.

As these ideas are adopted and adapted in modern political thought their limitations in a modern context become more apparent. Both Aristotle and Cicero retain a rigid sense of the

[25] See also David Held, *Models of Democracy*, 3rd Ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006).

naturalness of hierarchy. Neither addresses the question of slavery as a moral problem. Both justify a subordination of women to men. Martha Nussbaum notes that while Cicero does argue for duties not to wage aggressive wars and for hospitality to strangers, for Aristotle, the duties to people outside of one's republic are very weak.[26] Civic friendship, the friendship encouraged among citizens simply because of their shared life in a shared land, is territorially bound and does not extend to those who are beyond one's borders.

In addition to raising concerns about the treatment of those outside the political community, there are questions about differences *within* the political group. The emphasis on similarity as a key factor in friendships raises questions about the extent to which diversity has a place in this modern scheme. Jacques Derrida emphasizes this point in his *Politics of Friendship*, where he focuses on the centrality of similarity and likeness in Aristotle's account of friendship.[27] For example, Aristotle writes that "concord" or agreement

> is apparently political friendship … for it is concerned with advantage and with what affects life as a whole … concord is found in decent people. For they are in concord with themselves and with each other, since they are practically of the same mind; for their wishes are stable, not flowing back and forth like a tidal strait. They wish for what is just and advantageous, and also seek it in common.[28]

Aristotle frequently notes the role of similarity in virtue friendship, remarking, "the excellent person is related to his friend in the same way as he is related to himself, since a friend is another himself."[29] But if the friend is simply another self, what room is there for difference? How can this concept apply to a pluralistic world, in which political communities are composed of varied and diverse interests?

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[26] Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness*; Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), xxi. "Nor does Aristotle acknowledge that we have moral connections with people who live outside our own city-state. We do, he says, recognize as human people who live at a distance. But he did not suggest that this recognition imposes any moral obligations upon us…"
[27] Jacques Derrida, *The Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 1997).
[28] Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics,* 1167b5.
[29] Ibid., 1170b7.

Derrida argues that the impulse to claim the other as the self is colonizing.[30] He describes the longevity of the equation of politics with the bonds of friendship or fraternity and argues that democracy is a product of this tradition, emerging from the appeal to fraternity as grounds for the end of monarchy and the establishment of equality as a political ideal. However, Derrida argues, while this insinuation of fraternity and friendship has established a principle of cohesion, it is also a source of exclusion and domination. The sister and the slave may be included, but they must be rendered docile. Derrida wants a politics that is "beyond the principle of fraternity," a politics that extends hospitality to the stranger.[31]

This concern is pertinent as we turn toward the concept of solidarity, and issues of identity and difference, inclusion and exclusion, will be central to later chapters. Aristotle's conception of friendship was shaped by his context in a small and largely homogenous city. And he admits that his conception would be difficult to expand to a more populous society: "Experience tells us that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a very populous city to enjoy good government," and he goes on to suggest that the city must be small enough that its people know each other so that they can perform their functions well.[32] With Cicero, and the larger context of Rome as an extended republic, we already see a slightly more analogical relationship between friendship and citizenship. One can have only a few friends, but friendship is nevertheless important as a form of relationship that encourages people to develop their virtues, to care for the well-being of others, and to live rightly and justly.

For our purposes, we can note that while Aristotle does assume that the friendship of fellow citizens is based on a kind of similarity, he leaves open the content of the relevant

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[30] Derrida, viii.
[31] Ibid. Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinches also register concern about this and assert that difference is central to Christian friendship. *Christians among the Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 40.
[32] Aristotle, *Politics*, 1325b33.

similarities between friends. He does not insinuate that they must have all the same preferences, opinions, or qualities. The important point is that what friends share is a common object of love. In political friendship, this object is the common good. Engaging in practices that orient one toward the common good cultivates a certain sense of identification with others in the community, a sense of "an expanded self."[33] A kind of identification does become a prerequisite for a virtue friendship. However, this identification need not be total, impenetrable, and complete. What matters is the cultivation of a desire for one another's good, which creates the condition for a manifestation of justice beyond justice.

While seeking an alternative to atomistic individualism, the traditions that develop the idea of solidarity look to the ideas of friendship, virtue, and ethics as essential to the possibility of political life. We can turn now to how theorists and practitioners have been attempting to think about community, friendship, and the common good in a diverse, pluralistic, but deeply interdependent world.

[33] Nancy Sherman, "Aristotle on Friendship and the Shared Life," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 47, no. 4 (June 1987): 589–613.

CHAPTER 2

## MODERN ELABORATIONS: ON HARMONY AND STRUGGLE

The idea of "solidarity" was birthed in the midst of the clamor and chaos of the nineteenth century. The early 1800s witnessed unprecedented changes in production, consumption, and the lives of workers across Europe. With the growth of factory industries, laborers found themselves isolated from their families, working long hours, with few rights and no property to their name. Popular uprisings were taking place around the world as nations sought independence. In 1830 and again in 1848, French monarchs were overthrown. Coups put them back into power, only to be overthrown again. The issues of social organization, of representation and democracy, of dignity and justice, would persist as the fundamental questions of the age.

During this era of industrialization, financialization, and social upheaval, solidarity is invoked as a key to the future. Historian J. Hayward notes, "progress and solidarity were widely regarded in the nineteenth century as open sesame words, abstract *a priori* answers to all social problems, even by the most eminent and influential, for 'progress' expressed the dynamic need to go beyond the limits of an outdated social structure, whilst 'solidarity' indicated the will to reorganize it on a sound and just basis."[1] But what this meant, exactly, and how it would translate into a political or economic program would be uncertain.

The development of the idea of solidarity in modern political thought illuminates a continuity with the centrality of friendship and community in classical Greek and Roman thought. The concept builds off of a perspective on politics, ethics, and virtue, which we saw

[1] J. E. S. Hayward, "Solidarity: The Social History of an Idea in Nineteenth-Century France," *International Review of Social History* 4, no. 2 (1959): 275.

articulated by Aristotle and Cicero, and which is at odds with the more rationalistic traditions emerging from the Enlightenment. But just as these prior traditions diverged in their perspectives on friendship, so a multitude of perspectives on solidarity becomes apparent. The central question for nineteenth-century political actors and theorists would be how to create solidarity in the modern world: How to imagine a new form of political community.

## I. ETYMOLOGIES

The first appearances of the Latinate term, from which we derive the modern idea of "solidarity," occur in Roman law. The emperor Justinian's Digest and Code [529 AD] discuss in detail the relations between debtors and creditors. To hold a debt *in solidum* meant to hold a debt *together*, to share responsibility for the repayment of that obligation.[2]

In the 1600s, with the establishment of modern banking and the emergence of the modern nation-state, the term continued to carry this legal significance.[3] While modern English translations of Justinian's Digest and Codes replace the language of "solidum" by references to "co-debtors," French law retains the Latinate term, thus laying the foundation for development of the concept of solidarity in modernity.[4] As defined by the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Francaise* of 1694, the terms "solidaire" and "solidarité" refer to the Roman concept of collective responsibility for debt.[5]

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[2] Adolf Berger, ed. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Roman Law* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1953), 445.
[3] Richard Hildreth, *The History of Banks* (Boston: Hilliard, Grey and Company, 1837), 7.
[4] For an example of the English translations, see *The Digest of Justinian,* trans. Alan Watson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985).
[5] Hayward, "Solidarity: The Social History of an Idea," 261. Also see Max Pensky, *The Ends of Solidarity: Discourse Theory in Ethics and Politics* (Albany: Suny Press, 2008), 6; Andreas Wildt, "Solidarity: Its History and Contemporary Definition," in *Solidarity*, ed. Kurt Bayertz (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 210.

Jean Domat, a legal advocate for King Louis XIV, explains the term in an exposition of civil law, *The Civil Law in Its Natural Order: Together with the Publick Law*.[6] Domat believes that civil law is rooted in natural law, and he writes that this natural law was deeply pursued and expounded upon in Roman law. And yet, he expresses regret that so much that is good and true in Roman law is also mixed with so much that is useless and arbitrary. Thus, he authors his book "to set the Roman Laws in their true order."[7] The *Code Louis*, as the legal system of Louis XIV was often called, was an attempt to strengthen the rule of law in France and was the predecessor of the Napoleonic Code, which is considered one of the foundations of modern law.

As Domat explains, solidity characterizes a debt shared by many debtors to the same creditor. There are several main characteristics of debts held in solidarity: (1) "Solidity" should not be presumed unless stated. Article 1202 of the Napoleonic legal codes confirms this.[8] (2) Solidity does not prohibit a debt from being divided among the debtors. (3) The parties may bind themselves together as mutually obligated for the whole. (4) The conditions that characterize each debtor may be different. (5) One debtor may pay the entirety of the debt and relieve the others. Solidity implied that each debtor could be held accountable for the debt that they held in common.[9] The debt was meant to be divided among them, but if any failed to pay the others were responsible. This protected creditors from the risk of debtors defaulting, but the law also attended to the protection of debtors, stating, "for in a doubt, obligations are to be interpreted in favour of those who are bound."[10]

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[6] Jean Domat, *The Civil Law in its Natural Order*, Vol. 1, trans. William Strahan (London: E. Bell, 1722), 388.
[7] Ibid., "Author's Preface," 25..
[8] *Le Code civil des Français* (Paris: De l'Imprimerie République, 1804). Also see Lisa Moses Leff, *The Sacred Bonds of Solidarity: The Rise of Jewish Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century France* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2006), 46, for the effects of this law on the shaping of national identity.
[9] Ibid., 390.
[10] Domat, 712-717.

While the legal concept of solidarity referred to debts held collectively by groups of individuals, over the course of the 1800s, the concept would be abstracted from the law and generalized to society as a whole. As we will see, by the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of solidarity came to indicate a debt to society, a social debt to those who have come before and created the world we live in and to those who will come after, to whom we owe a healthy world. The idea of debts to society was also used to create a commitment to the project of the nation. Taxation could be considered to indicate the obligation of all to pay the debts we hold in common. This is evident on the eve of revolutionary France. While many historians of pre- and post-revolutionary France focus on demographic and political changes, historian Eugene White argues that the national deficit needs to be understood as one of the long-term causes of the revolution and the financial reform in its aftermath.[11] The French government defaulted three times over the course of the eighteenth century, and in 1787 it faced a need to raise taxes to soften the national deficit. The solvency of the nation would depend on the willingness of the population to invest in the national project, to be in solidarity together, as a nation. This logic would be used by both conservative and progressive advocates.

Counterrevolutionary thinkers, such as Joseph de Maistre and René Chateaubriand, would use the idea of "solidarity" to argue for submission to the nation and the monarchy, and as a reason to take on the debts of France as a collective liability.[12] For de Maistre, solidarity among the people of a nation was the analog to Augustine's concept of the heavenly city. The state was a manifestation of the divine order, and earthly solidarity was the call to be unified in a pilgrimage through this life. De Maistre was a defender of hierarchy and monarchy, yet it was

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[11] Eugene Nelson White, "The French Revolution and the Politics of Government Finance," *The Journal of Economic History* 55, no. 2 (June 1995).

[12] T. Fiegle, *Von der Solidarite zur Solidaritat* (Munster: Lit-Verlag, 2003. An English exposition can be found in Michael Hoelzl, "Recognizing the Sacrificial Victim: The Problem of Solidarity for Critical Social Theory," *Journal for Cultural and Religious Studies* 6, no. 1 (December 2004): 51.

through him that the legal, theological, and political aspects of the concept of solidarity would begin to weave together in a complicated tapestry.

As Michael Hoelzl argues, these counterrevolutionary thinkers would imbue the term with Christological significance.[13] The idea, embedded in the legal notion, that one could pay the debt for all aligned the term with a sense of righteous sacrifice for the collective. Christ stands in solidarity with humankind, willing to take on the debts of all, willing to give his life to pay the price, thus making himself a co-debtor with God's people. As he takes away the sins of the world, citizens should sacrifice for the debts incurred by the nation and participate in that absolution. Hoelzl goes on to argue, therefore, that the modern concept of solidarity was forged between the revolutionary and counterrevolutionary forces and the theological and secular extrapolations from religious and legal sources.

On the part of the revolutionaries, the term "solidarity" would be taken up as an heir to the concept of fraternity. In the revolutionary cry for "liberté, égalité, fraternité," the third term would indicate a commitment to one another in the search for a new world that was more just and equitable. Fraternité, a term with familial connotations, signified an affective attachment that could ground the project for a new national identity. It would be by standing together, as brothers, that progressive change could take place. But by the 1830s, several factors would lead to the diminishment of the idea of a nation of brothers. The rights of women as equal citizens were being discussed across Europe and in the United States (Charles Fourier is credited with coining the term "*feminisme*" at that time, though the claim is disputed).[14] And with the urbanization that accompanied industrialization, the family was less and less potent as a central national metaphor. The language of fraternity diminished in the political discourse, while the

[13] Hoelzl, 51.
[14] Karen M. Offen, *European Feminisms, 1700–1950: A Political History* (Redford City: Stanford University Press, 2000), 19.

language of solidarity became more prominent in a way that shows the transition of the community from a natural family to a legal construction.[15]

## II. Early Socialism

As we see, the concept of solidarity emerged as a collage of myriad sources, traditions, and metaphors. Yet another occurrence took place among workers in the early days of the labor movement.

Historian William Sewell writes that under the old regime, each art and trade was divided from every other, with each pursuing its own interests. The guilds, or "corporations," of the eighteenth century were tightly bound units, but they were also hierarchical and divided. The word "corps" was used to signify the inextricable connections between individuals in a common guild, as if they were organs in a single body. But in the early 1800s, this began to change, and the isolated and separate guilds began to form larger alliances. As Sewell writes, "class consciousness first emerged in France during the agitation that followed the Revolution of 1830."[16] For the first time, workers and craftsmen began to see themselves as a single class, as "the people." The corporations and associations began to organize linkages with one another. "This will to solidarity between trades was manifested in a whole series of institutions set up to unify and coordinate the activities of various corporations: the Bank of the People, the General Syndicate of Associations, the Chamber of Labor, the Mutuality of the Workers, the Solidarity,

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[15] Laurent Dobuzinskis, "Defenders of Liberal Individualism, Republican Virtue, and Solidarity: The Forgotten Founding Fathers of the French Third Republic," *European Journal of Political Theory* 7, no. 3 (May 2008), 299. Dobuzinskis writes that this is evident, for example, in tracking the changes of terminology in Fouillee's works from *la science sociale contemporaine* to *le socialisme et la sociologie reformiste.*

[16] William Sewell, *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 281.

and the Union of Fraternal Associations."[17] Through the turmoil of social and economic change, the various local groups began to "coalesce in an overriding opposition between the working class and the bourgeoisie, an opposition between an individualistic, proprietary, liberal vision of the social order identified with a well-to-do class of property-holders, and a solidary, collectivist, socialist vision identified with a class of propertyless 'proletarians.'"[18] Among workers, the term solidarity was used in conjunction with the rise of class-consciousness and an emerging sense of the need for social and economic institutions which would rectify growing inequality.

Pierre Leroux, who coined the term "socialism," seems to have been the first to really elaborate on the idea of solidarity, investigating the concept from a theoretical perspective.[19] Leroux rejected the framework of the social contract theorists, such as Hobbes and Locke, who seemed to believe that individuals exist prior to and separate from society. For Leroux, human beings are fundamentally social creatures, and being in solidarity is part of what it means to be human. Leroux saw bourgeois liberalism and individualism as prime obstacles of the modern era. As he writes, "The bourgeois class, the proprietary class, which is committed by interest and by sentiment to the system of pure individualism: there is the enemy."[20] This bourgeois ideology would need to be countered by an emphasis on the common good.

According to Leroux, the idea of solidarity embodies the commandment to love one's neighbor.[21] But while he related the concept of solidarity to Christian charity, he also wanted to adapt this latter notion, which he thought did not place enough emphasis on the importance of equality. Christianity helped reorient individuals toward others. But Leroux criticized Christianity for misconstruing the idea of neighbor-love and subordinating it to the love of God.

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[17] Sewell, 273.
[18] Sewell, 282.
[19] Yves Guyot, *Socialistic Fallacies* (London: Cope and Fenwick, 1910), 79.
[20] Pierre Leroux, *Revue Encyclopedique* 55 (August 1832): 317.
[21] Pierre Leroux, *De L'humanite,*(Paris: Perrotin, 1840); Michael Hoelzl, 52.

In Christianity, love of neighbor disintegrates into pity and compassion. In contrast, he argued, it was by loving oneself and loving others that one actually loved God.[22] Adopting solidarity as a secular version of Christian charity, Leroux set out to construct a humanistic religion that would become the foundation for a democratic socialist society.[23] This would not be the religion of Christianity, but rather a religion of progress and human perfectibility. Similar efforts abounded during this period. With the Church thrown into question because of its alignment with the monarchy and nobility, a new faith was necessary. And for Leroux, this faith needed to be imbued with the ideals of the Revolution and democratic socialism.

Leroux argued for the need for a thorough political and economic transformation, which could establish social equality while protecting individual liberty. While he engaged briefly with the French republican activists who were much more closely involved with the everyday tasks of policy creation and implementation, Leroux believed that there was need for deeper theoretical analysis about the possibilities for social transformation. As a prolific writer and the founder of several popular publications, including the *Revue Encyclopédique*, he propelled the spread of socialist ideas. The following decades would require an integration of these ideas with the actually existing labor movement that was beginning to gain steam.

As socialist theory and practice developed, it would begin to fracture in several directions. Those who would later call themselves anarchists sounded a cry for solidarity against not only economic disparity, but also political authority. This would have important consequences for the political traditions that would oppose themselves to both the liberal and republican schools of thought, both in how they imagined society and community to function and what they saw to be the threats to social harmony and cohesion. Over the next decades,

[22] Leroux, De L'humanité, I, 201–207.
[23] Jack Bakunin, *Pierre Leroux and the Birth of Democratic Socialism* (New York: Revisionist Press, 1976), 104.

socialists of many stripes, from Marxists to anarchists, would continue in fierce debates about what it would take to create lasting change that would enable greater solidarity and equality for all.

### III. Positivism and Organicism

Meanwhile, throughout the period from 1830 to 1870 that we have marked thus far, another branch of thought around the concept of solidarity was beginning to take hold in the application of the principles of science to the study of society and philosophy. Those who used this methodology were called "positivists," and while they rejected socialism, both traditions claim a common source in the work of Henri de Saint-Simon.

An aristocrat who abandoned his privilege and set out to determine how to solve the problem of poverty in the industrial age, Saint-Simon advocated for industrial planning that would organize production and thereby eliminate poverty. He would go on to deeply influence Auguste Comte, Emile Durkheim, and Karl Marx, each of whom developed his perspective on the role of technology in social change in different ways, expanding on the role of industrial developments and the effects of the division of labor on the creation of new forms of solidarity.[24]

In France, Auguste Comte developed the concept of solidarity along naturalistic lines. Comte had been the secretary and close friend of Henri de Saint-Simon. Like Saint-Simon, he emphasized the role of industrialization and the possibilities, but also the dangers, it raised for social harmony. Along with many of his contemporaries, Comte was concerned with the social and political tumult in the wake of the Revolution of 1789. In his *Course on Positivist Philosophy*, written between 1830 and 1842, he asks: "How does one reorganize human life,

[24] Emile Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint-Simon*, ed. Alvin Gouldner (Yellow Springs: Ohio Antioch Press, 1958).

irrespectively of God and king?"[25] The exploration of social laws and the laws of nature, he hoped, would reveal possibilities for new ways of organizing society.

Comte invented the neologism "sociology" in 1838 to designate the science that could "reveal the developmental laws which had always determined the course of human history but which only now, in the new positivist dawn, would be known, so that men could live their lives rationally."[26] With the development of positivism and the field of sociology in the 1800s, society became understood as an object with its own laws and functions, ready to be analyzed by the scientific observer. On this view, society was a system in which all the parts must be understood as interrelated. Such a conception would facilitate a certain way of thinking about how diversity and difference might not conflict but work in coordination, within a greater unity. It would also, however, enable a conception of social Darwinism to find its footing in the overlay of social and natural science.

Comte begins the *Cours* by stating that understandings of man and nature are deeply linked. But while theology and metaphysics begin with a study of human consciousness and experience and, from there, extrapolate the laws of nature, positivism does the reverse. It begins with a study of nature and, from there, gathers information about man. Thus, as he discusses the social and moral role of solidarity, Comte describes the phenomenon as a natural and scientific fact, an aspect of physiology, evident in the workings of the body and animal life.[27] Indeed, on his view, the solidarity of society resembled the harmony of the different parts in the body, the solidarity best exemplified by living organisms.

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[25] Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity* (London: Longman's, Green and Co., 1875-1877: 100.
[26] Geoffrey Hawthorn, *Enlightenment and Despair: A History of Sociology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 70.
[27] Auguste Comte, *Cours de la Philosophie Positive* (Paris: Bachelier, 1830), 312.

Like organisms, societies grow and develop; as they increase in size, they increase in complexity and differentiation; and all their parts are interdependent. Comte argued that society is characterized by universal consensus, the natural harmony of all of its parts. As Francis Coker puts it in her study on organicist theories of the state, "This solidarity and harmonious action, existing in plants, becoming more perfect in animals, attains in the social organism its completest development; society forms the highest state of organic evolution."[28]

For "organicist" thinkers, like Comte and Herbert Spencer, society is fundamentally a cooperative unit, and this natural fact has moral consequences.[29] Rejecting the idea of the social contract as an artificial myth and its acceptance of the right of the majority to rule over the minority by sheer force, Spencer wrote, "it is cooperation of some kind, from which there arise these powers and obligations of majority and minority; and in the absence of any agreement to cooperate, such powers and obligations are also absent."[30] Cooperation and solidarity are the basis of morality. Indeed, solidarity is defined as the morality that ties one to one's compatriots. This is evident in Comte's explanation of the three stages of moral development: while filial morality ties one to the past, and parental morality fosters love for the future, "solidarity" is the expansion of familial love to society at large, in the present.[31]

The naturalization of social forces, however, could lend itself to both conservative and progressive political conclusions. For Comte and Spencer, this idea of social cooperation would shape their views on government. Both believed that there would be a natural division between the intellectually superior, who would rule, and those who would submit themselves to the

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[28] Francis Coker, *Organismic Theories of the State* (London: P.S. King and Son, 1910), 123.
[29] Herbert Spencer, *Essays: Scientific, Political and Speculative* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1892), 265.
[30] Spencer, *The Man Versus the State* (Indianapolis: Liberty Classics, 1981 (1884)), 190. Also see Ernest Barker, *Political Thought in England, 1848–1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947)
[31] Gertrud Lenzer, ed. *Auguste Comte and Positivism: The Essential Writings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1975), 338.

authority of those above them. Prior to Darwin's publication of the *Origins of Species*, Spencer would coin the term "survival of the fittest," indicating the natural superiority of both the fittest individuals and societies. Unlike Darwin, however, who resisted making evaluative claims about the ability of organisms to adapt, Spencer saw such survival to indicate the right to greater power and higher status.[32]

While aspects of this organicist orientation were rejected by the end of the nineteenth century, the framework had lasting consequences.[33] As we will see in the next chapter, Emile Durkheim builds on these theories to flesh out the enterprise of sociology, and the critical question of how solidarity is constituted, though he departs from Comte in certain important respects. Importantly, this positivist perspective also helped create the perception of *politics* as a science. In "The Positivist Generation of French Republicanism," John Eros draws attention to the significant role that positivism played in the development of French Republican thought, particularly around the transition to the Third Republic in 1870.[34] Under Comte's influence, political theory became subject to empirical investigation. Utopian impulses were seen as misguided and dangerous, and instead, politics needed to incorporate examination of the processes of social change and development. Philip Nord confirms this in *The Republican Moment*, writing, "it was this positivist generation that shepherded the Third Republic into existence."[35] This orientation marked a rejection of the Jacobin years and indicated a more "practical" road to social change.

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[32] John Offer, "Introduction," in *Spencer: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1994), xviii; Walter Simon, "Herbert Spencer and the Social Organism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 21, no. 2 (April–June 1960): 297.
[33] Jonathan Turner, *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1978), 17.
[34] John Eros, "The Positivist Generation of French Republicanism," *Sociological Review* 3 (December 1, 1955).
[35] Philip Nord, *The Republican Momen*t (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995). See also John Eros, "The Positivist Generation of French Republicanism"; D. B. Charlton, *Positive Thought in France during the Second Empire, 1852–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), and *Secular Religions in France, 1850–1870* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963).

For many, the linking of scientific and evolutionary thinking with politics also led to the belief that society would inevitably develop in beneficial ways. Eros quotes Jules Ferry, a follower of Comte, who stated during an address to the freemasons in 1876 that the believer in Progress "will feel that he is a part of Humanity, the great Being which is immortal, and thus he will be liberated from death."[36] Progress was inevitable; change was necessary; and the new was superior to the old.

This view would characterize the thinking of many republicans (some of whom, like Ferry, leaned toward liberal economism). For the positivist republicans, history was on their side. But it would also influence the thought of Marx and Engels, who sought a scientific basis for the belief in the possibility of a post-capitalist future. In this way, then, republican and Marxist thought would share this optimistic faith in progress, though their visions of how such progress would occur, and what it would look like, differed. For the one, social change would take place incrementally, through political reform. Legislative and legal reforms were key to progress, as they offered a stable and predictable path forward. For the other, legislative efforts were a distraction from the real need, which was to build up solidarity among workers and prepare the way for more fundamental transformations. For the one, inequality and hierarchy were naturalized and justified; for the other, such social formations were to be overcome through conflict and opposition.

Comte rejected both laissez-faire economics and socialism. Instead, he tried to carve out a sort of "third way." But his thought influenced both camps. It was most evident, however, in the republican tradition, which sought greater social stability and cohesion through the political process. To a significant degree, Comte's concept of society as an organism contributed to naturalizing the presence of the market and state as institutions that worked to create harmony

[36] Jules Ferry, *Discours et Opinions,* vols. 1–7, ed. P. Robiquet (Paris: Colin, 1893–1898). Quoted in Eros, 262.

and social order. Solidarity was a fact of nature, and in the case of disorder, reforms needed to be pursued to restore harmony.

## CONCLUSION: HARMONY, ORDER, AND FREEDOM

The sketch above serves to identify a few of the ways in which nineteenth-century European thinkers were conceptualizing the problem of, and responses to, the rise of modern atomistic individualism and the moral and social confusion that accompanied this period of political and economic flux. Each of the schools of thought discussed is connected by the shared discourse of solidarity as a solution to these problems. But each understood solidarity, and the possibilities of modern morality, in very different ways. For the French revolutionaries and republicans who sought to overthrow the monarchy, solidarity would provide the mediating term between conflicting ideals: the responsibilities signaled by "egalité" and the new horizons opened by "liberté." For many, solidarity was the secularization of Christian charity. For some, solidarity would require a struggle against emerging social forces that promoted exploitation and domination. For others, it was a beacon of the unity and harmony inherent in human society.

The idea of solidarity as a fact of nature and the discourse of solidarity as a cry for social protest and contestation represent deep, fundamental differences between what would become republican, Marxist, and anarchist political theories. But these divergences also represent the hope, in each tradition, for the possibility of community and reconciliation.

PART II: THREE TRADITIONS AT THE *FIN DE SIÈCLE*,
1890-1914

CHAPTER 3

## "COGITO ERGO SUMUS": "I THINK, THEREFORE WE ARE" FRENCH SOLIDARISTS AND SOCIOLOGISTS

> The Good cannot be realized without the True, but the True has no value except for the realization of the Good. The realization of the Good—that is the satisfaction of moral sentiment—within the conditions of the True—that is, with the approval of reason: The problem is definitively posed.
> Does the doctrine of solidarity provide a solution?
>
> —Léon Bourgeois

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the idea of solidarity had become so popular as a possible solution to the ills of modernity that one politician of the time cried, "We must become mad about solidarity just as the martyrs became mad about Christ."[1] In 1900, a high-level conference was held, with the purpose of understanding and elaborating upon the concept of *solidarité*.[2] Politicians, professors, business leaders, and philosophers convened to study the term and establish its meaning, including Léon Bourgeois and Emile Durkheim. Durkheim's biographer, Steven Lukes, writes, "The Congress concluded with a resolution stating the meaning and implications of the notion of *solidarité*—the idea of justice as the repayment of a 'social debt' by the privileged to the underprivileged, assuming mutual interdependence and quasi-contractual obligations between all citizens and implying a programme of public

[1] J. E. S. Hayward quotes from Gide and Rist, *Histoire des Doctrines Economiques,* 4th ed., in "The Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic: Léon Bourgeois and Solidarism," *International Review of Social History* 6 (1961): 20.
[2] Steven Lukes, *Emile Durkheim: His Life and Works* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1973).

education, social insurance, and labour and welfare legislation."[3] Solidarity offered a way of understanding justice as based on interdependence, and as such, it was turned to as the foundational principle for the modern welfare state.

In this chapter, I look at a trend in late nineteenth-century French thought, which developed the idea of solidarity as a principle of republican theory and practice. Republicanism had, for over a century, offered a way of structuring society on the basis of individual dignity and the rejection of absolute rule. But a creeping atomistic individualism was also on the rise, which threatened to overcome traditional community life. Léon Bourgeois, Albert Fouillée, and Emile Durkheim each sought a response to the hazards of egoistic individualism on the one hand and the collectivist socialist alternative on the other. Each sought a synthesis of the ways of thinking about solidarity that we explored in the previous chapter, tying together strands of organicism with Christian theology, the legal history of solidarity with the idea that each person has a responsibility for all. While Bourgeois and Fouillée sought to enact these ideas at the level of policy and the state, Durkheim contributed to the study of solidarity in the fields of sociology and anthropology.

Republican theory was, of course, a harkening back to Ancient Rome. As Gordon Wood puts it, "In the eighteenth century, to be enlightened was to be interested in antiquity and to be interested in antiquity was to be interested in republicanism."[4] By the late 1800s, the republican tradition in France was composed of diverse strands of thought, having made its way from Cicero, through the rise of positivist thought and social theory, into the series of ongoing revolutions that took place across Europe throughout the late 1700s and 1800s. The heyday of republicanism is usually considered to be the end of the eighteenth century, during which time it

[3] Ibid., 351.
[4] Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 100.

played an important role in the dramatic French and American revolutions. But we pick up the story a century later, as a new discourse began to emerge: a discourse of solidarity.

In turning to three thinkers in this tradition, I aim to draw attention to a central concern republicans shared about the relationship between the individual and the community. Unlike the liberal economists who imagined freedom as a kind of noninterference, republican thinkers attended to the question of what sorts of structures, practices, laws, and beliefs needed to be established, society-wide, to ensure individual liberty. Rather than opposing liberty to structure, order, and state power, the latter are seen as necessary for the existence of the former.

Though Fouillée and Bourgeois are less known today, they exerted massive influence on republican thought and practice and laid the groundwork for the modern welfare state. Meanwhile, Durkheim is most often engaged as a sociologist, whose writings on religion and solidarity illuminated novel ways of thinking about social cohesion. His work on the role of the individual in society and his activism during the Dreyfus affair, however, illuminate his embrace of and advocacy for the republican tradition, in which, he argues, the individual is held sacred and protected by the power of the community. Despite important differences between Durkheim and the solidarists (as Bourgeois, Fouillée, and other advocates of solidarity as the fundamental social principle were often called), Durkheim, Bourgeois, and Fouillée were all engaged in imagining new political possibilities during a time when the dominant models—economic liberalism and conservative monarchism—were being rejected. Their assertions would not go uncontested, but they would continue to be deeply influential in the unfolding of the following century.

## I. French Solidarism and Social Reform

In 1895, Léon Bourgeois, one of the most influential men in France, wrote a tract on the idea of solidarity where he posed the question: did the explosion in the use of this new term, which seems to be invoked in every corner of society, simply indicate a new *word?* A new way of talking about fraternity? Or did it indicate a whole new idea? An indicator of the evolution of "*la pensée generale*," the common consciousness? A new phenomenon?[5]

Bourgeois's tract became enormously popular. A former minister and prime minister, he would also become the French representative to The Hague and the League of Nations. If his exposition of the idea of solidarity was unique, however, it was also deeply informed by the thought of the French social philosopher, Albert Fouillée. J. A. Scott writes, Fouillée's "influence upon the Radical republicans was enormous. He was the first man to bring together and discuss exhaustively the principle elements out of which later developed the mature doctrine of '*Solidarité*' expounded by the Radical leader Léon Bourgeois."[6] Both Fouillée and Bourgeois were part of what historian James Kloppenberg marks out as a tradition of progressive and social democratic thought that was spreading across Europe and the United States. If, in the United States, that tradition would be influenced by John Dewey and William James, Fouillée and Bourgeois developed similar ideas in France.[7] Attempting to find a way between liberal individualism and socialist collectivism, these thinkers carved out a *via media*—though Bourgeois would call it not a position *between* but *superior* to the dominant poles; their

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[5] Léon Bourgeois, *Solidarité* (Paris: A. Colin et cie, 1896), 46; Hayward, 21.
[6] J. A. Scott, *Republican Ideas and Liberal Tradition in France, 1870–1914* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951), 159. See also J. E. S., Hayward, "'Solidarity' and the Reformist Sociology of Alfred Fouillée, I," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 22, no. 1 (1963).
[7] James Kloppenberg, *Uncertain Victory: Social Democracy and Progressivism in European and American Thought (1870–1920)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).

reconciliation. In this tradition, the concept of solidarity would play a role as the key concept for a new political orientation.

Bourgeois and Fouillée combined elements of organicism and positivism with a pragmatist approach, articulating an image of man as "a creature of culture born from the historical process and living in a social milieu to which he stands in reciprocal relation.''[8] Solidarity had to do, in part, with acknowledging our own historicity and seeking the good in the absence of certainty. Quoting Albert Fouillée, Bourgeois writes that moral laws cannot be discerned by gazing away from society, toward some eternal truth, but instead by looking at humanity and the relationships by which human societies are constituted.

For Fouillée, the basic fact of our existence is solidarity, or interdependence. Fouillée would change Descartes's saying, "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am), into "cogito, ergo sumus" (I think, therefore we are) because of his belief that individual consciousness was necessarily social. However, solidarity, though natural, was amoral to Fouillée. It would only be as good as the structures that upheld it. Societies, he would write, are *organized* rather than *organic*.[9]

According to Bourgeois and Fouillée, what is needed is a study of the "social laws" of humanity. Most reformists attempt to change society according to their dreams, Bourgeois writes, but this approach is bound for failure. Rather, like the organicists, Bourgeois takes a scientific approach to the study of society. Just as an understanding of scientific laws has helped us shape and build upon nature, so the understanding of social laws can help us shape and build upon society. "It's the study of the causes, the conditions, and the limits of this solidarity that can give us a measure of the rights and the duties of each towards all, and of all towards each, and

[8] Ibid., 303.
[9] Hayward, "'Solidarity' and the Reformist Sociology of Alfred Fouillée," , 214.

which will provide the scientific and moral conclusions of the social problem."[10] Similarly, historian J. E. Hayward writes, "Fouillée pointed out the need to transform by contract the spontaneous sociability, appropriate to the physiological and zoological world, into a willed sense of community between rational beings."[11] In a sense, this tradition sought to reconcile the developments in science with the republican tradition in which the state is the legitimate representative of the people and seeks the Good for the political body. Indeed, Bourgeois writes that in solidarity, two forces that have long been opposed are finally finding themselves united: the scientific method and the moral ideal.

Bourgeois begins his pamphlet rehashing the debate between the liberal economists and socialists. These two poles, he says, cast a shadow over all political debate. The rights of the individual versus the rights of the collective seem mutually exclusive and irreconcilable. The scientific observer, he notes, does not discover distinct and isolated individuals, each sufficient to themselves. On the contrary, each individual is enveloped in an ecosystem with other individuals and groups at a variety of different levels. The individual is found to have not only an isolated intelligence but an awareness of others, a conscience. Its well-being is bound up with the well-being of others.

Solidarity is a universal principle, he writes. Nothing about us—our genes, our physique, our thoughts—is created without the influence of others. Even the stars, he goes on, as discovered by Kepler and Galileo, do not exist in isolation but are held in space by their relationships with other celestial bodies. Indeed, this web of solidarity, he writes, unites us to all that has passed and all that is to come. Humanity is made up of more corpses than living bodies; and with each new generation, every movement, passion, joy, and sadness is tied to all that has

[10] Bourgeois, 15.
[11] Hayward, "'Solidarity' and the Reformist Sociology of Alfred Fouillée,", 212.

gone before us and all that is around us, to the currents of the deep oceans and the last gravitational pulsations of the stars. We exist only because of universal solidarity.

Bourgeois continues with a scientific and organicist approach to the question of how to resolve the apparent contradiction between the freedom of the individual and the fact of our social dependence. How, he asks, can we establish a practical doctrine of moral and social solidarity on the foundation of the natural solidarity shown to exist? Cicero, he notes, sought a universal law, which would apply to Rome and Athens and around the world. But today, Bourgeois notes, the diversity of moral codes is vast, with each country and religion deciphering its own.

For the solidarists, the natural and moral obligations of humanity could be understood through the concept of debt, harkening back to the etymological origins of the terms in Roman law. Solidarity in debt, as a legal concept, bound communities together in shared obligations. In the modern elaboration of the concept, rights and duties are understood as based on the inheritance of benefits and gifts from previous generations and, therefore, a host of debts. This conception, in which individuals, and the state itself, owe a debt to society, helped facilitate the transition from the idea of charity to social service as a duty. The doctrine of solidarity, Bourgeois writes, destroys the idea of the isolated individual and creates an understanding of our connection to one another over time and our debt to all that has gone before us. "Man, he writes, is born a debtor to humanity."[12] For every word we speak, letter we write, utensil we use, idea we have, we are indebted to those who have paved the way to the present. He quotes Renan, who wrote, "Each individual represents capital that has been accumulated by previous generations."[13]

[12] Ibid., 116.
[13] Unattributed quotation in Bourgeois, 117.

Debt is our *nourishment,* he writes. Everything we consume is the fruit of centuries of cultivation, reproduction, and amelioration.

If we are indebted to the past for all that we are, he then asks, to whom do we pay these debts? For Bourgeois, the future generations are those to whom we are obligated. We are essentially stewards of the world we have been born into, and our lot is not only to protect this world but to improve upon it for those to come. Yet there is a confounding element to debt, he writes, in its seeming ubiquity. Where does it begin? Where does it end? What are the extents of its obligations?

Bourgeois conceptualizes this debt through the lens of the social contract tradition. Like John Locke, Bourgeois conceived of society as a contractual relationship that creates order and can increase freedom through the establishment of an understanding of rights and restrictions. But while Bourgeois shared certain assumptions with the social contract tradition of Locke and Hobbes, he uses the language of a "quasi-contract" to clarify the evolving nature of social relations. One does not entirely choose to enter into society, for we are always already embedded in and indebted to a social context. And the contract is not a once-and-for-all event, for it requires continued vigilance and development. But the idea sheds light on the conscious participation of rational individuals who are bound to one another, not only by birth, but also by choice.

The quasi-contract was meant to reconcile the tension between liberals and socialists. The problem, he writes, is not a contradiction between "the Man versus the State," as Spencer put it, but between individuals and how they are able to organize themselves as a community that works for the common good and protects the liberty of each. While Bourgeois rejected the idea of the isolated individual, on one hand, he also rejected the idea of the absolute authority of the

state, on the other. The state, he writes, is nothing but the creation of men and thus has no *a priori* superiority over them. A just government would need to be accountable to the people.

This conception becomes concrete through the implementation of republican ideas, such as representative and limited government. Central to the idea of Roman republicanism was the prevention of the consolidation of power into a few hands. The constitution was meant to protect the *liberty* of the people from the *domination* of the one or few. Philip Pettit calls this a theory of freedom as "non-domination," a theory that originates in Rome but that continues to offer a way of thinking about the possibilities for modern politics.[14] Whereas Isaiah Berlin argued that there were two theories of freedom, positive and negative, Pettit argues that Cicero's version, the republican version, represents a third tradition. Negative liberty is associated with the idea of freedom *from* constraints, freedom from the impositions of society or government on one's choices. The idea of positive liberty is associated with the line of thinkers from Aristotle to Hegel, Rousseau and Marx, and indicates the sense that true freedom involves an ability to *participate* in the good life, in the decisions of one's community, and that the right structures and systems are needed to enable this freedom.

The republican idea of freedom as non-domination shares with the idea of positive liberty the sense that there is a need for institutions that will enable the participation of people in the decision making of their communities. As Cicero's writings show, the Roman republican ideal of liberty required a certain set of institutions and laws to protect the citizenry from domination. Central among these were structures of representation and accountability. Recalling the classical ideal of the virtuous and active citizen, republicans sought to create avenues for participation in government. Representatives, it was argued, were charged with securing the common good:

[14] Philip Pettit, *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (London: Oxford University Press, 1999), viii.

freedom from domination and liberty for each individual. Gordon Wood writes that while European republicanism retained the classical notion that the primary role of representatives was to seek virtue and justice, the American revolutionaries redefined representation, arguing that what needed to be represented was not virtue, but *interests*.[15] We can see why solidarity would not become a prominent term in U.S. political thought.

French republicans, therefore, sought a representative government that would pursue the common good. As Schwartzmantel puts it, "the republican perspective differs from liberalism in its adherence to some idea of a common good, seen as greater than the sum of individual interests…. Citizens associate with each other as members of a political community, sharing a common identity, but also as members of particular or partial associations, which confer on them a particular identity."[16] Republicanism is an attempt to hold these different commitments in harmony, allowing for personal freedom while protecting the common good. This would require strong political institutions and social solidarity.

The state, thus constituted as the body that would represent the people, could serve to establish the context in which individuals can be in right relationship and in which they develop the right kinds of habits and virtues. As Fouillée would articulate it, there was a need for a contract to protect individuals "from subordination to authority disguised as a pseudo-scientific 'general will' or 'common consciousness,'" or, on the other hand, from the domination of capital. The following long quotation reveals the reasoning behind Fouillée's advocacy for a strong state with the ability to protect the community from the powers of wealth:

> Liberty is not by itself a motive or guiding force; like space, it is essential to movement but has never itself moved anyone. The same is true of equality…. Bargaining strength being unequal, the freedom to assert one's strength necessarily led to such immense de facto inequalities that liberty and equality remained Platonic ideas….In the course of

[15] Ibid.
[16] John Schwartzmantel, *Citizenship and Identity: Towards a New Republic* (London: Routledge, 2003), 46.

> rightly destroying privileges and monopolies, the Revolution in France, like the Reformation in England, allowed itself to be carried away to the extent of destroying the very principle of association. That was its great mistake. Though the Revolution thought it was establishing democracy, it prepared the way for plutocracy. Once men were declared free, equal and brothers, but not in fact rendered such, what necessarily became the main symbol of social superiority in an increasingly industrial civilization? Wealth. Besides, under this supposedly egalitarian regime, capital alone was allowed to associate; its owners hastened to profit by this.[17]

Fouillée recognizes here that in the post-revolutionary period, capital continued to enjoy the benefits of association. But in the absence of structures that limited the power of capital, workers and the property-less were left unable to use their newfound freedom, or their ideal moral equality, and were instead reduced to poverty. Thus, Fouillée and the solidarists proclaimed the need for a strong state to protect the individual liberties that were so precious to the Revolution. "State intervention is justified in matters in which private initiative and voluntary associations prove fundamentally incapable of either guaranteeing the exercise of individual rights, or of implementing a practical corollary of both social justice and the public interest."[18] Similarly, Bourgeois would insist that the contract only holds inasmuch as it can be understood as binding individuals together in just and fair ways, such that none has advantage over any other. Liberty, he writes, cannot be sustained if some are profiting inordinately over their compatriots. Solidarity is therefore a commitment to upholding this tension between the freedom and equality of each individual.

Fouillée, drawing on Leroux, argued that solidarity was needed as the organizing principle that would ensure greater liberty and equality. But this was not a socialist agenda. He saw his "reformist sociology" as sharing significant ground with the socialist project, but it differed in the belief that progress could be made through reform, rather than through the

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[17] Albert Fouillée, "Le progress social en France," *Revue des Deux Mondes* 153 (June 15, 1899). Quoted and discussed in Hayward, "Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic," 217.
[18] Fouillée, "Sociologie Reformiste," quoted in Hayward, "Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic," 200.

outright abolition of private property. He criticized the obsession with class struggle, which obscured the social solidarity that held the classes together. His reformism was in fact steeped in a cooperative theory whereby, rather than exist as wage-earners, workers all shared in the profits they produced cooperatively. He sought improved conditions, decreased working hours, higher wages. He saw room for many ameliorations to the system that might strengthen the rights and duties of modern citizens.

By the late 1800s, the reformists had succeeded in establishing social security, healthcare, and public education. Public assistance was paid for through a progressive taxation program that included a "compensatory tax" on those who benefitted disproportionately from "the social instruments of production."[19] The state also promoted consumer-producer co-operatives and credit co-operatives by providing subsidies and loans to those who chose this route. And as Hayward writes, "Such action was to be undertaken not on grounds of charity or even fraternity, but as the restitution of their quasi-contractually sanctioned share in the social inheritance."[20] The framework of solidarity created a new justification for these state-led provisions, in a sense, founding the modern welfare state. [21]

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For Bourgeois, a consistent adherence to the notions of interdependence and solidarity required an *international* perspective. In 1899 he chose to represent France at a conference at The Hague instead of accepting an offer by the president of the Republic to form a new government. Bourgeois sought to promote the notion that, not only domestically but internationally, the interests of each could be harmonized with the interests of all. Just as there

[19] Hayward, "Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic,"36.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Hayward, "Official Philosophy of the French Third Republic." On this front, however, France lagged behind developments in Bismarckian Germany. See Philip Nord, "The Welfare State in France, 1870–1914," *French Historical Studies* 18:3 (1994).

was harmony between the individual and the community, so there was no contradiction between the progress of the nation and the good of all peoples. In an address to the National French Peace Congress, he writes that there must be both moral and material cooperation between states to ensure peace. No longer can we think only in the terms of isolated states: "The economic solidarity of the nations is becoming increasingly felt. There are no more national markets; there is an immense international market, a sort of international economic community."[22] Thus, he advises,

> In creating among [nations] what we have often called the society of nations, we are doing for them what in 1789 was done for individuals, we are guaranteeing, ennobling, exalting them. In establishing among them equal rights and reciprocal duties, we are creating for them the highest sort of independence, that which knows only a common law, that of the common conscience of the world.[23]

Of his many efforts, Bourgeois attempted to set up a Permanent Court of International Justice, expand international law, and establish a committee of experts to deal with international problems in commerce and finance. "All of this was justified through international solidarity—a solidarity, as Bourgeois assured the skeptics at home, which proved the indissociability of France's interests from those of the international community."[24] After the conference, Bourgeois was considered "the apostle of global harmony based upon disarmament and arbitration."[25]

There was concern, however, that even as solidarism attempted to carve a way between liberalism and collectivism, it overemphasized the power and privilege of the state. Noticing this possibility, Fouillée wrote,

> Solidarism is essentially an interventionist doctrine even while it guards against being so. The role it assigns to the State, of sanctioning the quasi-contract, is big with

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[22] Léon Bourgeois, "The Conditions of Peace," *The Advocate of Peace* 71, no. 11 (1909), 254.
[23] Ibid., 255.
[24] Martti Koskenniemi, *Gentle Civilizer of Nations: The Rise and Fall of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 295. Also Bourgeois, *L'Ouvre de la société des nations* (Paris: Payot, 1923).
[25] Koskenniemi, 278.

> consequences. Moreover, the State does not confine itself to giving its sanction. It has to determine, to specify, the credit and the debit, in each person's account.[26]

Meanwhile, for the socialists, solidarism provided a way to soften the glaring abuses of industrialism without questioning the basis of capitalist society, such as private property. Steven Lukes would write that solidarism "sought to embrace socialism in theory so as to neutralize it in practice."[27]

Thus, on the one hand, the doctrine was displeasing to liberals, as it gave too much power to the state. But on the other hand, collectivists criticized the weakness of its impact on the structure of society. As Hayward notes, "the liberals objected to the flexible nature of State intervention which denied the individual any sacrosanct sphere of his own, whilst the collectivists objected to what they regarded as the timid deductions which Bourgeois, in practice, made from his revolutionary juridical theory."[28] Though the solidarist argument led to a stream of welfare legislation, it did little to question the sanctity of property or the inequality of wealth and power.

Durkheim, writing during the same period, frequenting many of the same salons, would contribute to this conversation, departing from the solidarists in important ways by providing more attention to the question of moral education, private property, and the values and beliefs around which community is constructed. While Durkheim is often looked to for his sociological and religious thought, I attend here, additionally, to his political theory and thoughts on the question of property.

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[26] Fouillée, 96.
[27] Lukes,353..
[28] Hayward (1959), 32.

## II. Durkheim and French Sociology

### 1. Mechanical and Organic Solidarities

Emile Durkheim was born in 1858 in Epinal, France. His father was a rabbi, and while Durkheim was expected to follow suit, he made his way instead as a secular academic, eventually rising to prominence as a professor at La Sorbonne. In the midst of a rapidly industrializing and urbanizing society, Durkheim was preoccupied with the question of how, in the face of such comprehensive changes, society would be held together. The industrial revolution, the defeat of France by Germany in the war of 1870, and the widespread embrace of individualism as an ideal led many to worry that the bonds of community were unraveling and morality was in decline. Sociologist Robert Bellah writes that Durkheim "was a high priest and theologian of civil religion of the Third Republic and a prophet calling not only modern France but modern Western society generally to mend its ways in the face of a great social and moral crisis."[29]

Durkheim is often called the father of sociology for the way in which he conceived of society as the basic fact of existence and a field of scientific study. In response to trends in philosophy and science, which were attempting to discover the abstract and eternal sources of reason and being, Durkheim emphatically argued that society itself was the immanent source of all knowledge and understanding. Our concepts of space, time, causality, and even numbers are all shaped by our social context. Despite considering himself a rationalist, he would criticize Kant for assuming that reason was simply inherent in human nature. Instead, he would argue, "what Kant called universal or pure reason is in fact a set of contingent beliefs, produced by and

[29] Robert Bellah, *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973).

entrenched in social institutions and traditions."[30] There was nothing prior to, or outside of, social existence.

In post-revolutionary France, the argument that society was prior to the individual could be seen as a conservative and reactionary stance. It was the stance taken, of course, by the advocates of the monarchy in polemics against the new apostles of secular individualism. But while some have attempted to interpret Durkheim as a conservative, his thought tended to unite a concern for social morals with a cosmopolitan humanism more generally associated with others in the republican tradition.[31] Durkheim was an original thinker and difficult, therefore, to classify. While Mark Cladis emphasizes his odd combination of communitarian and liberal leanings, Frank Pierce illuminates his "radical" and socialist threads.[32] His nephew, Marcel Mauss, suggested that Durkheim sought to integrate the thought of Comte and Marx.[33] Durkheim has been a fascinating source for generations of students because of the way in which he attempted to unite what were so often dichotomous and opposed orientations.

For Durkheim, "solidarity" is the term used to describe how a community holds together. Solidarity is a social fact, something that must exist for a community to be sustained. Many worried that in modernity, society was disintegrating and solidarity was weakening. The rise of the individual was a threat to the traditions and obligations of the community. On Durkheim's account, however, this would only be a problem if one imagined the individual as an abstract being, separate and detached from society. Instead, he would argue, the very concept of the

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[30] Mark Cladis, *Durkheim's Communitarian Defense of Liberalism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 18.
[31] Bryan Turner elaborates on this in his introduction to *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals.*
[32] Cladis, *Durkheim's Communitarian Defense*; Frank Pierce, *The Radical Durkheim* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press, 2001).
[33] Mauss, "Introduction," in Emile Durkheim, *Socialism and Saint Simon*, ed. Alvin Gouldner (New York: Routledge, 2009).

individual is a social concept. It is an outcome of modern European history.[34] The individual and the community were not at odds, because the concept of the individual was a communal creation.

In his early writings, Durkheim would attempt to argue that the form and basis of solidarity was simply changing. In *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim develops two notions of solidarity: a premodern notion, based on similarity, which he calls "mechanical," and a modern notion, based on difference and interdependence, which he calls "organic." Primitive societies are often highly religious and share what Durkheim calls a *conscience collective*, a common way of thinking and being. The components of these kinds of societies are fundamentally alike and are thus bound together in their resemblance. Thus, "mechanical solidarity" designates the way in which societies are bound together by kinship, similarity, and common beliefs.

In modernity, however, society has become increasingly complex and differentiated. Modern society is characterized not by likeness, but by difference. Materially, this can be witnessed in the division of labor. The parts of society seem more separate, but they are in fact interdependent. They are dissimilar, but they cannot function without one another. Organic solidarity expresses the sense that "dissimilarity, just like resemblance, can be a cause of mutual attraction…. The one protects, the other consoles; one advises, the other executes, and it is this distribution of functions or, to use the common expression, this division of labour, that determines these relations of friendship."[35]

Durkheim's distinction works to designate two ways of thinking about morality. In a mechanistic society, where solidarity is based on similarity, morality is strong when the individual is weak: "Made up of rules practiced by all without distinction, [this morality] receives from this universal, uniform status as an authority that makes it something superhuman,

[34] Cladis, *Durkheim's Communitarian Defense*, 18.
[35] Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York: Free Press, 1997), 16.

removing it more or less from argument."[36] In an organic society, on the other hand, morality develops "as the individual personality grows stronger." It seems to be chosen by the will, consciously, and through individual initiative.

While Durkheim's distinction suggests that one form of solidarity is pre-modern, the other modern, he is unclear about the relation between the two notions.[37] At times, they seem to apply to different societies at different historical periods. They seem to operate inversely, where the more segmental a society is, the less organic is its notion of solidarity. And yet at times, both seem to be present in equal measure in a society, applying, however, to different aspects of social life. These issues will be explored further below.

As Durkheim looks into the causes of the transition to modernity, he rejects the idea that happiness acts as the motivation or goal. Unlike the utilitarian philosophers or others who might suppose that modern industry arises because it will bring more pleasure to more of society, Durkheim denies that "progress," as defined by the economists around him, is related to "happiness." He argues that happiness is not something that can increase indefinitely and should not be considered the motor of industrial development. On the contrary, he is drawn to the problem of suicide as a modern phenomenon, tied to the development of civilization, with rates increasing at the speed of increased industrialization.[38] Nevertheless, he does agree that changing social conditions are resulting in profound changes in the texture of modern morality. Despite the diversity that accompanies modern life, and the disagreements over religion, truth, and the good, modern society is bound together by new kinds of solidarities, which emerge from economic practices if not in agreement over metaphysical principles.

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[36] Ibid., 174.
[37] Whitney Pope and Barclay D. Johnson, "Inside Organic Solidarity," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 5 (1983): 685.
[38] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, 194.

Like Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer, Durkheim often used organic metaphors to describe society. In the 1860s, several decades before Durkheim would write his dissertation, Spencer used biological terminology to describe what was happening in modern Western society. With the growth of the population, society was becoming a more and more complex and differentiated organism. This differentiation did not, however, lead to chaos. Rather, by understanding society as a kind of organism, one could see how differentiation led to increased integration and interdependence.

For Durkheim, a biological approach enabled one to visualize society as a system made up of interrelated parts. Every individual component is important, not despite but because of its particularity. Conceiving of society in this way helps to ease the concern around how individual freedom can exist in a context of social obligation. In the organism, unity and plurality are reconciled. Social cohesion becomes the condition for individual freedom:

> Society becomes more capable of collective movement at the same time that each of its elements has more freedom of movement. This solidarity resembles that which we observe among the higher animals. Each organ, in effect, has its special physiognomy, its autonomy. And, moreover, the unity of the organism is as great as the individuation of the parts is more marked. Because of this analogy, we propose to call the solidarity which is due to the division of labor, organic.[39]

For Durkheim, then, the division of labor provides hope for the continuation of solidarity in modern times. The division of labor displays the way in which all the parts are different, but necessary, as they work in coordination. Durkheim has been called a "functionalist" for the way in which he explains the importance of social phenomena. This functionalist orientation was common among his contemporaries. What exists in society can be said to exist for a reason, to have function. This does not necessarily indicate a teleological focus. Indeed, he writes, "we use the word 'function' in preference to 'end' or 'purpose,' precisely because social phenomena do

[39] Ibid., 132.

not generally exist for the useful results they produce."[40] Rather, on Durkheim's account, though something may seem to exist for a particular end, in fact it exists because of the role it plays in holding society together.

For Durkheim, the division of labor is not simply an arbitrary development, therefore, but serves an important function as a population grows and society becomes more complex. It creates a material form of interdependence and thereby binds people together, despite their increasing differences, into one community. In modernity, communities are not torn apart. Rather, the interdependence created by the division of labor holds communities together. The expansion of the economy with the advent of industrialization means that individuals and groups become increasingly dependent on others for the items they do not themselves create. Thus, according to Durkheim,

> The most notable effect of the division of labour is not that it increases the productivity of the functions that are divided in this way, but that it links them very closely together.… We are therefore led to consider the division of labour in a new light. In this case, indeed, the economic services that it can render are insignificant compared with the moral effect that it produces, and its true function is to create between two or more people a feeling of solidarity.[41]

This orientation did not necessarily require any particular teleology, but it did tend to naturalize social developments, including modern industry and capitalist economic practices.[42] And soon, Durkheim would begin to question how well modern economic practices were filling their function.

While this position on organic solidarity and the freedom of the individual as a communal ideal would seem to resolve the problem of the changing nature of society in modernity, Durkheim noted that social conditions were not unfolding as smoothly as hoped. Despite the

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[40] Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (New York: Free Press, 1982 [1938]), 96
[41] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, 21–22.
[42] Jonathan Turner, *The Structure of Sociological Theory* (Homewood: Dorsey Press, 1978).

optimism of his early writings in *The Division of Labor*, he already hinted toward a concern that civic life was diminishing and a form of asocial, egoistic individualism was triumphing. Just a few years later, Durkheim would lament more explicitly that in modernity, "nothing remains but the fluid mass of individuals."[43] In his later years, therefore, Durkheim began to move from an analytic perspective to a more openly normative stance, turning his attention to the problems of his time.

In 1897 Durkheim became so concerned about the state of individuals in modernity that he wrote a treatise on suicide. This work was a significant contribution to the field of sociology in that it was one of the first that attributed apparently individual phenomena to social causation. Suicides were not simply isolated events, Durkheim argued. They were indications of larger social trends.

Durkheim set out to investigate why, in a period in which wealth was increasing exponentially, suicide rates were rising to unprecedented levels. He identified four main causes of suicide, the most common of which were egoism and anomie. Egoism, Durkheim writes, is a result of over-individuation. The sense of not belonging, of being isolated from a group, can lead to a state of depression. Anomie denotes a similar sense of purposelessness yet reflects not simply a subjective sense but a societal condition. Anomie, for Durkheim, was a particularly modern phenomenon caused by the dissolution of communities and families under industrial capitalism. These states of depression were not caused by poverty or helplessness, but rather by the loss of solidarity.

The division of labor was a primary cause of the dual problems of egoism and anomie. For while he had argued that the division of labor would create social integration, he noted that modern economic processes did not involve natural division of labor, but rather "forced" division

[43] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals* (London: Routledge, 2003 (1957), 106.

of labor. In these cases, the individual is confined to occupations below his or her abilities.[44] Durkheim argued that the division of labor was just only if it was based upon merit. Society necessarily involved constraints. Nevertheless, he argues,

> All constraint is not normal. Only that constraint which corresponds to some social superiority, intellectual or moral, merits that designation. But that which one individual exercises over another because he is strong or richer, above all if this wealth does not express his social worth, is abnormal and can only be obtained by violence.[45]

Furthermore, the division of labor led to inequalities of wealth and power that could be detrimental. And, he would argue, this had problematic effects for both those left in poverty and those left with wealth. Indeed, he writes that people with wealth

> are probably most stricken by the state of anomie. The enormous [suicide] rate of those with independent means (720 per million) evidently shows that the possessors of most comfort suffer most. Everything that enforces subordination attenuates the effects of this state. At least the horizon of the lower classes is limited by those above them, and for this same reason their desires are more modest. Those who have only empty space above them are almost mentally lost in it, if no force restrains them.[46]

Wealth leads to a state of anomie because it detaches individuals from society. Placing them above all the rest, they become unconstrained, but unconstrained in a way that leaves them isolated and alone. This becomes an even greater problem, he suggests, as the pursuit of wealth becomes a social priority. Capitalism stimulates the passions, and particularly greed, throwing off the constraints of the community, constraints that once functioned to bind individuals together.

Durkheim's thoughts on the material and moral problems of modernity are compiled, through lectures he gave between 1890 and 1900, in *Professional Ethics and Civic Morals.* In these lectures, which Bryan Turner calls the culmination of Durkheim's sociological thought, Durkheim argues that the detachment of the economic sphere from other social institutions is a

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[44] Durkheim, *Division of Labor,* 310.
[45] Durkheim, *Rules of Sociological Method*, 123.
[46] Durkheim, *Suicide* (New York: Free Press, 1979), 257.

critical factor in modern malaise. Economic activity takes a priority over the institutions of the family, religion, and even government. And this had provoked a crisis of morality: "this amoral character of public life has led to a public danger."[47]

While he thought that, technically, the division of labor makes every part of society increasingly interdependent, it did not necessarily create a consciousness of this interconnection. The economic sphere is cut off from the other social institutions and is left without a coherent morality of its own. As individuals focus increasingly on the service they are paid to provide, relationships are reduced to brief moments of exchange.

According to the political economists, this was not particularly problematic. On their account, economic relations would suffice to ensure a well-functioning society; the invisible hand would coordinate the interests of each for the benefit of all. But Durkheim identifies a similar stance among socialists as well. He notes that they assume "economic life is equipped to organize itself and to function in an orderly way and in harmony, without any moral authority intervening."[48] While, for socialists, property is shared rather than held in private hands, they resemble classical liberal economists in their tendency to believe that economic arrangements can be sufficient for producing social harmony. They overlook the role of ideals, beliefs, moral traditions, and virtuous habits in structuring social interactions.

In contrast, Durkheim holds that self-interest, without a sense of morality and purpose, could not be a principle of social harmony. He takes pains in *Division of Labor* to explain that integration does not take place through the making of contracts or the process of exchange. On the contrary, he writes,

> In the fact of exchange the various agents involved remain apart from one another and once the operation is over, each one finds himself again "reassuming his self" in its

[47] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics,* 12.
[48] Ibid., 10.

> entirety. The different consciousnesses are only superficially in contact: they neither interpenetrate nor do they cleave closely to one another. Indeed, if we look to the heart of the matter we shall see that every harmony of interests conceals a latent conflict, or one that is simply deferred.[49]

In *The Division of Labor,* Durkheim argues that contracts and acts of exchange are not the elements of modernity that have the potential to increase the sense of interdependence. Rather, he argues that the contracts which now populate our interactions work only because there is a prior social contract, understanding, or bond, which moves us all to respect the formal contracts into which we enter. The division of labor is accompanied by a morality, even if that morality is more limited than the strong moral norms attributed to premodern societies.[50]

But in his later work, Durkheim appears less hopeful about the natural development of modern morality. Economic output has become considered an end in itself. Modern industry has become dependent, he writes, on "a chronic state of warfare and endless dissatisfaction amongst the producers."[51] Even utilitarians, he says, should question the use of piling on riches, if doing so does not bring greater happiness. Society "has no justification if it does not bring a little peace to men—peace in their hearts and peace in their mutual intercourse."[52] In his later writings, Durkheim's moral outrage against the injustice of modern inequality becomes apparent, as do his prescriptions. In what follows, I look to Durkheim's work on religion and politics to explore how modern solidarity has been eroded and what might restore it.

### 2. Solidarity and the Sacred

Throughout his prolific writings, Durkheim returned repeatedly to the concept of religion. He corresponded extensively with other European writers who were studying tribal life and

[49] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, 152.
[50] Ibid., 174.
[51] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 16.
[52] Ibid, 16.

primitive practices and wrote on totemism, penal law, and customs of marriage and divorce. From Durkheim's perspective, one of the best ways to understand contemporary life was to study the past. And while he did not believe in any universal human nature, he presumed that the sociologist and the anthropologist might be able to uncover common structures and functions across diverse societies.

In addition to the problem of the changing economic conditions, many of Durkheim's contemporaries were concerned about the decline of religion. In 1887, Durkheim wrote to a Monsieur Guyau on the topic of the irreligion of the future. M. Guyau, he writes, assumes that religion arises as a source of explanation first and as a social practice second. Durkheim suggests we turn this on its head. Individuals feel sentiments and attachments and are taught to inhabit certain practices, and religious representations are only offered later to explain these aspects of social life. Despite developments in science and attacks on religion, a vast number of individuals continue to go to mass on Sunday, or to resist eating pork, which shows that these are not simply practices that relate to a certain set of beliefs, but rather, they are *social* practices that have a life of their own. [53]

Durkheim explains the deeper distinction that must be faced by those who hail the end of religion, which is the question of its origins. If there is agreement that religion is in part related to certain sentiments, he distinguishes two kinds of social sentiments. One is an interindividual, or intrasocial sentiment, which includes feelings of attachment, respect, fear, and affection. The other is toward society as a whole, a sentiment that comes into play in intersocial relationships, between multiple social groups. M. Guyau, he says, believes the first type of sentiment is that which characterizes religion. Religion is a personal attachment to a conception of God. But Durkheim argues that it is the latter that is the source of religion. Religion emerges in the

[53] Durkheim, "Guyau, M., *L'Irreligion de l'avenir*," *Revue philosophique* 23 (1887): 299–311.

distinction between one society and that which is other. Religion, therefore, has to do with the formation of a social identity; it is the source of solidarity by which a society is held together.

Durkheim's development of this concept of religion shifts the field of inquiry from religion as related to truth to the idea of how religious beliefs and practices function in society. After completing *The Division of Labor*, Durkheim moves on from his distinction between modern and premodern forms of solidarity and begins to emphasize the fact that in all cases, society is held together by shared beliefs about what should be considered sacred. [54] Against the trend of scholarship that would compare religions and judge their truth or falsity, Durkheim would argue that all religions reveal something about humanity. "There are no false religions," he would say.[55] What is important is not the accuracy of a religion's truth claims, but how it functions in relation to a variety of "legal, moral and economic relationships."[56] The question becomes, then, how does religion function in modernity?

Durkheim turns to the past to gain insight into the present. In *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, written in 1912, Durkheim explores primitive and tribal religions to uncover what he thinks is the core logic of religious practice, unencumbered by the preconceptions that color modern ideas about religion. He begins by rejecting the idea that religion is fundamentally about the supernatural. This idea, he says, arose quite late in the history of religion and is actually dependent on the notion of the priority of the natural, opposed to the supernatural, which was a notion that developed along with the rise of science. Religion is also not simply about "divinity." On the contrary, he invokes examples of religions that are not oriented around a concept of God,

[54] Cladis, *Durkheim's Communitarian Defense*, 79.
[55] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Dover Publications, 2008 [1915]), 4.
[56] Durkheim, *Division of Labor,* 118.

or some great and mysterious being, such as Buddhism.[57] In addition, even deistic religions, he notes, have many aspects not oriented to the divine but nevertheless integral to religious practice.

Durkheim observes that what religions have in common is that they are made up of beliefs and rites.[58] The common quality he finds among religious beliefs is that they separate the world into the *sacred and the profane*, though what these categories define may vary broadly. For Buddhists, the Four Noble Truths might be considered sacred. For some, the sacred might be found in a rock, a tree, or a stone. He sums up his position saying,

> Sacred things are those things protected and isolated by prohibitions; profane things are those things to which such prohibitions apply and which must keep their distance from what is sacred. Religious beliefs are representations that express the nature of sacred things and the relations they sustain among themselves or with profane things. Finally, rites are rules of conduct that prescribe how man must conduct himself with sacred things.[59]

If this is true, the question becomes not which religion is most true or false, but why humans have the tendency to see the world in this dichotomous way, how some things take on a sacred status, and, for our purposes, what role this has in the constitution of solidarity. As Durkheim will go on to say, "Demonstrating that the idea of religion is inseparable from the idea of a church suggests that religion must be something eminently collective."[60]

The importance of the sacred, then, is its collective function. The sacred orients individuals toward society, toward the community. In fact, for Durkheim religion is essentially the worship of society. In contrast to the idea of the abstract individual, who chooses to adopt certain religious beliefs, Durkheim would turn this understanding on its head. Life begins with the religious, as the essential structure of the social. Religion, or the division of social life into

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[57] He offers this example with qualifications, given the assertions of some Buddhists that the Buddha himself is divine, an assertion he considers a deformation of Buddhism.
[58] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 36.
[59] Ibid., 40.
[60] Ibid., 46.

the sacred and the profane, gives the social context meaning. The individual finds herself inextricably attached to society through the fabric of beliefs and practices that abound around her.

Through his study of primitive religions, Durkheim would come to the conclusion that the function of the concepts of the sacred and profane would ultimately serve not to illuminate the true nature of reality, but rather, to solidify social solidarity. Religious rites, though they appeared to involve worship of sacred objects, were in fact practices that reinforced the authority of the social.

From this perspective, despite the seeming secularity of modernity, Durkheim was able to apply this framework to the modern age. While in *The Division of Labor* he characterized the role of religion as particularly prominent in traditional societies, he comes to see that modern society can also be understood through this lens, even if what has come to be considered sacred has changed significantly.

In his introduction to *The Elementary Forms*, Mark Cladis argues that the Dreyfus Affair had an important impact on Durkheim's thoughts on this topic. Dreyfus, a Jewish French officer from Alsace, Durkheim's place of birth, was unjustly convicted of treason by a military tribunal. The case proved so popular that it became a question of national identity. As people took to the streets, debated vehemently, waved flags, and invoked ideals, Durkheim identified the religious nature of the Dreyfus question. In this social effervescence, "Durkheim discerned a common faith reaffirmed and extended. This faith—call it civic republicanism or moral individualism—affirmed the rights and dignity of the individual, and the conviction that one does not live for

oneself alone but for one's fellows."[61] A particular notion of the individual, therefore, and his or her rights and liberties, had become a core sacred aspect of modern society.

Durkheim had begun to articulate the insight that modern society was a "cult of the individual" in *The Division of Labor:*

> If, moreover, we remember that the collective conscience is becoming more and more a cult of the individual, we shall see that what characterizes the morality of organized societies, compared to that of segmental societies, is that there is something more human, therefore more rational, about them.… The rules which constitute [society] do not have a constraining force which snuffs out free thought; but, because they are rather made for us, and in a certain sense, by us, we are free.[62]

The modern cult, therefore, which makes the individual its sacred object, offers a hopeful prospect in that it reconciles the individual and society by establishing a set of rules. What ties individuals to society is the social recognition of the freedom and rights of each individual. But freedom does not mean the absence of all obligations or constraints, however. On the contrary, Durkheim's conception of freedom involves being bound together within a web of social institutions and practices. Negative liberty, or freedom from all constraints, is an illusion for Durkheim. Without the appropriate rules, practices, and prohibitions, individual freedom is threatened.

In addition to the sacredness of the individual, modern society is populated with a variety of other religious aspects. Many seemingly secular notions and activities serve to hold together the collective and create a shared background and shared morality. No longer, perhaps, is there agreement about a transcendent God. But there is agreement around the sacredness of certain historical events or symbols: "The mother country, the French Revolution, Joan of Arc, etc., are

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[61] Cladis, "Introduction," *Elementary Forms of Religious Life,* tran. Carol Cossman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), xv.
[62] Emile Durkheim, *Emile Durkheim on Morality and Society*, ed. Robert Bellah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 144.

for us sacred things which do not permit to be touched. Public opinion does not willingly permit one to contest the moral superiority of democracy, the reality of progress, and the ideal of equality."[63] Religion, understood in the broad sense of rituals and beliefs, continues to be a strong social factor even in modern secular societies.

With this understanding, we can see how religion can be conceived not as an external force, but as a way of describing the process of forming collective values and judgments. Religion does not require complete similarity or obedience to a priestly authority. It can permit conflict and pluralism by providing a set of practices and beliefs that incorporate those facts as aspects of society. A modern republic attempts to offer rites and rituals for dealing with differences in a way that can sustain unity. Stephen Lukes notes that Durkheim identified the religion of modern society, which, "deriving from Christianity, sanctified the values of liberalism and pointed towards socialism."[64] Religion could be understood, therefore, not as a separate sphere within society, but as that set of beliefs and practices which fundamentally characterizes how individuals think of themselves and their relations to others. A concept of moral individualism could become a way to create a social orientation that left open the possibilities of diversity and difference. The Dreyfus Affair illuminated this problem in high contrast. At the heart of a well-conceived republic is a set of prohibitions, things that cannot be done to other people. First and foremost of these is domination, the possibility that one person is in a position to have arbitrary control over another's life and well-being.

And yet, as noted, modern conditions were diminishing the possibility that this individualism work to sustain a sense of the solidarity with the collective. What practices would ensure that the kind of individualism that predominated in modernity would be one that resisted

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[63] Emile Durkheim, "De la définition des phénomènes religieux," *Année sociologique* (1899): 20. Quoted in Cladis, *Durkheim's Communitarian Defense,* 79..
[64] Lukes, 339.

the pull toward egoism and, instead, would draw individuals toward a concern for the community?

### 3. The Possibilities of Modern Solidarity

Durkheim saw potential in the idea that modern, secular society would be based on a concept of the moral individual. But in the wake of the Dreyfus affair and debates about what it meant to be French, it was clear that the possibility toward which Durkheim cast his gaze was still far in the distance. In lectures given between 1890 and 1900, compiled in *Professional Ethics and Civic Morality*, Durkheim turns to a closer examination of modern politics and economics. In this concluding section, I turn to two final topics: Durkheim's concepts of property and the state. Between these two poles lies the problem of modern morality.

On one hand, according to many of Durkheim's interlocutors, the role of the state should be minimized, as it is an infringement of individual liberty. On the other hand, property has come to take on a sacred character, as the embodiment of individual rights. Durkheim would challenge these presuppositions on three fronts: (1) he argued for a moral authority in the state; (2) he challenged the sacred status of property; and (3) he suggested that beyond this dichotomy, we must attend to the practices of daily life, particularly our economic practices, and explore how solidarity can be recovered through the development of intermediary institutions, which might bridge the state and the individual and reorient individuals toward the common good while preserving their diversity and difference.

For many modern thinkers, the myth of the state of nature and the freedom of individuals prior to the development of government created a particular conception of the relationship between individuals and society. The state was seen in opposition to the individual, a source of

constraints and infringement. If the economists and philosophers were right about the naturalness of the individual and the artificialness of society, they could be justified in arguing that the main purpose of the state was the minimal function of ensuring the natural freedom of the individual by warding off "the ills of association."[65] But for Durkheim, every concept and category of thought is determined by society, including the concept of the individual. "Man is a product of history: there is nothing in him that is either given or defined in advance."[66] Durkheim notes that society envelops everything that the individual can know: "the world is inside society."[67] The relationship between the individual and society would need to be rethought, beginning with the role of the state.

For Durkheim, if the individual is to be held sacred, this will require strong communal norms. Indeed, the freedom of the individual is not opposed to but dependent upon a strong and robust state. He argues for this first on the basis of historical reasoning. If one reads the pages of history, he writes, one sees the development of the individual and the expansion of the state take place concurrently. In this way, he argues against both collectivists and individualists that neither one nor the other has priority: "Shall we find some people saying that the cult of the individual is a superstition of which we ought to rid ourselves? That would be to go against all the lessons of history: for as we read on, we find the human person tending to gain in dignity."[68] But similarly, from his perspective, just as the dignity of the individual has increased over time, so has every state in existence expanded its activities, its budget, and its services. The view of the state as playing a simply minimal and prohibitive role is blind to history.

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[65] Ibid., 52.
[66] Durkheim, *Pragmatism and Sociology*, tran. J. C. Whitehouse, ed. John B. Allcock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 12.
[67] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms*, 490.
[68] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 56.

Hannah Arendt would make a similar claim, decades later, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism.* Like Durkheim, she saw a paradox in the modern idea of the abstract individual, endowed with inalienable and universal rights. The Declaration of the Rights of Man, proclaimed at the end of the eighteenth century, was a valiant effort to protect individuals from the insecurity of changing times. It identified human rights as inalienable to every human being, independent of God's existence or any other social condition. And yet, the Declaration rested on a paradox, for it could only be enforced by states. It assumed an abstract man who existed separately from any community. But when it comes to actual political and social arrangements, such abstraction gives way to the particular rights and responsibilities acknowledged and enforced by communities. There are no rights separate from a community that endows them, as is evident in the lack of rights of stateless peoples and refugees.

The modern individual, therefore, is not an abstract concept but is rather a social creation, and its sacredness must be enforced by the community. The concepts of freedom and autonomy are not incompatible with social cohesion but dependent upon it: "Nothing is more false than the antimony that people have too often wished to establish between the authority of rules and the freedom of the individual. On the contrary, liberty (by which we mean a just liberty, one for which society is duty bound to enforce respect) is itself the product of a set of rules."[69] Moral individualism is actually related to the acceptance of a rational moral authority. And for Durkheim, the state becomes this moral authority in modernity.

Durkheim does, however, admit to the apparent contradiction. How can the individual enjoy his or her freedom in the presence of an active and imposing state? He agrees that if we see the individual and state as deriving their sacredness from innate qualities, if the state embodied one moral authority and the individual another, this would indeed be a conflict. But on his

[69] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, xxxiii.

account, each derives its authority from the other: "The only way of getting over the difficulty is to dispute the postulate that the rights of the individual are inherent, and to admit that the institution of these rights is in fact precisely the task of the state. Then, certainly, all can be explained."[70] Durkheim admits that there is a danger that such a view would allow the state, the collective, to exert undue power over the part, the individual. But he also argues that the state can provide relief from the despotism of the smaller communities of which it is composed. He claims that the smaller a community, the more stringent it often is about conformity to its norms. The state can provide a reminder of participation in a larger community; it offers freedom from the despotism of smaller groupings—family, profession, associations—and a vision of a collectivity that transcends the particular. The state orients individuals toward the common good. And in modern democracies, it does this, not by aggregating many individual wills and calculating a majority opinion. Rather, Durkheim offers a participatory vision, in which individuals deliberate together and create new and original representations of what is the good for all.[71]

The state does not exist, therefore, to impinge on individual rights. It exists to endow them. Individuals are not, as Kant would have it, "wholes that are self-sufficing and that the state should merely respect, since it is through the state, and the state alone, that they have a moral existence."[72] Individuals can be seen as sacred and endowed with dignity, and yet it should be acknowledged that this status comes from their position in society. "Take away from man all that has a social origin and nothing is left but an animal on a par with other animals."[73]

At this point we have seen how a shared commitment to the value of individualism, in the context of a strong state, could become the basis of social solidarity. "The individualist who

[70] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 57.
[71] Ibid., 92.
[72] Ibid., 64.
[73] Ibid., 60.

defends the rights of the individual defends at the same time the vital interests of society."[74] But other social developments have diminished the authority of the state and led to a position that sees the state as infringing upon freedom, and property as that which protects it. Durkheim turns to this issue in a seldom-treated set of lectures on property. He will argue that property has had a sacred status throughout history. And while, for millennia, this helped to bind society together, the contemporary condition of modern individualism and the enclosure of private property under individual ownership have become one of the greatest obstacles to modern solidarity. For Durkheim, private property, and inheritance in particular, perpetuates inequality, which fundamentally undermines the possibility of unity across social classes.

Durkheim's treatment of property begins with a strong challenge. The idea of private property is taken as a given, and yet, on what claims does this idea rest? Durkheim's immersion in religious thought gives him a particular orientation to the arguments he will make. Property, he will argue, has taken on a sacred status. This has been true since its origins. The sacred, as we know from the *Elementary Forms,* is that which cannot be touched or trespassed against. Property, by definition created through enclosure, becomes sacred through the act of its withdrawal.[75]

The sacred object is closely related to a sacred person, and vice versa. There is a contagious quality to that which is sacred, which makes sacred those things around it. A religious leader becomes sacred by his proximity to the sacred religious objects. And the sacredness of each is retained through the ritual ceremonies by which they are maintained. Such rituals, signifying the sacredness of the land, may take place every year, to remind onlookers of its bounty and boundaries. Seeds are scattered, first fruits are sacrificed. And yet, the recognition of

[74] Ibid., 54.
[75] Ibid., 146.

the land as sacred, and as untouchable, is a collective process, a process which in turn solidifies the nature of the community.

There are consequences for violating sacred land. Durkheim raises a point (elaborated more recently by Giorgio Agamben) that a man who commits a crime and profanes that which is sacred is declared *homo sacer*.[76] While the term is translated to "sacred man" after Christianization, the Latin notion of *sacer* originally indicated something set apart. *Homo sacer* was one who could be justifiably killed by anyone, with impunity, but not religiously sacrificed. For this man does not simply trespass against the private property of another. Rather, he trespasses against the entire society, its meaning and its norms, and he is therefore cast outside both human and divine law. For Agamben this indicates an important way in which power operates through the ambiguity of the concept of the sacred and the way it is used to include or exclude individuals from society.

How, Durkheim asks, does this translate to modernity? On Durkheim's understanding of religion, "gods are no other than collective forces personified and hypostasized in material form. Ultimately, it is the society that is worshiped by the believers."[77] Every member of society is supposed to retain a stamp of that society, signifying his or her belonging to it. It is from the collectivity that all sacredness ensues. But private property is paradoxical, for it is a rejection of the collective. "Private property came into existence because the individual turned to his own benefit and use the respect inspired by the society."[78] In modern societies, private property retains a sense of sacredness, but the concept is replete with contradictions.

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[76] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics,* 151. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
[77] Ibid., 161.
[78] Ibid., 162.

First, private property is deemed to belong to an individual, and the individual therefore has exclusive right to it and all its uses. This comes from the idea of property as the fruits of one's labor. But Durkheim questions how this conclusion follows from the first presumption. "It is said that we should be free to dispose of the fruits of our labour because we are free to dispose of the talents and energies involved with this labor. But are we able to dispose of our abilities with such freedom? Nothing can be more debatable. We do not belong to ourselves entirely: we owe something of ourselves to others, to the various groups we form part of."[79] The idea that there is a realm of things with which we can do whatever we please obscures the fact that we are always bound to others, beyond ourselves.

Second, he challenges the notion that most property is actually the fruit of one's labor. Labor, he writes, does not produce the raw material out of which property is made. Those materials come from the earth and have their own existence. To whom do they belong and why? And finally, most property is not the fruit of one's labor at all but comes from exchange, gift, or inheritance. Durkheim moves through each of these points to challenge their legitimacy. But it is inheritance, in particular, that he sees as "the supreme obstacle" and cause of social inequality and injustice. The concept of inheritance, Durkheim argues, has no place in contemporary ethics.

When Durkheim turns to the question of inheritance, and his recommendation for its abolishment, we begin to gain insight into his view of an alternatively constructed society. Durkheim does not think such inheritances should be absorbed by the state, as "hands that are already so blundering and wasteful." On the contrary, he imagines that secondary groups, more limited in range and closer to concrete communities, could fulfill the function of redistributing the property. While the family was once an economic unit, that unit has grown to include local professional groups. Durkheim's main prescription, then, is the expansion of these secondary

[79] Ibid., 122.

groups, which can mediate between the family and the state and recover a moral sense for economic life.

For Durkheim, then, the state is not the only relevant community that holds society together. Every individual exists simultaneously in a variety of communities. And in each of those communities, the individual may be accorded a greater or lesser status, may be bound by stronger or weaker obligations, and may be compelled to behave by a different set of norms. Most individuals exist as members of a family, a neighborhood, a professional or student group, and a nation. Identities are made up of race, gender, and territorial affiliations. Durkheim noticed this plurality and saw it as an important way of creating balance and freedom. The fact that we are never entirely defined by a single community allows us choice in whom we decide to be. In this sense, it is not our existential uniqueness that forms the basis of our freedom, but the fact of negotiating between our different community affiliations.

Secondary institutions play an important role in mediating between the individual and the state. "A nation cannot be maintained unless, between the state and the individuals, a whole range of secondary groups are interposed. These must be close enough to the individual to attract him strongly to their activities and, in so doing, to absorb him into the mainstream of social life."[80] Durkheim looks back to Greece and Rome for a model of guilds and professional associations that integrated individuals into intermediary institutions. Within the guild structures, norms were created about the boundaries of obligations, and the individual's interests were contextualized within the interests of the larger group.

Durkheim proceeds to offer a vision of a modern guild society, locally rooted but nationally connected. He addresses the potential criticisms of the static nature of previous guilds or their incompatibility with a central state. Unlike previous guilds, he suggests, which were too

[80] Durkheim, *Division of Labor*, liv.

slow to transform at the rate of other social aspects, he asks his readers to imagine a system of modern guilds, as a corporate structure of secondary institutions that would be diverse, innovative, and connected to and organized in accordance with the state.[81]

In addition to strengthening relationships among workers in any guild and enabling a more robust sense of morality, these secondary groups would play an important role as mediators between the state and the individual. However, he quickly notes, part of what facilitated this professional morality in medieval societies was the accompaniment of festivals, celebrations, and banquets, which imbued a sense of community into relationships that could otherwise be considered primarily economic. Morality was fundamentally tied to the social practices that accompanied economic activity and oriented individuals toward the common good.

In modernity, he laments, nothing has emerged to replace those lost communities. But if professional guilds could be strengthened, they would be key to ensuring social solidarity. On the one hand, they could create more democratic control. They would be the basis for extending ownership of the means of production and thus serve to decrease the level of wealth inequality. But he also sees these guilds as providing an opportunity for the development of modern morality. "What we particularly see in the professional grouping is a moral force capable of curbing individual egoism, nurturing among workers a more invigorated feeling of their common solidarity, and preventing the law of the strongest from being applied too brutally in industrial and commercial relationships."[82] In a certain sense, these secondary institutions provide venues for the establishment of new moral communities, particular concepts of the sacred and profane, which give meaning and order to society.

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[81] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 17.
[82] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, xli.

While this might seem like a conservative recommendation to reestablish order in a time threatened by chaos, Durkheim's recommendations provide insight into the concerns of his century, a time of significant social upheaval, regular revolutions, and the search for new sources of social order and harmony. Durkheim witnessed the development of an increasingly pluralistic and secular society, but instead of abandoning hope for any sense of social cohesion, he developed a conception of "moral polymorphism," a supple arrangement, loose enough to comprise the multiple moralities of the family, various professional associations, and civic life.[83] Increasing the number of intermediary institutions, professional guilds, and voluntary associations would foster the ability to negotiate between diverse conceptions of what constitutes moral behavior and the good life. These structures would be the basis of social solidarity in the context of modern pluralism and diversity.

## CONCLUSION

Durkheim and the solidarists wrote at a time when society was in flux and traditional communities seemed to be fragmenting. The idea of solidarity presented an opportunity to discern a way forward, a way that would embrace the autonomy and freedom of individuals while protecting the context of the community as a source of meaning and purpose.

In this chapter, I have situated Durkheim, Fouillée, and Bourgeois in the republican tradition, but we can note that they also represent distinct lineages within this tradition. Fouillée and Bourgeois drew, in large part, from the Ciceronian line and looked to the state as that which would protect liberty and equality and create social solidarity. Durkheim can be seen as adopting a more Aristotelian perspective on the need for more intimate communities in which individuals

[83] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 7.

are provided a moral education and given a communal context in which they can find freedom, between the intimacy of the family and the abstraction of the state.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Durkheim did not believe that progress was inevitable. He believed that the modern idea of the sacredness of the individual could provide the basis for the reconciliation of individual freedom and social solidarity. But he also emphasized the distinct difference between egoistic individualism and moral individualism; and in fact, he was very concerned that there were many aspects of the modern system, such as private property and inherited wealth, that would undermine the relationships and bonds critical for healthy social life.

Steven Lukes notes that while Durkheim was aligned with the solidarists in many ways, he did not fit within the mainstream of solidarist thought and practice. The solidarists sought a third way between individualism and collectivism, liberalism and communism. They advocated for state intervention and a moral focus within politics. However, as Lukes writes, solidarism "in no way challenged the existing social structure or the security of property and had the immediate practical consequence of a stream of welfare legislation."[84] Durkheim, however, was aware that the problems of social degeneration could not simply be fixed by tweaking legislation. He saw deeper reasons for the unbinding of communities.

The republican tradition continues to be one of the most important political philosophies that animates the modern world. It is a tradition that ties together the virtues of the citizenry with the well-being of the community. It is a tradition that seeks to reconcile individual liberty and communal flourishing. But in the following chapters, we will explore several other traditions and movements that broach questions about the state as an adequate protector of either individual liberty or communal well-being. In particular, the problem of severe economic disparities

[84] Lukes, 352.

continues to surge as a fundamentally undermining aspect of modern politics, though it also creates new potential sites of solidarity, based on a shared position in the global economy.

As we turn to the legacy of Marxism, we can note that Durkheim differed from Marx in that he did not see social change taking place solely through alterations in material conditions. On his view, those material conditions were in large part secured by conceptions of society, the individual, the sacred and the profane. For Marx, the end of classes would bring the end of the state, the equalization of individuals, and the fulfillment of their desires. But for Durkheim, desire is an appetite not so easily controlled. While desires are socially constituted, they can be inflamed unless there are social mores that restrict them. Thus, for Durkheim, an ethical socialist society needs to be infused with a morality that orients individuals correctly toward the community and one another. Charity, justice, and self-restraint continue to be moral ideals that Durkheim sees as necessary in a socialist society. Solidarity is not simply cultivated by more equalized economic conditions but also requires a shared moral orientation.

Durkheim ends his lectures on property with a final point on the distinction between charity and justice, which returns us to the timeless question raised also, as we saw, by Aristotle. There are two kinds of duties, Durkheim notes: those governed by justice and those governed by charity. Justice seeks fairness and balance. But charity goes beyond justice, "For it is man as a human being that we love or should love and regard…. Charity is the feeling of human sympathy that we see becoming clear even of these last remaining traces of inequality. It ignores and denies any special merit in gifts of mental capacity acquired by heredity. This, then, is the very acme of justice."[85] We are not there yet, Durkheim says. Egoism is still too strong. But by turning our attention to the possibility of solidarity in modern political communities, there may be hope for finding this justice beyond justice again.

[85] Durkheim, *Professional Ethics*, 219.

CHAPTER 4

# REFORM OR REVOLUTION?
# ROSA LUXEMBURG AND THE DEBATES OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL

> To discover what we share with others, to rediscover common desire, is to acquire a new moral standpoint. One cannot, of course, make this discovery by introspection…. Whether one makes it at all will depend on whether capitalism places men in a position in which so deep dissatisfaction is born that only a realistic answer to the question 'What do I really want?' can be given. The history of all false consciousness is a history of evasions of this question. And this question can only be answered by a discovery that 'I want' and 'we want' coincide.…
>
> The ideal of human solidarity, expressed in the working-class movement, only has point because of the fact of human solidarity, which comes to light in the discovery of what we want.
>
> —Alasdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness"

On May 1, 1886, workers in Chicago held a general strike, demanding an eight-hour workday. Several years later, the Second International was formed, a successor organization to Karl Marx's First International, which aimed to coordinate the movement for workers' rights around the world. At its first congress, members called for an international workers' protest, to be held on May 1, 1890, commemorating the Chicago strike. By 1891, the protest was recognized as an annual event: May Day, the international day of worker solidarity.

If the French republicans developed a conception of solidarity as social cohesion based on our debts to those in the past, who helped construct the world we live in, and our responsibilities to those in the future, who will inherit the world we steward, the Marxist conception of solidarity is a call to action, to struggle and opposition, based on an analysis of exploitation in class relations.

Republicanism was a radical force in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but as a tradition, it differed from Marxism in its analysis of social conditions and theory of change. Republicans of French, British, and American varieties looked toward the structures of governance, and the methods of representation, as important ways in which justice and solidarity could be achieved. For Marxists, domination persisted through class relations despite these reforms. Both traditions sought an ultimate unity or harmony, but for Marxists, working-class solidarity would be an unmasking of the ideology of unity that characterized the nationalism of the bourgeoisie. If there were ever to be greater harmony in society at large, it would only come on the other side of class struggle.

Just as solidarism was developing in France as a form of republicanism, the Second International was reviving the effort to create a class-based movement that would unite the world's proletariat. Within the movement's international leadership, however, very different ideas of solidarity were promulgated. While Bernstein became wildly popular in Germany for his "evolutionary socialism" and Lenin began to consolidate power in Russia, Rosa Luxemburg offered an ethical Marxism with a democratic populist orientation. In this chapter, I focus on the debates about solidarity and organization among Marxists, lifting up Luxemburg as the thinker who has the most to offer today's movements.

In the following pages, I explore the idea of solidarity within the Marxist socialism of the Second International (1890–1914). Luxemburg carries forward Marx's Aristotelian humanism, in which participation in the processes of structuring one's environment is a good in itself. On this perspective, the rhetoric of solidarity is not simply a call to arms but is also an ethic and a principle for rethinking social relationships. Central to this orientation is a theory of change that ties together both the development of class-consciousness and engagement with formative social

practices that address material relations. As Paul Blackledge argues, this strand of Marxist thought illuminates the dialectic between individual and structural change. In the embodiment of the practices of solidarity, the working class could "create the conditions for the solution of the contemporary problems of morality."[1] That is, through the perspective of the working class, one could discover that what one ought to do and what one desired to do were one and the same. As Blackledge argues, the proletariat discovers that "solidarity is not simply a useful means through which they struggle to meet their needs, but it is in fact what they naturally desire." In this process, the material and the ideal, ethics and rational desire are unified.

While focusing on Luxemburg's theory as the one with the most potential for contemporary political thought, I want to distinguish her work from her contemporaries, primarily Lenin, Bernstein, and the anarchists of her period. Luxemburg saw anarchism as utopian and unstrategic in its rejection of the measured and intentional organizing that would be required to create workers' associations and spread class-consciousness. But Luxemburg also took a stand in opposition to both Lenin and Bernstein, who represented, respectively, the stances of revolution and reform. While Lenin would claim that "solidarity" meant discipline and commitment to the party, Bernstein's perspective relied less on any associative notion and more on a Kantian form of moral reasoning. What was significant about Luxemburg, in contrast to both thinkers, was her belief in the agency of workers, in the potential of mass movement, and in the unity of ends and means. She saw that a commitment to Marxism would involve not only a transformation of political and economic systems, but also a social transformation, which would allow workers to be the protagonists in the struggle against the alienation caused by capitalist conditions.

[1] Paul Blackledge, "Alasdair MacIntyre's Contribution to Marxism: A Road Not Taken," *Analyse & Kritik* 30 (2008): 225.

Marxists agree that the problem of economic exploitation in capitalist production requires the solidarity of workers to create a shift in social relations. But on issues of organizational structure and the relationship between ends and means, they remain divided. A form of ethical Marxism, which is manifest in Luxemburg's perspective, and which has been promulgated by Cornel West and others, continues to offer resources for understanding solidarity as cultivated through social practices and collective action.

## I. An Ideology of Unity, A Dialectic of Solidarity

A central theme in Marx's early writings is the concept of community. Community is essentially what capitalism has undermined and what communism aims to restore:

> Only within the community has each individual the means of cultivating his gifts in all directions; hence, personal freedom becomes possible only within the community. In the previous substitutes for the community, in the State, etc. personal freedom has existed only for the individuals who developed within the relationships of the ruling class, and only insofar as they were individuals of this class. The illusory community, in which individuals have up till now combined, always took on an independent existence in relation to them, and was at the same time, since it was the combination of one class over against another, not only a completely illusory community, but a new fetter as well. In a real community the individuals obtain their freedom in and through their association.[2]

In this passage, we see Marx invoke two notions of community. On the one hand, he argues that true community is the source of personal freedom. In healthy associations, individuals find themselves supported and surrounded, enabled to be free in a positive and active sense. But at present, he argues, many of our communities are "illusory." Illusory communities involve the appearance of harmony and the obfuscation of oppression and exploitation. They are the ideological buttresses of class conflict, in which domination is justified by appeals to the unity of the state or group.

[2] Karl Marx, *The German Ideology* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1998), 86.

As Martin Jay writes, Marxism must be understood through its relationship to Enlightenment thought, in which the unity of humanity and the possibility of progress as a whole were prominent ideals.[3] In many ways, Marxism shares the framework of society as a totality, which is progressing toward a utopian end. The unity of society is a condition that makes it possible to talk about progress. However, on the other hand, Marxism is fundamentally characterized by the idea that the motion of history is fueled by the contradiction and conflict of social forces. As István Mészáros writes, the idea of organic and harmonious social unity is an ideology, which perpetuates the status quo.[4] Proclamations of social harmony can function as pacifying statements that naturalize and justify social inequity, as we witnessed among organicists. In this context, it is the solidarity of the proletariat—not the unity of society as a whole—that forms the critical condition for the possibility of a more just social arrangement. In this section, I want to review Marx's concern about modern capitalism as a fundamentally alienating structure and, from there, begin to discuss how class solidarity offers a way forward.

Marx's work, like Durkheim's, is a reflection on industrialization and the political and economic changes that restructured European life in the 1800s. Both saw the dangers of modern industry and the impact factory labor and urbanization were having on the lives of Europeans. While both worried about the effects of modern industry, their analyses of the causes, and therefore the possible responses to such a situation, differed significantly. For Durkheim, as we have seen, the division of labor established interdependence, and if professional associations were strengthened and moral education offered, a balance could be restored between the individual and the community. But on Marx's account, that interdependence was a relation of slavery and oppression. We become interdependent, but only as parts of a machine, required to

[3] Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).
[4] István Mészáros, *The Power of Ideology* (London: Zed Books, 2005).

produce ever more profit for the capitalist class. The division of labor does not create community but fragments it.

> While the division of labor increases the productive power of labor and the wealth and refinement of society, it impoverishes the worker and reduces him to a machine. While labor gives rise to the accumulation of capital and so brings about the growing prosperity of society, it makes the worker increasingly dependent on the capitalist, exposes him to greater competition and drives him into the frenzied world of overproduction, with its subsequent slump.[5]

While Marx notes that some level of division of labor has always existed, the systematization and efficiency pursued during the industrial revolution transforms the laborer into a cog in a machine. With the implementation of Taylorism and the scientific management of manufacturing, individuals become increasingly dispensable. Drawing on Adam Smith, Marx notes that in a small community, no one would willingly subject him or herself to repeating the same minor task day in and day out. But as the market grows and the division of labor becomes more profitable, individuals are forced to fit within this system.[6]

The division of labor also alters the way in which we understand work. For Marx, work is a human capacity and part of our activity as a species. Production and exchange enable us to participate in creating society, in contributing, even, to the common good. But in a society singularly motivated by profit and the accumulation of capital, these activities become fundamentally alienating. Overlooking the use-value of objects—the reason for which they are created—capitalism reduces objects to their exchange value. The worker toils to produce products not because they are useful, but because they are profitable for the factory owner. With profit as the end goal, the skill of the laborer and the characteristics of the product no longer have any value in and of themselves. Their value is simply tied to their monetary return.

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[5] Karl Marx, *Early Writings* (London: Penguin Books Limited, 2005), 287.
[6] Ibid., 371.

On Marx's account, the laborer is also turned into a commodity through this process. This is perhaps one of the most vicious and insidious effects of capitalism.

> The demand for men necessarily regulates the production of men, as of every other commodity. If the supply greatly exceeds the demand, then one section of the workers sinks into beggary or starvation…. The worker has become a commodity, and he is lucky if he can find a buyer.[7]

In a system based on the need for growth and driven to create profit, the easiest way to do so is, of course, by reducing wages. Quoting Adam Smith, Marx notes, "the normal wage is the lowest which is compatible with common humanity, i.e. with a bestial existence."[8] Labor is bought and sold on the market, and as the population of available workers increases, their wages sink. Struggling to find work and to make a living, human beings are reduced to selling themselves as objects, becoming increasingly alienated from themselves, their work, and society.

These ideas of alienation and estrangement are central to the problem that the Marxist traditions seek to solve. As Hegel noted, all work involves objectification, that is, turning a human capacity into a material object that exists in the world independent of its creator. Objectification is not in itself problematic.[9] But what Marx notes is that, in wage labor, in laboring for someone else, the worker experiences this work as "loss and bondage to the object." The worker is estranged from the object of her creation. In work, one essentially pours oneself into an object, but in a capitalist market, that object, and the labor that has gone into it, no longer belongs to the worker. To be estranged from this object causes the worker to become estranged from herself.

In addition to being estranged from oneself, from the object of one's labor, and from the process of one's labor, Marx writes that this economic system estranges man from his species-

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[7] Ibid., 283.
[8] Ibid. Quoting Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations* (Blacksburg: Thrifty Books, 2009), 61.
[9] Georg Lukacs, *History and Class Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1972), xxxvi.

life. In Marx's terms, a species being is "a being which treats the species as its own essential being or itself as a species-being."[10] Unlike most other animals, humans see themselves as part of a larger whole, a global community, sharing something in common with all other men and women around the world. Individual existence is a part of species, or communal, existence. And it is through activity, including labor, as we contribute to the community beyond the family, that we experience ourselves both as individuals and as a part of something larger.

When labor is estranged, however, we are estranged from our species-being. Instead of experiencing our individual lives as held in common, we are forced to focus purely on our own individual and material existence. Our life in common becomes a means to our individual survival rather than vice versa. "Estranged labor therefore turns man's species being—both nature and his intellectual species-powers—into a being alien to him and a means of his individual existence. It estranges man from his own body, from nature as it exists outside him, from his spiritual essence, his human essence."[11] The need to work to survive, in a way that is typically degrading, severs our connection to the spiritual essence of a larger community.

The republican tradition sought to overcome alienation and isolation, in addition to pursuing more just social conditions through the political process, by finding meaning in social rituals, or collective worship, typically of the nation itself. Through the rituals and practices of patriotism, harmony is created across a diverse body. One sees oneself as part of a larger whole and begins to desire the common good. Marx worried, however, that this unity was based on an ideology that would support the interests of the ruling class. He saw the appeal to harmony as a potential tool to suppress class differences and hide the dynamics of exploitation. For Marx, it

[10] Marx, *Early Writings*, 329.
[11] Ibid., 329.

was critical to unmask these processes and reveal the economic framework that forms their foundation.

As we saw in the last chapter, Durkheim agreed that the true "common good" cannot be achieved without some kind of socialism, some way of reducing economic inequality. He, too, was wary of the possibility of false unities, which suppress the moral integrity of each individual. Both, therefore, sought to understand what would enable the attainment of a truly common good; and for both, material, structural conditions would need to change, if there were to be hope for genuine solidarity.

In a certain sense, the concept of community in Marxist thought has little to do with the organicist notion of society as an already existent and harmonious whole. Instead, it is a concept deeply informed by the Hegelian notion that the truly ethical community emerges through a dialectical encounter with contradictions, through a struggle. Alienation and estrangement are integral parts of the process through which reconciliation would finally take place. It is through the class struggle, through the creation of class-consciousness, the solidarity of the working class, and the ultimate abolition of capitalism that we find the road to true universal solidarity.

### II. Reform or Revolution?

Like Marx, Rosa Luxemburg saw the development of modern capitalism and industry to be fundamentally exploitative and alienating. Poverty was mounting in European urban centers, imperialism and colonialism were proliferating, and social conditions were dire. The question remained, however, of how to build a mass movement, how to transform a society that had become oriented toward competition and restore a sentiment of community and solidarity. In this section, I turn to Luxemburg's thought on social transformation. Carving out a space between

Bernstein and Lenin, advocates of reform and revolution respectively, Luxemburg offers a conception of solidarity as a virtue cultivated through practice. Her commitment to democracy and internationalism made her a threat to those in power, but her legacy continues to be an important resource for popular movements.

Rosa Luxemburg was born in Poland in 1871. After participating in a general strike and joining the outlawed Proletariat Party, she was forced to flee to Switzerland in 1889. There she did a doctorate in economics, writing on the industrialization of Poland, before moving to Germany. Deeply involved in Germany's socialist party, Luxemburg also taught economics and Marxism. Biographies on Luxemburg frequently note that she seldom mentioned her Jewish heritage and was uninterested in the women's suffrage movement. Instead, she adamantly fought any forms of identification, including nationalism, which would obscure the potential for class solidarity.[12]

In frequent debates with the socialist leaders of her time, Luxemburg was never shy to express her disagreements. In 1909, Karl Kautsky, one of the leaders of the Second International and the German Socialist Party, published *Ethics and the Materialist Conception of History* as a critique of Neo-Kantianism. While he argued for a Marxist ethic over a Kantian one, he ultimately concluded on a deterministic note: the proletariat would be victorious; ethics adds little, substantively, to the revolution; history has its course, and it simply needs to be ushered in. Luxemburg would share some of this determinism; however, her writing illuminates a greater sense of the role of an ethic of solidarity, an affective shaping of character, as an important condition for socialism. She was devoutly committed to the participation of workers as leaders and agents in social change.

[12] Paul Frolich, *Rosa Luxemburg* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2010); Stephen Eric Bronner, *Rosa Luxemburg: A Revolutionary of Our Times* (London: Pluto Press, 1981).

Founded in 1889, the Second International would renew the First International's attempts to organize an international class of workers. But within its ranks, there would be deep and important disagreements, particularly about the relationship between means and ends, strategies and goals. Lenin and Bernstein represented the two most dominant perspectives within late nineteenth-century Marxism, each trailed by large followings. Bernstein had become a prominent voice in Germany, and his *Evolutionary Socialism* was deeply influential throughout Western Europe. He was often called a "revisionist" for his claims that some of the basic principles of Marxism required rethinking. Bernstein argued that it was no longer reasonable to assume that capitalism would inevitably collapse. The bourgeoisie was expanding. The conditions of the proletariat were improving. The state was beginning to incorporate welfare policies and social benefits. The last decades of the 1890s had put into question the hypothesis of the inevitability of the revolution, and it was time to turn to the progress that could be made through reforms.

For Lenin, on the other hand, reform was an abandonment of Marxism. Lenin was committed to the project of social democracy, defined as making "the workers aware of their own world-historical mission, namely, to conquer state power as a class and use it to introduce socialism."[13] He was a realist *par excellence* and argued for the need for a centralized revolutionary party to lead the masses to success.

While Bernstein and Lenin were pitted as opposites, reformist and revolutionary, Luxemburg saw them as flip sides of the same coin.[14] For both, a grouping of intellectuals or politicians was assumed necessary to represent the interests of the proletariat. Luxemburg would vehemently argue, however, that such representation could not be legitimate. The workers needed to be integral to the process, transformed by their participation in the revolution. The

[13] Lars Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered: What Is to Be Done? In Context* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006), 6.
[14] See Stephen Bronner, *Socialism Unbound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011) for more.

means of the movement must cohere with its ends. "Solidarity" could not be a way to demand loyalty to the party but must involve an active process of standing together, as a mass movement with broad participation, in a shared struggle.

According to both Lenin and Luxemburg, Bernstein and the "economists" in his camp were "opportunists," who used a platform of social welfare to advance their own interests. The cornerstone of Bernstein's platform would be taxation. But Luxemburg saw this to be inadequate as a challenge to the underpinnings of private property and capital accumulation. As István Mészáros writes in his critique of Bernstein, the latter would entirely overlook the issue of structural inequality, an inequality that is not the fault of wicked individuals but the result of "capital's innermost determinations, which must subordinate everything to the imperative of *profitable capital-expansion*."[15]

Ignoring the logic of capitalism, Bernstein and the reformists would look to parliamentary action as the site of potential progress. This orientation would limit the movement to the election of representatives, without any notion of the accountability of those representatives to the working class as their base. Bernstein would also diminish the role of workers and the masses in social change, considering them "immature and badly educated." Meszaros writes, this orientation accepted and even idealized the framework of capitalism, retreating from the possibility of its reimagination: "It is therefore by no means accidental that *90 years* of reformist theorization in the *whole* of Western Social Democracy could not produce any significant advance over Bernstein's original formulations."[16]

But Luxemburg criticized Lenin's views as equally problematic. Lenin was absorbed with the question of how to form a revolutionary party that would politicize and consolidate the

[15] Mészáros, 310.
[16] Mészáros, 340.

interests of the working class. He dismissed the idea of "local, amateurish work" and study-circles, which were assumed to empower the workers themselves to develop the ideas and goals for the socialist movement, as sufficient endeavors. For Lenin, the central question was "the improvement of revolutionary organization and discipline."[17] Without the guidance of a strong revolutionary party, he worried that the working class would be tempted by the possibility of slightly improving their conditions, for example, by the offer of higher wages or a shorter working day. Mired down by the inhumanity of their conditions, workers could not be expected to formulate a political platform on their own; their "true" interests would be overshadowed by their immediate interests. A centralized party was necessary to tie together their different interests and reveal their common position and common goals.

For Lenin, the social democracy represented by Bernstein posed a threat to the potential of true change. He saw the attempt to position oneself alongside workers as lowering to the level of "trade-unionism," at which point the best one could imagine was improved economic conditions that nevertheless left the main dynamics of capitalism in place. As long as workers remained disenfranchised, that is, as long as all they owned was their own labor, they remained dominated by the capitalist class. For this reason, Lenin sought a way to connect the concerns of workers to the larger political struggle to change the dynamics of power at the national level.

It was not just the factory workers, then, but peasants, intellectuals, and others who should unite in a broad-based struggle: "the Social-Democrat ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people, who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression, no matter where it appears, no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence

[17] Vladimir Lenin, "An Urgent Question," in *Collected Works,* vol. 4 (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1960 [1899]),

and capitalist exploitation."[18] A political party, led by a revolutionary vanguard, would be tasked with exposing the problem of political repression, explaining social issues through a materialist lens, and linking spontaneous uprisings in a single narrative that would draw in more and more adherents to the social-democratic cause. It would need to theoretically tie together political repression and economic exploitation, to create a picture of the common causes of various forms of oppression.

Lenin was also deeply cognizant of the powers he was up against. The Russian state, controlled by the Tzar, was in full force in its attempts to crush the socialist and democratic movements. Change, therefore, would not simply require a change in ideas but the defeat of one power by a stronger power. Unlike Bernstein, Lenin recognized that while the conditions were in place for a transformation of economic conditions, this transformation would require the defeat of those whose interests lay with the status quo. Lenin faced the very real question of the need to build power to achieve one's goals or otherwise be crushed by stronger forces. For Lenin, this endeavor required a tightly organized operation:

> Against us, against the tiny groups of socialists hidden in the expanses of the Russian "underground," there stands the huge machine of a most powerful modern state that is exerting all its forces to crush socialism and democracy. We are convinced that we shall, in the end, smash that police state, because all the sound and developing sections of our society are in favour of democracy and socialism; but, in order to conduct a systematic struggle against the government, we must raise revolutionary organization, discipline, and the technique of underground work to the highest degree of perfection.[19]

Lenin saw himself as building an army. There needed to be specialization, a division of labor, a strengthening of the firing line and the reserves. Without organization and discipline, Lenin argued, the workers' struggle was not a true class struggle. It was only the isolated struggles of this or that group of workers against this or that set of employers. True class struggle

[18] Vladimir Lenin, *Essential Works of Lenin: "What Is to Be Done?" and Other Writings*, ed. Henry Christman (New York: Bantam Books, 1966), 113.
[19] Lenin, "An Urgent Question."

needed to be conceived as one entire class, organized as a political force, against another. The different parts of society, the workers, peasants, and intellectuals, needed to be brought together under a single banner, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party; and in this formation, each party member would be *responsible* to the rest of the Party.[20]

Writing in 1899, Lenin saw that the problem was how to build a party that was both centralized, efficient, and organized and yet keep it connected to the workers, to the local groups. In "Our Immediate Task," he states that this is the central problem toward which all social-democrats should be directing their attention. The focus on centralization was not meant to diminish the importance of strikes, boycotts, protests, etc., but to tie all these activities together and give them greater significance. "The Party organ, far from competing with such activity, will exercise tremendous influence on its extension, consolidation, and systematization."[21]

Ultimately, Lenin came to oppose the idea that the workers would be the self-propelled motor of the revolution. He took the view that "true" political consciousness needed to come from outside any single class's perspective, from a perspective that tied together the social whole. In fact, he worried that so much time was spent studying factory life that the discontents and revolutionary potential of the rest of the population were being overlooked. It was in this sense that Lenin set revolutionary socialism against trade unionism and justified the leadership of a vanguard party.

While Lenin did assert that the working class needed the help of bourgeois intellectuals to understand their true interests, he also argued that if they failed to understand, this was not their fault but the fault of inadequate theorizing: "we must blame ourselves, our lagging behind the mass movement, for still being unable to organize sufficiently wide, striking and rapid exposures

[20] Lenin, "Our Immediate Task," in *Collected Works.*
[21] Ibid.

of all the shameful outrages. When we do that (and we must and can do it), the most backward worker will understand, or will feel, that the students and religious sects, the peasants and the authors are being abused and outraged by those same dark forces that are oppressing and crushing him at every step of his life."[22] Lenin here seeks to lay the foundation for a broad-based movement for social transformation.

The responsibility of the intellectual, therefore, was to create the context in which many groups and individuals would come to see their interests as united, to see themselves as part of a common system. Because they were able to analyze the system as a whole, however, the vanguard supposedly had the authority to assert an understanding of the true interests of the class and work toward a revolutionary goal that would provide emancipation, despite what workers indicated as their subjective interests. This leap, however, which put such faith in the hands of a revolutionary party, would soon be used to justify the authority of that party and demand adherence to its vision and goals. As a contemporary observer wrote in the newspaper *Iskra*, "the keynote of the Party is solidarity, which is a synonym for discipline."[23]

In 1917, Lenin would lead a revolution in Russia, which would overthrow the Tzar; and in October, Lenin's Bolshevik party would take power. But as Stephen Eric Bronner writes, Lenin failed to grasp the very different qualities needed by a movement in revolution versus a party in power: "soon enough, a contradiction arose between the emancipatory purpose of the revolution and the authoritarian content of the new state. It became apparent that where a working class was meant to rule in the interest of abolishing all classes, a party was actually ruling in its own interest."[24] The privileges accorded to the party would allow it to treat

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[22] Lenin, "*What Is to Be Done?*" in *Lenin: On Politics and Revolution*, ed. James E. Connor (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 51.
[23] *Iskra*, no. 66 (May 15, 1904). Quoted in Lars Lih, *Lenin Rediscovered*, 519.
[24] Stephen Bronner, *Socialism Unbound* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 78.

opposition with condescension, confident in its claims to true class-consciousness. The bifurcation of means and ends, the assumption that the vanguard could lead the way and would one day hand over power to the people, was ultimately shown to be a vapid myth. Ultimately, of course, it laid the foundation for a corrupt and totalitarian order.

### III. On Marx, Hegel, and the Ethics of Opposition

Throughout this period, Rosa Luxemburg was in frequent debate with both Lenin and Bernstein. In addressing the question "Reform or Revolution?" Luxemburg took up the opposition of their positions, but she immediately broke it down as a false dichotomy. Luxemburg sought a way forward, without sacrificing the ends or ignoring the means. Indeed, Luxemburg carried forward the ethical tradition of Marx and Hegel, in which community and participation are central aspects of a notion of a flourishing and good life.

There has been extensive debate about the relationship between Marxism and morality.[25] While Marx does not talk explicitly about solidarity, he does, as we have seen, emphasize the importance of community. I want to suggest that it is through this line of thought that we can draw out an ethic of solidarity in the work of later Marxist thinkers, such as Luxemburg. The emphasis here on the distinction between Kantian morality and Hegelian ethics was critical among Marxist thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and I want to insist on the ongoing importance of this distinction in contemporary political theory. For grasping solidarity as an ethic, rather than a moral position in relation to a set of rules, allows for a better understanding of why the transformation of society in the pursuit of greater equality and

[25] Paul Blackledge, "Marxism and Ethics," *International Socialism* 120 (October 2008); George Brenkert, *Marx's Ethic of Freedom* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983); Norman Geras, "The Controversy about Marx and Justice," in *Marxist Theory* , ed. Alex Callinicos(London: Oxford University Press, 1989). Cornel West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991).

flourishing need be so total. As an ethic, solidarity describes an entire orientation toward others, a way of being. It is a framework that involves the understanding that one's freedom is bound up with the freedom of another, that one's individual flourishing is tied together with the flourishing of one's community. This distinction therefore works as a guide between political positions on the relationship between structural and individual transformation.

In "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," Alasdair MacIntyre expresses the concern that the conditions which Marx identified failed to provide the sufficient ethical resources to support the revolutionary activity of the proletariat: "while proletarianisation makes it necessary for workers to resist, it also tends to deprive workers of those forms of practice through which they can discover conceptions of a good and of virtues adequate to the moral needs of resistance."[26] MacIntyre here identifies the key problematic in how resistance is structured and propelled. But Paul Blackledge argues that MacIntyre overlooks the ethical possibilities within Marxist thought, overly conflating the possibilities of Marxism with the realities of Stalinism. In addressing the relationship of ends and means, reform and revolution, I want to suggest that we turn toward this ethical strand in Marxism, which is based on the formation and agency of the working class.

In *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought,* Cornel West shows the deep ethical grounding of Marx's analysis.[27] As a radical historicist, Marx does not engage in traditional moral philosophy, which searches for philosophical groundings and absolute certainties. Instead, following the examples of Aristotle and Hegel, for whom ethics is intrinsic in sociality, his social criticism is an ethical practice. Unfortunately, as Lawrence Wilde also points out, this ethical orientation was obscured by later interpreters of the tradition. Part of the reason for the emphasis on determinism and material struggle, over ethics, in much of the history of Marxist thought lies

[26] Alasdair MacIntyre, "Notes from the Moral Wilderness," in *The MacIntyre Reader*, ed. Kelvin Knight (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 232.
[27] Cornel West, *The Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1991).

in the fact that many of Marx's more philosophical writings were not published until the decades after the Russian Revolution (e.g., *The German Ideology*, 1932; English, 1964).[28] But West, Wilde, and more recently philosophers including Kelvin Knight and Martha Nussbaum have drawn attention to the influence of Aristotelianism on Marx's thought, which makes human flourishing, the fulfillment of the human essence, a central goal of social life.[29]

In addition to studying Aristotle, Marx was an avid reader of Hegel. Like Hegel, Marx criticizes moralists and moral traditions based on the idea of an autonomous individual, abstracted from a social context. In fact, Marx sees this form of moral reasoning as upholding the status quo, as a form of ideology.[30] In contrast, Marx endorses an ethical framework offered by Hegel, based on the contextualization of individuals in social life as both inheritors of social norms and active agents who have the potential to change those norms. Insight into Marx's ethical thought can be obtained through a study of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* and Marx's response to that work. Marx's contribution, written in 1843 but not published until after his death, establishes his disagreement with Hegel about the progression of history toward the reconciliation of the individual and the community in the state. Nevertheless, it also helps clarify his significant agreement with Hegel on the distinction between morality and ethics.[31]

In the *Philosophy of Right,* Hegel describes the three-step transition from the immediacy of the will, to morality, to the ethical life. The will, he begins, exists *in-itself*. It is abstract in the sense that it has not yet worked out its determinate content. It has not yet come into contact with

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[28] Lawrence Wilde, *Ethical Marxism and its Radical Critics* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).
[29] West, *Ethical Dimensions of Marxist Thought*; Kelvin Knight, *Aristotelian Philosophy: Ethics and Politics from Aristotle to MacIntyre* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007); Martha Nussbaum, *Frontiers of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).
[30] Michael Rosen, "The Marxist Critique of Morality and the Theory of Ideology," in *Morality, Reflection, and Ideology*, ed. Edward Harcourt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 21.
[31] While MacIntyre sees this potential, he argues that there is a break between Marx's early and later writings. Rosen, on the other hand, argues for continuity. For our purposes, what matters is less where Marx finally ends up and more the resources he provides, which are used by later Marxist thinkers as they continue to develop a materialist ethic in contrast to bourgeois morality.

its own oppositions and contradictions. When it does encounter these contradictions, it begins the transition to morality. In the moral point of view, the will, which was immediate to itself, becomes *conscious of itself*. Hegel writes that this is the beginning of true subjectivity. The will becomes aware of itself as a subject in relationship to others outside of itself. The moral point of view, Hegel says, takes on the aspect of obligation or duty. But this duty remains abstract. This is essentially the Kantian moment, where duty must be done for duty's sake.[32]

What quickly becomes apparent is that the content of duty remains obscure. This notion of duty as an abstract morality leaves the individual lacking guidance in particular situations. The individual is left to resort to his own conscience to guide him in the correct course of action. But he is confronted with the fact that he is trapped within a subjective determination, without any objective content to what his duty should consist in. The options seem to be arbitrary good intentions or nihilism and the retreat into meaningless. Without any hope in a universal law, which is given meaning in a particular social context, morality can only reside in abstract dictates.

The ethical life, for Hegel, is the *Aufhebung* (negation/transcendence) of morality, which was the negation/transcendence of the immediacy of the will. As the negation of the negation, it has encountered its contradictions and achieved reconciliation between its oppositions. In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel states that

> the unity of the subjective with the objective good which has being in and for itself is ethical life and the reconciliation which takes place in it is in accord with the concept. For whereas morality is the form of the will in general in its subjective aspect, ethical life is not just the subjective form and self-determination of the will: it also has its own concept, namely freedom, as its content.[33]

[32] Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 161.
[33] Ibid., 186.

The transition from morality to ethics is a transition from abstraction to content. Freedom is no longer a hollow ideal but is tied to a certain way of living, a certain place and time and social being.

Thus, in the ethical life, the individual, who previously relied on her own conscience to make moral decisions, now finds herself embedded in a social context which has authority, and yet in which she still has the freedom to participate in adopting, molding, and shaping.[34] The laws and institutions of society can be made and remade by the members of society and thus are not necessarily discrete external authorities. They are a part of the collective self-creation, the vehicles for reconciling the individual and the community. Hegel argues that in finding oneself existing within laws that one has participated in creating, the individual is liberated from being compelled by natural drives and dominated by her own desires, liberated from the isolation of being trapped in one's own conscience. She is liberated from the paralysis of uncertainty in the face of a world without foundations. In the ethical life, the individual finds freedom and reconciliation with the community. "Hence duty and right coincide in this identity of the universal and the particular will, and in the ethical realm, a human being has rights in so far as he has duties and duties in so far as he has rights."[35] It is in this convergence of rights and duties that the characteristic binary of moral discourse is transcended.

Marx follows Hegel in this critique of bourgeois morality.[36] He notes that the concept of rights, while an advance on previous systems, is the instantiation of the individualism and egoism already perpetuated by a capitalist system. Abstract rights belong to abstract individuals,

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[34] Ibid., 191.
[35] Ibid., 197.
[36] For more on Marx's relationship to Aristotle, see the volume *Marx and Aristotle*, ed. George McCarthy (Savage: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991). Martha Nussbaum also treats the topic in *Frontiers of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006).

whose particularity, context, and community have all become secondary.[37] In the Kantian framework, duties are those imperatives that should apply to anyone, anywhere. And while, for Kant, humanity has a role in creating his laws, the facts of history, context, and material relations are largely absent from view. This, in consequence, does not result in freedom from one's contextual conditions but in further enslavement to them because it obscures the possibility for critique. Marx thus writes, "in imagination, individuals seem freer under the dominance of the bourgeoisie than before, because their conditions of life seem accidental. In reality, of course, they are less free, because they are to a greater extent governed by material forces."[38]

In this move, Marx goes beyond Hegel in his critique of bourgeois morality. Hegel criticized Kantian morality for its abstraction, but Marx displays how this abstraction enables new forms of exploitation and domination. It functions to separate individuals from one another and ultimately prioritizes the protection of private property and capital from infringement by the community.[39] In *On the Jewish Question*, Marx displays the relationship between the predominant notions of liberty and rights and the way in which they are not used to resist but rather to uphold and enforce the relations of capitalism:

> Liberty is therefore the right to do and perform everything which does not harm others. The limits within which each individual can move without harming others are determined by law, just as the boundary between two fields is determined by a stake. The liberty we are here dealing with is that of man as an isolated monad who is withdrawn into himself…. The right of man to freedom is not based on the association of man with man but rather on the separation of man from man. It is the right of this separation, the right of the restricted individual, restricted to himself.[40]

Rosa Luxemburg will later note that the rhetoric of freedom is used to legitimate the expansion of capitalism. On her account "freedom" is part of the justification for imperialism, which is

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[37] Leszek Kolokowski, "Marxism and Human Rights," *Daedalus* 112,no. 4(Fall 1983): 82.
[38] Marx, *German Ideology,* 87.
[39] Michael Rosen, "The Marxist Critique of Morality and the Theory of Ideology," in *Morality, Reflection, and Ideology*, ed. Edward Harcourt, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[40] Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Early Writings*.

necessary for continual growth. "Labor power … must first be 'set free' in order to be enrolled in the active army of capital."[41] The freedom offered in bourgeois morality is a freedom *from* community, a freedom to become an isolated piece of the economic machinery. Freedom is the lure offered by a system dependent on an expanding supply of cheap work, mobile labor, and individuals who are disconnected from the opportunity to organize in opposition. True freedom depends, instead, on altering social and economic conditions such that individuals are released from the domination of the capitalist system. As Marx says in the *Manifesto*, what is necessary ultimately is a classless society where "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."[42]

It is said that Marx turns Hegel on his head, emphasizing the role of material development over the development of consciousness. But despite Marx's materialism, as a dialectical thinker he emphasizes the role of individuals, workers, as active and conscious agents, working within large-scale social structures. As Lawrence Wilde puts it, "ethical Marxism takes seriously the question of how alienation can be overcome so that the human essence of creative social activity can be enjoyed by all citizens."[43] Marx's position, Wilde notes, "is a 'meta-ethical' one which will not deliver a moral code or decision procedure for ethical judgement…. The strength of this approach is that it reintegrates ethics into the constitution of the life of the community and allows for the emergence of an ethical spirit of the sort which Marx admired in Athenian democracy."[44] Ethics is a situated effort, responsive to a particular time and place.

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[41] Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (London: Routledge, 2003), 343.
[42] Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (New York: Signet Class, 1998), 76.
[43] Lawrence Wilde, *Ethical Marxism and Its Radical Critics*.
[44] Ibid.

For Hegel, the ethical life takes form in the individual as virtue, in the Aristotelian sense.[45] As in Aristotle's ethics, doing well is not simply a matter of making the right decision in a particular situation. It means becoming endowed with the qualities of a person who has integrated justice, honesty, and courage into their character. It is the development of a second nature.[46] For Marx, it was the proletariat that needed to develop these abilities. He acknowledges that it is the aim of proletarian parties to solidify their being as a class and to take political power, on the way toward a classless and stateless society. Thus, the character, thoughts, strategies, and ethics of those involved in this struggle are critical to its success.

As opposed to liberal morality, which asserts an abstract notion of the universal based on an abstract notion of the individual, the solidarity of the working class offers a way to move through the particular struggles of a particular part of society in such a way that their achievements are the achievements of all. In Hegel's terms, such a process is no longer abstract but is embodied in a *concrete* universal, appropriate to a particular time and place.

Nevertheless, the history of Marxism did not always, in practice, emphasize this ethical orientation. Bernstein's political impulses situated him in a more republican tradition, while Lenin abandoned concern with the means for the sake of revolutionary ends. I want to suggest, however, that Rosa Luxemburg offered a conception of an ethic of solidarity that wove together the relationship between consciousness and practice. Her writings particularly attend to the problem of ends and means in the socialist project, how the process of revolution would cultivate the solidarity that was in fact both the means and the end toward which the hope of emancipation was ultimately aimed. Luxemburg offers the most viable and relevant form of Marxist thought

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[45] Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, §150.
[46] Jay, *Marxism and Totality,* 43. Jay notes the residue of this conception in Marx's writings through the legacy of Rousseau. For Rousseau, the community could not be constituted by returning to nature but by developing a second nature.

after the demise of the USSR and the experience of many of the dangers that accompanied the early twentieth-century socialist project. She offers an ethic of solidarity based not on abstract duties, but on a contextual recognition of a common existence within an exploitative structure, and an understanding of the need to cultivate a second nature by participating in shared practices of self-empowerment, critique, and opposition.

## IV. LUXEMBURG'S ETHIC OF SOLIDARITY

Luxemburg would agree with Lenin that Bernstein and the "economists" were abandoning Marxism with their incrementalist and parliamentarian perspective. She shared with Lenin the concern that "opportunists" would destroy the potential of the movement through their satisfaction with reforms, which ultimately would not impact the structure of the economy, the ownership of the means of production. But she also worried that Lenin's eagerness for revolution would skip the development of democracy, dividing the means from the ends. She departed from Lenin in her skepticism of centralization, and instead, she offered a vision of local leadership and self-administration. She would write,

> The party sections and federations need the liberty of action which alone will permit them to develop their revolutionary initiative and to utilize all the resources of a situation. The ultracentralism asked by Lenin is full of the sterile spirit of the overseer. It is not a positive and creative spirit. Lenin's concern is not so much to make the activity of the party more fruitful as to control the party—to narrow the movement rather than to develop it, to bind rather than to unify it.[47]

Lenin saw centralization as the best guard against cooptation by reformists. But Luxemburg argued that, on the contrary, centralization would have the opposite effect:

> If, like Lenin, we define opportunism as the tendency that paralyzes the independent revolutionary movement of the working class and transforms it into an instrument of ambitious bourgeois intellectuals, we must also recognize that in the initial stage of a

[47] Rosa Luxemburg, "Organizational Questions of the Russian Social Democracy," in *Selected Political Writings of Rosa Luxemburg,* ed. Dick Howard (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), 122.

> labor movement this end is more easily attained as a result of rigorous centralization rather than by decentralization. It is by extreme centralization that a young, uneducated proletarian movement can be most completely handed over to the intellectual leaders staffing a Central Committee.[48]

In this quotation, we see her emphasis on the vulnerability of the uneducated proletarian movement. But with time and practice, she believed there was potential in the working class to build a counter-power. Indeed, she argued, "there is no more effective guarantee against opportunist intrigue and personal ambition than the independent revolutionary action of the proletariat, as a result of which the workers acquire the sense of political responsibility and self-reliance."[49] Here we see Luxemburg reject the dichotomy of reform or revolution. As she writes,

> Can social democracy be against reforms? Can we counterpose the social revolution, the transformation of the existing order, our final goal, to social reforms? Certainly not. The daily struggle for reforms, for the amelioration of the condition of workers within the framework of the existing social order, and for democratic institutions, offers to social democracy the only means of engaging in the proletarian class war and working in the direction of the final goal—the conquest of political power and the suppression of wage labor. Between social reforms and revolution there exists for the social democracy an indissoluble tie. The struggle for reforms is its means; the social revolution, its aim.[50]

Luxemburg was committed to the scientific claims attributed to Marxism, that capitalism was inherently unsustainable and would eventually collapse. Her faith in this inevitability has tainted some of her reception given that capitalism proved to be more agile and adaptable than expected. However, unlike many determinists, her commitment to this model did not justify the assertion that an educated party knew more than the masses. Instead, she saw the workers as active agents, who needed to be involved in fashioning their own future.

> It is not true that socialism will arise automatically from the daily struggle of the working class. Socialism will be the consequence of (1), the growing contradictions of capitalist economy and (2), of the comprehension by the working class of the unavailability of the suppression of these contradictions through a social transformation.

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[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Rosa Luxemburg, "Reform or Revolution," in *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg: Reform or Revolution and the Mass Strike* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2007), 41.

Luxemburg emphasizes here the importance of the comprehension of workers in their role as active agents. Lukacs would later defend Luxemburg's position in *History and Class Consciousness*, arguing against vulgar materialism that consciousness plays a central role in revolutionary change. Lukacs would argue that the crisis of capitalism may bring us to the brink; but at the point of creating an alternative to capitalism, it was up to men and women to determine the way forward. Capitalism would begin to destroy itself, but the outcome would not be predetermined. For that reason, the development of consciousness, an understanding of class and history, was critical. He would write,

> The closer this process comes to its goal the more urgent it becomes for the proletariat to understand its own historical mission and the more vigorously and directly proletarian class consciousness will determine each of its actions. For the blind power of the forces at work will only advance "automatically" to their goal of self-annihilation as long as that goal is not within reach. When the moment of transition to the "realm of freedom" arrives this will become apparent just because the blind forces really will hurtle blindly towards the abyss, and only the conscious will of the proletariat will be able to save mankind from the impending catastrophe. In other words, when the final economic crisis of capitalism develops, *the fate of the revolution (and with it the fate of mankind) will depend on the ideological maturity of the proletariat, i.e. on its class consciousness.*[51]

Luxemburg perpetually emphasizes the need for the proletariat to develop certain characteristics: "a sense of political responsibility" and "self-reliance." Revolution was an educational enterprise, dependent upon the development of thought and character. It required the cultivation of a certain sensibility and disposition and the creation of class-consciousness among the proletariat, their ability to self-identify as a class and to self-direct. Other classes would attempt to play a role and gain power, but according to Luxemburg, the proletariat needed to be the primary subjects of revolution, for it was their interests that were the interests of the whole. The proletariat had been created as a class by capitalism and thus, as a class, could be the agent

[51] Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness,* tran. Rodney Livingston (London: Merlin Press Ltd., 1971), 70.

that would overcome capitalism. A multiclass force "is only possible if the Social Democracy already contains a strong, politically educated proletarian nucleus class, conscious enough to be able, as up to now in Germany, to pull along in its tow the declassed and petty bourgeois elements that join the party."[52]

Indeed, she would adamantly defend the need for workers to educate themselves and participate in theorizing, rather than leaving this work to the purview of academics:

> The entire strength of the modern labour movement rests on theoretical knowledge. But doubly important is this knowledge for the workers in the present case, because it is precisely they and their influence in the movement that are in the balance here. It is their skin that is being brought to market…. As long as theoretical knowledge remains the privilege of a handful of "academicians" in the Party, the latter will face the danger of going astray. Only when the great mass of workers take the keen and dependable weapons of scientific socialism in their own hands, will all the petty-bourgeois inclinations, all the opportunistic currents, come to naught. The movement will then find itself on sure and firm ground.[53]

She therefore argued for a dialectical understanding of the relationship between organization and the development of the consciousness of the working class in and through practice. The party should aim to educate the workers; it should put forward platforms and try to influence the consciousness of the masses. But it should not assume to rule them. The masses had to participate in creating change, if there was to be true social transformation. This did not mean shrinking from seizing power. On the contrary, Luxemburg would write, "The masses must learn how to use power by using power. There is no other way … we have to work from beneath. Therein is displayed the mass character of our revolution, one which aims at transforming the whole structure of society."[54]

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[52] Luxemburg, "Organizational Questions of Social Democracy," in *Selected Political Writings.*
[53] Luxemburg, "Reform or Revolution," in *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*, 43.
[54] Rosa Luxemburg, "On the Spartacus Programme," trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (Colombo: Wanasinghe, 1971), delivered on December 30, 1918 at the Founding Conference of the Communist Party of Germany, 16.

This dialectic between the party and masses is displayed in her description of the mass strike.[55] Luxemburg calls the strike "the living pulse-beat of the revolution," but she also writes, "mass strikes do not exactly fall from heaven." Strikes require the determination and activity of the workers, but they are also often influenced by the direction of the party. Strikes "must be brought about in some way or another by the workers." But, she notes, "the initiative and the wider direction naturally fall to the share of the organized and most enlightened kernel of the proletariat."[56] Thus, a strike might require the initiation of those who have a more developed sense of class-consciousness, but they fundamentally rest on the ability of the workers to organize and act.

Strikes play a crucial role in Luxemburg's theory of revolution as one of the central ways in which the proletariat is formed as a class. They offer a tactic that is a convergence of ends and means, for they require the immediate and full participation of the working class, on the way toward greater participation in state power. She sees the strike as fitting within the framework of both Bernstein and Lenin. Strikes have potential to create the immediate reforms desired by the trade-unions, but they are also the context in which a revolutionary class-consciousness can develop. She writes, the strike is "not a crafty method discovered by subtle reasoning for the purpose of making the proletarian struggle more effective, *but the method of motion of the proletarian mass*, the phenomenal form of the proletarian struggle in the revolution."[57] They are the practice through which solidarity is built, through which workers can become agents of historical change. Luxemburg goes so far as to use the language of virtue in describing this process: "All these socialist civic virtues, together with the knowledge and skills necessary to direct socialist enterprises, can be won by the mass of workers only through their own activity,

[55] Bronner, 141.
[56] Rosa Luxemburg, "Mass Strike," in *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*, 147
[57] Ibid.

their own experience."[58] The mass strike was never an isolated phenomenon; it was a ritual, an ongoing process of subject formation.

Strikes have a formative function, therefore, and they allow for the development of mass power. But the achievable aims of strikes are not the actual goals of a socialist movement. Luxemburg envisioned a proletarian conquest of state power, but with Marx, and in contrast to Hegel, she then envisioned the transition of power from the state to local worker councils. This would be a long and progressive process, she admitted, that would proceed only slowly through every town and village, but ultimately, it would be a wholesale transformation of society, "not from above, but from beneath."[59] The process Luxemburg articulates is a vulnerable one. Unlike Lenin, she would write that there is no formal or abstract way to avoid all dangers. Building a mass movement would require embracing the tension between the urgency of immediate needs and the desperation to achieve the end goal.

Throughout her career, Luxemburg would continually insist on the need to focus on the mass character of the movement, despite the fact that this would require more time and effort. "We cannot secure ourselves in advance against all possibilities of opportunist deviation. Such dangers can be overcome only by the movement itself—certainly with the aid of Marxist theory, but only after the dangers in question have taken tangible form in practice."[60] Revolution is a process.

As we see, then, Luxemburg offers a theory of formation, where acts of resistance are fundamental to shaping working-class consciousness and cultivating the virtues necessary to bring about change. She avoided Lenin's mistaken bifurcation of means and ends, arguing that the proletariat needed to be transformed in and through the revolution, by their participation in it,

[58] Rosa Luxemburg, "What Does the Spartacus League Really Want?" in *Selected Political Writings* .
[59] Ibid.
[60] Luxemburg, "Mass Strike," in *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg*, 103.

to create the conditions for a just society beyond the struggle. As Eric Bronner writes, "she recognized that solidarity did not preclude critique, and she never relinquished her ethics of responsibility or her belief that theory should articulate a coherent relation between means and ends."[61]

## V. International Solidarity: Workers of the World, Unite!

> The only real safeguard for peace depends on the resolution of the proletariat to remain faithful to its class politics and its international solidarity through all the storms of imperialism.[62]

In contrast to the solidarity of the nation or geographic community, with which the term was typically associated prior to the development of international socialism, workers' movements have emphasized the need for solidarity across national borders. This form of internationalism is based on a shared material condition. Nevertheless, as discussed in the previous section, an international class-consciousness does not simply exist but must be cultivated. How this cultivation takes place will depend on the structure and organization of movements, in addition to the significance given to national identity.

These issues came to a head around World War I, bringing the movements for international socialism to a point of crisis. In this context of high nationalist fervor, Luxemburg would argue that nationalism was an ideology that distracted the working class from its true interests. In this final section, I want to close with a brief review of Luxemburg's contributions to considerations around the tensions between national and class solidarity, for these tensions continue to bear on the conceptualization of self-determination in global movements today.

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[61] Bronner, 145.

[62] Rosa Luxemburg, "Rebuilding the International," *Die Internationale,* no. 1 (1915). Transcribed by Dario Romeo and Brian Baggins for the Rosa Luxemburg Internet Archive (2000), http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/xx/rebuild-int.htm.

As Meszaros writes,

> Socialist internationalism is very different from ideas like the religiously advocated but in reality never even approximated "universal brotherhood of men" or the Rights of Man, or Kant's cosmopolitan world order … internationalism is the categorical reflection of fundamental material determinations in the innermost structure of capitalist production which tends, in a most antagonistic way, towards its global integration…. Thus the category of internationalism as rooted in the reality of social being cannot be conceptualized from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie.[63]

The bourgeoisie is a social class whose existence depends on the antagonisms of capitalism. The cosmopolitanism characteristic of a Kantian framework establishes shared humanity as a basis for a morality that takes all humanity as its object. But this is a moral framework that often overlooks the way in which imperialism and colonialism buttress the predominant ideas of rights and freedom. As the quote above demonstrates, the international solidarity of the working class is based on shared material conditions and on a critique of the processes of capitalist expansion.

Luxemburg made significant contributions to the theorization of the relationship between capitalism and imperialism. While Marx had a detailed analysis of capitalism, he did not have a worked-out theory of imperialism. For Marx, capitalism could exist in a closed system. While he predicted the global expansion of capitalism, he did not emphasize the necessity of its interaction with noncapitalist economies.[64] Marx saw colonialism as beneficial to capitalism, but not as an absolutely necessary component of the expanding market.

For Luxemburg, on the other hand, capitalism and imperialism were intrinsically intertwined. Luxemburg argued that capitalist economies could not exist without noncapitalist economies, which they could exploit. She argued that there must always be buyers outside of the capitalist relations who can absorb the surplus value created by capitalist production. Furthermore, war serves as a particularly important tool in facilitating these forms of exploitation,

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[63] Mészáros, 363.

[64] For more on Marx's theory of capitalism and its expansion, see Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism* (Boston: Routledge, 1990), 42.

as it creates the crisis that serves as the justification to extract resources from foreign territories. Many have criticized the stronger version of this point, but her basic insight, that capitalist economies tend to seek out underdeveloped areas and destroy their modes of production, has proven important in understanding imperialism.

Given an understanding of this relationship, nationalism seemed like a way to reject the globalizing and imperialistic tendencies of capitalism. But Luxemburg was adamantly antinationalist, seeing this form of affiliation as destructive of the international working-class struggle. Luxemburg points out that the concept of "nation" is often used as if it indicated some homogenous social whole. But in fact, she argues, the concept obscures the conflicts internal to the nation. A nation does not in itself have interests or rights. Rather, within each nation, there is constant struggle between differing groups and individuals. To go to war for the national interests typically meant, therefore, for the interests of the capitalist class. She insists that when socialists use concepts such as "nation," "will of the people," and "rights," they resort to liberal, pre-Marxist analysis, to an analysis that fails to see the role of class in determining group interests.

Luxemburg's antinationalism marks a significant departure from the republican tradition. Republicans would defend themselves from this attack by arguing that the nation is set up to seek the interests of the global common good. One aspect of the common good, as articulated by Machiavelli, is security from domination. And this does not require that the well-being of one nation be pitted against all others. On the contrary, as Durkheim explained, there were expanding spheres of concern, from the local to the national to the international, which all needed attention. Like Luxemburg, then, the republican tradition aims toward a kind of cosmopolitanism, while still empowering the nation to protect those in its orbit. On the republican perspective, the pursuit

of the common good nationally and internationally is facilitated by the establishment of well-ordered nations, which, through the creation of international institutions and norms, are then in relationship with other nations. Nevertheless, the Marxist critique points toward the risk that the emphasis on national unity can become an ideological façade for the interests of the ruling class and that patriotism can distract from other important forms of identification, such as the solidarity of the international working class.

While Lenin agreed with Luxemburg in general that war was in the service of imperialism, he rejected her claims that self-determination was always counter to the interests of the international working class. He saw a need for states that had been suppressed by empires to have the right to differentiate and self-determine. But Luxemburg argued that self-determination had become an illusion in a world dominated by global capital. In "The National Question" of 1909, she writes,

> The very development of international trade in the capitalist period brings with it the inevitable, though at times slow ruin of all the more primitive societies, destroys their historically existing means of "self-determination," and makes them dependent on the crushing wheel of capitalist development and world politics. Only complete formalist blindness could lead one to maintain that, for example, the Chinese nation (whether we regard the people of that state as one or several nations) is today really "determining itself."[65]

On her account, therefore, socialists had to stand in international solidarity against war as the tool of capitalist imperialism. In 1907, at the Seventh Congress of the Second International, she and Lenin would help author a resolution against war. The resolution read:

> Wars between capitalist states are, as a rule, the outcome of their competition on the world market, for each state seeks not only to secure its existing markets, but also to conquer new ones. In this, the subjugation of foreign peoples and countries plays a prominent role. These wars result furthermore from the incessant race for armaments by militarism, one of the chief instruments of bourgeois class rule and of the economic and political subjugation of the working class.

[65] Rosa Luxemburg, *The National Question: Selected Writings by Rosa Luxemburg*, ed. Horace B. Davis (Place: Monthly Review Press, 1976).

> Wars are favored by the national prejudices which are systematically cultivated among civilized peoples in the interest of the ruling classes for the purpose of distracting the proletarian masses from their own class tasks as well as from their duties of international solidarity.[66]

Several years later, Luxemburg and Karl Leibknecht helped form the Spartakus League, which, while sharing many of the principles of the social democrat party, would be adamantly antiwar. The *Guiding Principles* of the Spartakus League stated:

> Imperialism, the last phase and highest development of the political rule of capitalism, is the deadly enemy of the workers of all countries.... The struggle against imperialism is at the same time the struggle of the proletariat for political power, the decisive conflict between Capitalism and Socialism.[67]

But Luxemburg's thoughts on imperialism were not shared by all in her party, including Kautsky and Bernstein. By 1915, Luxemburg was in prison and the world was at war. Writing under a pseudonym, she decried the failure of the Socialist parties to resist the war. And even here, we see her attention to the ways in which such a decision would have an impact on the consciousness formation of the working class. "The world war has altered the conditions of our struggle and, most of all, it has changed us."[68] Rather than building solidarity, the war would create divisions between members of a class that shared interests across national lines.

Luxemburg had a theory of formation, whereby workers gain class-consciousness and develop solidarity by participating in practices of resistance. But the practices of class solidarity would come into conflict with the practices of patriotism. Unable to develop face-to-face relationships with members of ones class in distant countries, that solidarity would be weak in comparison with the solidarity that develops with ones compatriots in the midst of war.

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[66] International Socialist Congress at Stuttgart, August 18–24, 1907 (Vorwärts Publishers: Berlin, 1907), 64.
[67] Rosa Luxemburg, "The Fight Against Imperialism and War," trans. Tony Smith http://www.marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1959/rosalux/4-impwar.htm.
[68] Rosa Luxemburg, "The Junius Pamphlet," trans. Dave Hollis (1996 [1916]) http://www.marxists.org/archive/luxemburg/1915/junius/.

But Luxemburg did not lose hope. Instead, she returned perpetually to the theme of self-criticism, the virtue of humility:

> Dearly bought is the modern working class's understanding of its historical vocation. Its emancipation as a class is sown with fearful sacrifices, a veritable path to Golgotha…. But we are not lost, and we will be victorious if we have not unlearned how to learn….
>
> The madness will cease and the bloody product of hell come to an end only when the workers of Germany and France, of Great Britain and Russia, awaken from their frenzy, extend to each other the hand of friendship, and drown the bestial chorus of imperialist hyenas with the thunderous battle cry of the modern working-class movement: "Workers of the World Unite!"[69]

In contrast to her peers, Luxemburg offered a conception of solidarity not dictated by a party but formed through shared practices of resistance. By participating in the mass strike, and in the self-criticism of engaged reflection, the proletariat could become a world-historical class that would ultimately transcend capitalism. Her theories rested on a belief in trial and error. History would not show linear progress. With a clear analysis of capitalism and the system as a totality, one could attempt to engage in revolutionary efforts to transform society, but the success of such attempts could never be assured.

As the war tore apart the workers' international, the fate of communism would be tainted for the rest of the century by the dictatorial practices that came to accompany it under Lenin and, later, Stalin. Luxemburg was able to predict the dangers of resorting to a centralized party for guidance, which neglected the formation of the workers themselves as agents of change. In 1918, the Spartakus League would officially become the Communist Party of Germany; and in 1919, Luxemburg and Leibknecht would be taken into custody and killed.

[69] Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

My aim in this chapter has been to argue for the idea of solidarity as an ethic in Marxist thought, which has repercussions for how to think about political organization and power. In many ways, the Marxist notions of solidarity and class struggle are critical responses to modern bourgeois republicanism. Both traditions aim to restore community in a world that is increasingly fragmented. But, said simply, for the one, solidarity is based on equality and the transformation of material conditions, while for the other, solidarity is manifest in a shared commitment to national unity with the state as the representative and guarantor of the common good. Both traditions are internally diverse and contain many disagreements among their advocates, but essentially, they represent two distinct ways of thinking about collective identity and the common good.

I focused on Rosa Luxemburg in this chapter to draw out one of the best resources in the history of Marxism, who continues to offer guidance to contemporary social movements. In the wake of Stalinism and the devastating outcomes of many communist experiments during the twentieth century, we can conclude that Lenin's bifurcation of ends and means contributed to a detrimental problem within Marxist theory. Lenin's assumption that a hierarchical party structure could somehow create the conditions for equality and freedom would prove deeply flawed. These assumptions were part of the larger tendency in the Second International to rely on a belief in historical inevitability. In assuming that the revolution would be successful, it also ultimately asserted the party's unassailable right to be its guide. Such a perspective failed to grasp the slow formation of consciousness over time, through practice and reflection. In contrast to her peers, Luxemburg proposed a version of Marxism that held ends and means together, that

made the participation and agency of the working class a central part of the work toward revolution.

These distinctions between ends and means, and organizational structures, are important for our consideration of solidarity, for they show that solidarity is not simply a feeling but is buttressed by social institutions, political parties, and philosophical schools of thought. Solidarity is created in and through political activity. The question is, what creates the bonds of solidarity that are truly emancipatory?

It could be said that Marxism and republicanism are more alike than different. The contemporary moral philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre argues that Marxism and the Enlightenment tradition of the individual both evacuate history of human agency. Both created grand systems that assumed progress was inevitable, and both have a tendency to overlook the virtues of the actual individuals and communities that push history forward.[70] We have explored members of both traditions who do turn to this level of ethical analysis, and I have hoped to show that in fact virtue is a common theme among them. The virtue of piety orients republican thought, while the virtues of discipline and hope are critical for socialist activity.[71]

Rosa Luxemburg is exemplary in her emphasis on the cultivation of individuals and the importance of self-sacrifice, courage, and humility in revolutionary organization. For Luxemburg, international solidarity is an ethic, a commitment, which is critical in addressing the global logic of capitalism. Like Luxemburg, MacIntyre saw socialism as something that could not be imposed but needed to be chosen by, and cultivated in, communities. As he writes, "Socialism cannot be impersonally manipulated into existence, or imposed on those whose consciousness resists, precisely because socialism is the victory of consciousness over its

[70] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame University Press, 1984), 261.
[71] MacIntyre notes the importance of Marxism for perpetuating hope as a social virtue today in *Marxism and Christianity* (New York: Shocken Books, 1968), 116.

previous enslavement by economic and political activity."[72] Today, as contemporary movements develop their strategies and tactics, the debates of the past provide important insight for the construction of solidarity in the present.

[72] Paul Blackledge and Neal Davidson, *Alasdair MacIntyre's Engagements with Marxism* (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 2008), 56.

CHAPTER 5

# THE LOGIC OF AFFINITY: ANARCHIST ASPIRATIONS FOR COMMUNITY

> Equality of conditions is the principle of society, and universal solidarity is the ratification of this law.
>
> —Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, "What is Property?" (1840)

Amid the theorization and experimentations of republicans and socialists at the end of the nineteenth century, anarchism emerged, positing yet another theory of solidarity and social transformation. The departure of the anarchist block from the communist international organizations would cause great ruptures, with significant historical consequences. But anarchism continues to offer insight into potential alternative ways of organizing society, a perspective that still significantly shapes contemporary debates and organizing methods.

It is difficult to define anarchism with any precision, given the wide variety of ideologies and theories that have adopted the label. Perhaps the anarchist historian Rudolf Rocker provides the best way to begin an exploration of the field when he writes that anarchism is not

> a fixed, self-enclosed social system but rather a definite trend in the historic development of mankind, which, in contrast with the intellectual guardianship of all clerical and governmental institutions, strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life.[1]

Noam Chomsky suggests that one might understand anarchism as part of an attempt, which emerges at almost every stage of history, to dismantle the forms of domination and oppression that have survived from previous eras.[2] Peter Marshall notes that one can identify the beginnings of this trend in Taoism and Buddhism and see it as a sensibility that moves through ancient

[1] Quoted in Noam Chomsky, *Chomsky on Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2004), 118.
[2] Chomsky, *Chomsky on Anarchism*, 118.

Greece, Christianity, and the peasant revolts of the Middle Ages.[3] The term is first used in the 1800s, when Pierre-Joseph Proudhon self-styled himself an anarchist, and most contemporary anarchist thought orients itself around Proudhon's double rejection of capitalism and the state.

In this chapter, my focus is on the anarchist conception of solidarity, community, and the relationship between the individual and society. Often anarchism is seen as the "libertarian wing" of socialism.[4] Anarchists make liberty one of their core values, rejecting the authority that republicans and many socialists give to the state. And yet, their vision of the individual is not the isolated, atomistic, self-interested vision that can at times characterize modern liberal thought. Indeed, solidarity accompanies autonomy as a twin value. For most anarchists, solidarity has been a guiding hope, the foundation for the possibility of harmony without the state.

The anarchist orientation, which seeks to challenge structures of oppression and domination, continues to play an important role in twenty-first-century social movements. An understanding of the tradition, therefore, and the theoretical justifications and positions anarchists hold, is critical for grasping contemporary political and cultural trends.

## I. Capital and the State

In his recent critical history of anarchism, Peter Marshall describes anarchism as a river with many currents and eddies.[5] The main current is made up of social anarchists—mutualists, collectivists, communists, anarcho-syndicalists—who take society to be the starting point of their anthropology. But there is also a strong presence of individualist anarchists, who bring a more libertarian orientation to the tradition. All anarchists share in a rejection of the state as a legitimate authority and seek to create the conditions for a free society, a decentralized, self-

[3] Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2010), xiv.
[4] Chomsky, 123.
[5] Marshall, 3.

regulating society composed of free and equal individuals.

Most histories of anarchism begin with Pierre-Joseph Proudhon and the famous declaration in 1840 that "property is theft." Proudhon considered himself a socialist and supported the conclusion that the system of private property enabled severe exploitation and needed to be transformed. But he would also argue that the state could not be the solution to the problem of capital. The state provided yet another source of domination, political domination, which magnified economic exploitation. Thus, he proclaimed his stance in contrast to the prevailing theories around him, including Marxism and republicanism. For example, he would write:

> Since property is the grand cause of privilege and despotism, the form of the republican oath should be changed. Instead of "I swear hatred to royalty," henceforth the new member of a secret society should say, "I swear hatred to property."[6]

Or again,

> "You are a republican." Republican, yes, but this word has no precise meaning. *Res publica,* that is, the public thing. Now whoever is interested in public affairs—no matter under what form of government—may call himself a republican. Even kings are republicans.… "What are you then?" I am an anarchist. "I understand, you speak satirically. This is a hit at the government." By no means. I have just given you my considered and serious profession of faith. Although I am a strong supporter of order, I am in the fullest sense of the term, an anarchist.[7]

Proudhon, therefore, would advocate for a social order, a view of government that would depart significantly from his peers. Interestingly, he would continue to situate himself among republican thinkers, using their language and historical touchstones. In his critique of private property, he looks to Cicero as proffering the best version of the institution. In *What Is Property?* he draws on Cicero to claim that no one has a right to more than he needs.

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[6] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What Is Property?* trans. Donald R. Kelley and Bonnie G. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994 [1840]), 183.
[7] Ibid., 229.

> Cicero's comparison of the earth to a theatre proves it. According to that, each one may take what place he will, may beautify and adorn it, if he can; it is allowable: but he must never allow himself to overstep the limit which separates him from another. The doctrine of Cicero leads directly to equality.

Proudhon uses Cicero to develop the idea that one has the right to possess property in a temporary way, but never in an absolute way. One might possess a plot of land or a house, but one does not have the right to neglect, destroy, or accumulate these things without regard to the effects of such actions. Thus, Proudhon would show an affinity for republican thought in its attention to balancing individual interests with the common good.

For Proudhon, the problem with property has much to do with his worry that, as an institution, it destroys social solidarity. Property separates and isolates individuals from one another. It is not only the basis of isolation but also a central source of exploitation, of the ability for those who have more to overpower those who have less. It is the motivation for war and conquest. It is for these reasons—the way in which property becomes a weapon against the common good—that Proudhon rejects it as an institution.

But he would depart significantly from the republican views on government, questioning the idea that the state could be the guardian and protector of that good. Conceiving of the state as a concentration of power—military, political, and financial—Proudhon rejected the attempt on the part of his contemporaries to think of the state as a servant to the people, claiming this as a blatant contradiction. The entire idea of the state, he believed, was a concession to the sentiment that the people cannot rule themselves directly, that the concerns of the people must be mediated through representatives. Proudhon criticizes the frequent recourse of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers to the idea of the *will of the people* as an attempt to justify this representation as a legitimate interpretation of a collective entity, the People. For according to Proudhon, this collectivity is a fiction. "In short: We deny government and the State, because we affirm that

which the founders of States have never believed in the personality and autonomy of the masses."[8] Proudhon's concerns about both property and the state, therefore, have to do with the way in which he believed these institutions destroy the fabric of society. And, as he would note, these two sources of power and domination are linked, and both need to be reimagined in ways that the republicans had yet to accomplish.

Proudhon's argument against the accumulation of private property resonates, of course, with socialist arguments. At eighteen, Proudhon took up a job as a printer's apprentice and, in that role, was exposed to socialist ideas. He supervised the printing of Charles Fourier's *Le Nouveau monde industriel et sociétaire* (1829), which proffered a vision of utopian communities and universal harmony. But Proudhon rejected that utopianism and set out to create his own model, which could liberate the poorest of society.

For a brief period, Proudhon was on friendly terms with Marx in Paris, who encouraged him to join his international communist group. But Proudhon disliked Marx's authoritarianism and dominating personality. After Proudhon sent a letter to Marx, explicitly raising the issue of his intolerance and dogmatism, Marx did not respond. Instead, when Proudhon came out with *System of Economic Contradiction, or The Philosophy of Poverty,* in 1846, Marx published *The Poverty of Philosophy* as a direct attack on Proudhon, thus beginning the sharp separation between state socialists and anarchists.[9]

As he developed his critique of the state, Proudhon often found himself rebuffed and isolated.[10] Proudhon's attack on the state raised an outcry in response from early socialists and communists, and he made enemies on all sides. Socialists like Leroux sought economic equality

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[8] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, "The State: Its Nature, Object, and Destiny," *The Index,* trans. Benjamin Tucker (August 1877 [1849]), 4.
[9] Marshall, 241.
[10] George Woodcock, *Pierre-Joseph Proudhon* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 59.

and yet continued to esteem the state as a legitimate authority, which could potentially redistribute resources. But for Proudhon, this reverence for the state was as harmful as the deification of capital. Indeed, Proudhon saw the valorization of the state as an unfortunate result of the French Revolution, which confirmed its authority but now in a more "rational," representative, and therefore potentially more pernicious form because of its wider acceptance. Together, the state and private property had become the fundamental pillars of the new bourgeois order.

Already in his time, capitalism and communism seemed to be fated opponents. But naming the one the thesis and the other the antithesis, Proudhon believed in the possibility of a greater synthesis. Communism, Proudhon suggests, makes the mistake of assuming that the abolition of private property requires the appointment of the state or collective as the manager and overseer of land and industry. Individuals are then tasked with passive obedience to the collective, their liberty reduced to a minimum. In contrast to the industrial communist blueprint, Proudhon's vision was largely composed of small municipalities in which local bodies had more power than any central government. He imagined that these local societies would be loosely connected through a federalist system. Production would be undertaken in a mutualist context, which was an alternative to both capitalism and state socialism. The community would provide aid to its members, and the workers would participate voluntarily in cooperative industries.

For Proudhon, anarchy did not mean the absence of order. Instead, it created the possibility of community and solidarity. Admitting that liberty and authority were contradictory but both necessary, the best order would involve reducing hierarchy and authority as much as possible. In contrast to seeing either the state or religion as the institutions that could bring justice and order to society, Proudhon saw labor as the fundamental organizing principle:

> The power that tempers morals, that gradually substitutes the rule of right for the rule of force, that establishes security, that creates step by step liberty and equality, is, in a much higher degree than religion and the State, labor; first, the labor of commerce and industry; next, science, which spiritualizes it; in the last analysis, art, its immortal flower.

Proudhon thus imagines a society organized through social practices that do not require the intervention of outside authorities. And similarly, revolution would not be a political process, but a social one. Witnessing the coups and counter-revolutions of the mid-nineteenth century, he concluded that change would take place in the economic rather than the political sphere. Indeed, anarchism posed an answer to the question of "revolution or reform?" By creating communities of mutual aid and cooperation within society, one could change society from the bottom up.

### II. Solidarity and Liberty

In 1867, one of Proudhon's students, Mikhael Bakunin, would write "Solidarity and Liberty," a treatise that articulated both the principles of socialism and the need for a rejection of the state and representative government. The International Working Man's Association, or the First International, had existed for three years and was coming under the influence of Marx and Engels. Many radicals were becoming disillusioned with the more agrarian versions of socialist communities, such as those proposed or created by Charles Fourier, Robert Owen, and even Proudhon. There was a growing sense that issues of social and class division could not be resolved without taking power, taking control of the state. The industrial working class, Marx and Engels argued, needed to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and bring the means of production under worker control. They claimed that after the completion of this phase, the state would "wither away." But for Bakunin, like Proudhon, the state itself was one of the greatest threats to the possibility of justice and equality, and it needed to be abolished immediately, along with bourgeois property.

Bakunin's notion of solidarity falls closely in line with that expressed in the labor movement at large. Solidarity is the very essence, the goal, of the working class movement: "The cause of the working class of the entire world is one, is solidarity, across and in spite of all State frontiers. Expressing that common purpose, that complete proletarian identity of interest, the Council of Action proclaims the international oneness of the workers' cause."[11] Solidarity is not only a means but also the end of the struggle for freedom. That is, there is no freedom without solidarity and no solidarity without freedom. As he would go on, "The true, human liberty of a single individual implies the emancipation of all: because, thanks to the law of solidarity, which is the natural basis of all human society, I cannot be, feel, and know myself really, completely free, if I am not surrounded by men as free as myself. The slavery of each is my slavery."[12]

For Bakunin, therefore, freedom and solidarity were bound together. In a published address, "Federalism, Socialism and Anti-Theologism," he argued that humanity is both the most individualistic being on Earth and the most social. He critiqued the social contract tradition, arguing, "society is the natural mode of existence of the human collectivity, independent of any contract. It governs itself through the customs or the traditional habits, but never by laws."[13] Thus, Bakunin sought to reconcile the desire for individual freedom with the belief that the freedom of each depends on the freedom of all, that freedom requires the abolition of dominating and oppressive institutions, and that in the absence of political and economic oppression, communities could be rightly ordered and harmonious.

Like Proudhon, Bakunin saw the state as a powerful apparatus oriented toward its own

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[11] Mikhail Bakunin, "The Workers and the Sphinx," *Bakunin's Writings,* ed. Guy Aldred (Bombay: Modern Publishers, 1867)
[12] Mikhail Bakunin, "Solidarity in Liberty: The Worker's Path to Freedom" (1867), http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/writings/ch04.htm.
[13] Mikhail Bakunin, "Federalism, Socialism, Anti-Theologism" in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, trans. and ed. Sam Dolgoff (New York: Vintage Books, 1971 [1867]), 102.

supremacy, rather than the benefit of the population it claims to represent. The state, he writes, destroys social solidarity, as it sets individuals who are in fact mutually interdependent into conflict, dividing them by nationality. Bakunin is adamant that the working class movement is inhibited inasmuch as it confines itself to national borders.

Also like Proudhon, Bakunin's vision contrasted with the more centralized vision of the socialists in its emphasis on the federation of locally productive communities: "He who wants freedom, justice, and peace, he who wants the entire economic and political liberation of the masses, must strive for the destruction of the States, and the establishment of a universal federation of free groups for production."[14] Production would essentially be the foundation for social order and cooperation. Small communes or cooperative workplaces would be the basic unit of society.

Unlike Proudhon, however, Bakunin did insist on the importance of political revolution, the need to clear away the old before creating the new. This would not happen, he assumed, through peaceful means. A period of violent upheaval would most likely be necessary to abolish previous forms of hierarchy, including the church and the state.

### III. Debates and Disjunctures

Anarchists are often associated with early socialists who sought to create communities based on cooperation and mutual aid, and Marx and Engels would soon launch harsh critiques of these systems, identifying them as utopian. But Richard Day suggests that the creation of the term "utopian socialists" in the nineteenth century allowed Marxists and others to write off anarchist perspectives without engaging deeply with their theoretical and historical

[14] Mikhail Bakunin, "The German Crisis" (1870), http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/bakunin/works/writings/ch07.htm.

contributions.[15] Day argues that these currents offered important alternatives to the hegemonic and authoritarian strains of Marxism and state-socialisms. Anarchists, he writes, argued for a logic of affinity, in which solidarity and mutual aid were seen to be the fundamental principles of social life. They focused on the self-activity of local communities, which would produce, exchange, and meet the needs of their members, outside of the structures of state and market. Proudhon articulated a vision in which these communities were federated, such that they could work together, without operating through state structures. For some anarchists, like Kropotkin and Bakunin, this would involve a violent expropriation of the means of production, out of the hands of individual capitalists and into the hands of cooperative communities. But for most, whether it was peaceful or violent, what ties this vision together and gives it viability is that it offers a way to begin, in the here and now, to create communities that are just and equitable.

While Marxists and anarchists agreed about their rejection of capitalism, they disagreed about their theories of change and their understandings of the role of the state. Marx, Engels, and later Lenin and Luxemburg established a series of arguments against the anarchist strands of the socialist movement. First, they objected to the experimental scientific and rationalistic projects of the early utopian socialists, in particular Owen and Fourier, who were seen as the forefathers of anarchism. These predecessors, critics argued, attempted to create visions for new ways of organizing society without attending to the historical and material conditions of nineteenth-century Europe. They lacked a theory for how such just and ideal communities would interact with the large-scale global forces of industrial capitalism and imperialism. In fact, they also lacked a class analysis—they sought to liberate "all of humanity" at once rather than begin with a

[15] Richard Day, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 91.

focus on the proletariat, the oppressed.[16] Looking back, many of these forefathers can be understood as aristocratic libertarians, but their ideas continue to inspire more radical forms of anarchism.

Second, Marx and Engels identified a gap in the anarchist political vision of self-organization. One of Bakunin's contributions to anarchist theory was the opposition of the "social revolution" to the "political revolution." While the latter sought to take state power, the former sought to *break* it. Richard Day summarizes Bakunin's position as follows: "Social revolution … is a spontaneous uprising with no leaders or preformed goals, a passage to anarchism (a just society) through anarchy (disorder and chaos)."[17] Bakunin put the difference thus:

> This divergence leads to a difference in tactics. The communists believe it necessary to organize the workers' forces in order to seize the political power of the State. The revolutionary socialists (anarchists) organize for the purpose of destroying—or, to put it more politely—liquidating the State. The communists advocate the principle and the practices of authority; the revolutionary socialists put all their faith in liberty. Both equally favor science, which is to eliminate superstition and take the place of religious faith. The former would like to impose science by force; the latter would try to propagate it so that human groups, once convinced, would organize and federalize spontaneously, freely, from the bottom up, of their own accord and true to their own interests, never following a prearranged plan imposed upon "ignorant" masses by a few "superior" minds.[18]

Marx argued, however, that if the councils, which Bakunin imagined would emerge, were to have any capabilities at all, they would need to wield a certain amount of power and control. But herein lay potential for an authoritarian undercurrent in the possibility that certain individuals would gain control through rhetoric and personality rather than through the

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[16] Anarchism has continued to face challenges in reaching across race, class, and gender lines, a problem that we might find begins in its earliest texts.
[17] Day, *Gramsci Is Dead*, 113.
[18] Mikhail Bakunin, "The Paris Commune and the Idea of the State," in *Bakunin on Anarchy*, trans. and ed. Sam Dolgoff (New York: Vintage Books, 1971 [1871]), 259.

democratic process of the party structure.[19] New forms of social domination could arise, therefore, in the absence of sufficient political structures.

In fact, in a certain sense, Bakunin resembled Lenin in that, while he gave great homage to the "People" and believed in their ability to self-organize *after* revolution, he saw a need for professional revolutionaries and organizers, "helpers," to facilitate the conditions for the overthrow of the opposition.[20] Though he opposed Lenin's view of the dictatorship of the proletariat, arguing that an authoritarian takeover of the state would lead to an authoritarian aftermath, he replicated this division between leaders and masses in his own system, though in this case focusing on the reorganization of a stateless society.

Finally, Marxists criticized the anarchist emphasis on direct action and protest, which was often unaccompanied by an emphasis on organizing the proletariat into a self-conscious subject. Change does not happen spontaneously, they argued, but through the long process of organizing. As we saw in the last chapter, Luxemburg recognized the merit in the idea of the mass strike, but she rejected the idea that such actions were spontaneous. On the contrary, while agreeing with this anarchist tactic of direct action, she made the point that strikes should be used as political weapons, on the way to political power, not simply as tools to break the powers that be.

Anarchists and socialists were united in their opposition to capitalism as a fundamental problem in the modern age. But ultimately, the socialist critique of anarchism rested on the improbability of the program it offered *after* the revolution. Nineteenth-century anarchism, most Marxists would argue, failed to grapple with the forms of domination that occur not only through economic and political organization but also in the absence of organization. Marxist socialism, in

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[19] Karl Marx, L'Alliance de la Democratie Socialisme et L'Association Internationale des Travailleurs, (London: A. Darson, 1873), 14.. Also referenced in Robert Michals, *Political Parties* (New York: The Free Press, 1962),327.

[20] Mikhail Bakunin, "Revolutionary Organization and the Secret Society," in *Mikhail Bakunin: Selected Writings*, ed. A. Lehning (London: Jonathan Cape, 1973 [1870]).

contrast, set out to build international webs of power, based on a shared, common identity as the proletariat. These webs would aim not only to challenge the policies of their respective countries but to build power as an international force that could confront the expansion of global capitalism. Nevertheless, anarchists have in fact sought to promote visions for possible social alternatives that might replace capitalist social relations; and throughout the past century, these visions have inspired hopeful practices.

## IV. Anarchism in Practice

There are many examples of anarchism playing an important role in radical political activity, but two periods stand out during which anarchism offered significant resources for changing the course of history. The first took place in 1871, at which time citizens and workers in Paris, influenced by Proudhon, established the Paris Commune. During the Franco-Prussian war, a citizen militia called the National Guard had been armed to help defend Paris. The Guard elected a Central Committee, largely populated by radicals and socialists, who were intent on preventing both a German attack and the restoration of the French monarchy. While the Germans left without a significant encounter, the city remained mobilized, and when the French army arrived to disarm the city, the Parisian forces repelled them. Adopting the red flag as their banner, they empowered their local council and established a new set of social policies, including the postponement of commercial debt obligations, the rights of workers to take over and run their enterprises if the owners had deserted, the abolition of night work in Parisian bakeries, and the granting of pensions to the widows of National Guardsmen.

For three months, from March to May, Paris was ruled by local citizens in a triumph that was heralded by anarchists and socialists alike. But in May, troops from Versailles returned, and

*quartier* by *quartier*, they brutally crushed the commune and executed its adherents. The Paris Commune thus goes down in history as an example of both the possibility of local rule based on a vision of radical equality and of the central danger, to which anarchism has yet to posit a sufficient response: how to protect communities from incursion and domination in the absence of a state with coercive power.

The second example occurred in 1936 in Spain. When General Francisco Franco attempted to abolish the parliamentary system and install a fascist order, workers and peasants around the country rose up in resistance. Gaston Leval, a French participant and historian of the movement, writes that the workers instituted "not bourgeois formal democracy, but genuine grassroots functional libertarian democracy, where each individual participated directly in the revolutionary reorganization of social life. They replaced the war between men, 'survival of the fittest,' by the universal practice of mutual aid, and replaced rivalry by the principle of solidarity."[21] Factories were operated by worker committees, rural lands were collectivized, and businesses were turned into cooperatives, owned and managed by their employees. For almost three years, much of the Spanish economy was under popular control.

As the anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin notes, the revolution emerged in the context of more than sixty years of anarchist activity in Spain, which went back to the introduction of Bakunin's ideas to workers and intellectuals in Madrid and Barcelona through the Italian Guiseppi Fanelli. When Marx and Bakunin split at the First International's 1872 conference, the Spaniards followed Bakunin. In 1936, Bookchin writes, the revolutionaries did not only rebel against Franco, but also against the republican order.[22] The revolution in Spain was a social revolution, in that it was an attempt to transform society not by taking state power, but by

[21] Quoted in Samuel Dolgoff, *The Anarchist Collectives: Workers' Self-Management in the Spanish Revolution* (Montreal : Black Rose Books, 1990), 6.
[22] Murray Bookchin, "Reflections on Spanish Anarchism," *Our Generation* 10, no. 1 (1974).

transforming social and economic relations. They sought to reconstruct society on new grounds, on the basis of participatory democracy and collective ownership. This order would be held together by a principle of solidarity, conceived of as a conscious commitment to mutual well-being. The Spanish Revolution required a strong sense of responsibility and self-reliance, with each individual understanding him or herself as a critical piece of the larger puzzle. There could be no reliance on outside leadership, but on the contrary, each individual had the responsibility to lead. Together, these individuals did not form a "mass" but rather a collection of self-organized communities in which each person played a central part.

Critics of the anarchist practices of this period point to the collaboration between the anarchist movement and nonanarchist, statist, and even government forces as contradictory to the principles of anarchism. They also argue that the collectivization of property often took place by force, going against the principle of voluntary cooperation.[23] Historians sympathetic with the movement suggest that coercive practices were minimal and they draw attention to the years of organizing prior to the revolution, which can account for the high levels of anarchist membership throughout Spain.[24] During these decades, anarchism was not simply an ideological program; it was a way of life. People lived in closely-knit communities and developed practices of mutual aid, decentralization, and self-management. Socialists saw these practices as precapitalist and sought instead the transition to industrialism, which was necessary in Marxist theory as a step on the way to the revolution of the proletariat. Bookchin argues that Spanish anarchism flourished in the tension between socialism and precapitalism.[25]

In Spain, anarchist communities were organized in multiple layers of coordination. At the

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[23] Graham Kelsey and Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pantheon, 1979)
[24] Antony Beevor, *Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War, 1936–1939* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982)
[25] Murray Bookchin, *To Remember Spain: The Anarchist and Syndicalist Revolution of 1936* (Oakland: AK Press, 1994), 10.

most local level, workers created committees to manage the affairs of their workplaces. In assemblies, they would elect delegates to coordinate at the regional and federal levels. The regional federations that would connect the worker councils across villages were founded in the late 1800s, including the Catalan-based Pact of Union and Solidarity of the 1890s and Workers' Solidarity of the early 1900s. In 1910, the National Confederation of Labor (CNT) was founded as the first national revolutionary anarcho-syndicalist federation, which would combine forces with the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI), founded in 1927, together to play a decisive role in the civil war.

In addition to these geographic and trade-based committees, anarchists often formed affinity groups, or, in this case, *groupos de afinidad,* which were essentially groups of trusted companions, ranging from five to fifteen people. These groups constituted the core of the structure of anarchist organization, creating bonded, relational attachments between individuals, who were organized together to create political impact. This model continues to be used in contemporary radical social movements today, such as the alterglobalization movement and Occupy Wall Street.

The Spanish case shows that there is potential for anarchism to flourish, not only in the absence of external opposition but even in resistance to powerful forces. For three years, the Spanish workers and militants built coordinated networks of self-organized activity and worker self-management. Nevertheless, the movement was ultimately crushed when anarchists were confronted, not only by fascists, but also by communists and republicans. In 1939, Franco achieved control of the country and imprisoned, tortured, and executed his opposition.

Bookchin identifies aspects of the movement that made it vulnerable, many of which continue to plague anarchist groups. There was confusion, he notes, around decision-making

processes. Key decisions were made in regional and federal conferences rather than in the local shops and organizations. This created a separation between the representatives of the movement and the local communities, a separation that anarchism attempts, in theory, to collapse. Bookchin argues that

> The real place for this [decision-making] process should have been shop assemblies, regular congresses, or when events and circumstances required rapid decisions, conferences of clearly mandated and recallable delegates elected for this purpose by the membership. The sole responsibility of the regional and national committees should have been administrative—that is, the coordination and execution of policy decisions formulated by membership meetings and conference or congress delegates.[26]

Nevertheless, despite this difficulty in adhering to a commitment to local decision-making, the defeat of the anarchist movement need not be attributed to anything innate about anarchism. Such a difficulty could, theoretically, be corrected for in another context. In sum, this example challenges the argument that anarchist networks are unable to create sufficient structure to protect themselves from domination. What truly undermined the movement were the divisions among the Left itself, between communists, anarchists, and republicans—divisions that Franco was able to use to divide and conquer.

### V. The Logic of Affinity and Groundless Solidarity

Richard Day uses the term "the logic of affinity" to describe the fundamental dynamic at the heart of anarchism. He argues that, today, anarchism offers an alternative to the hegemonic logics of global capitalism/neoliberalism on the one hand and Marxism on the other. Neoliberalism structures global society through the principles of privatization, deregulation, the free market, and the declaration that "There Is No Alternative." Marxism counters that logic with a hegemonic prescription of its own, one that insists on the abolition of private property and the

[26] Ibid, 28.

use of the state as a tool for the redistribution and organization of economic power. Anarchism offers a *nonhegemonic* alternative, based on nonhierarchical, nonuniversalizing, noncoercive practices. Day calls this alternative an "affinity for affinity" in an attempt to draw attention to the centrality of *freedom* and *community* at the heart of this logic.

In this framework, both freedom and community are reconceived. Freedom, as we have noted, is fundamentally connected to solidarity. It is in the liberation of all that one finds liberation for oneself. But community must also be reconceived. Community need not be based on shared identity but can be understood as related to "non-identical identity," groundless solidarity, and infinite responsibility.[27] Community becomes *communities* and is first and foremost a recognition of plurality and difference.

Liberal multiculturalism rests on the assumption of static identities in need of recognition. It offers inclusion into that which is "normal," the majority, the mainstream, on the condition that one accepts the authority of the state and cultural norms. But the logic of affinity rejects the politics of recognition, which gives authority to a dominant "us" to judge and potentially accept the otherwise excluded "them."[28] It rejects the emphasis on integration, which it sees as offering to ameliorate the conditions of marginalized populations through state-based reforms. Instead, it invites the attempt to create new communities on the basis of ethico-political commitments:

> A politics of affinity… is not about abandoning identification as such; it is about abandoning the fantasy that fixed, stable identities are possible and desirable, that one identity is better than another, that superior identities deserve more of the good and less of the bad that the social order has to offer, and that the state form should act as the

[27] Richard Day, 179.
[28] Day engages Charles Taylor's *Politics of Recognition* (1992), which, he argues, tends to assert identities as final and static. He makes the case that the post-modern condition requires resisting the totalizing moments inherent in the politics of recognition, which privileges some identities over other. It requires "the assumption of radical equality." Day, 78.

arbiter of who gets what.[29]

The concept of affinity reorients the idea of community by allowing for greater fluidity of identities. It acknowledges that identities are not given, but that individuals participate in the construction of their personal and collective identities, which are made and remade in relation to historical moments. Community, therefore, is not simply the amalgamation of similar individuals who act together as a unit. Rather, it is a complex and fluid phenomenon.

When community is created based on ethico-political commitments, it is held together by a "groundless solidarity." Day draws on post-modern feminist theory to articulate this concept, which emphasizes the role of responsibility and active participation in community. Consensus is not taken to be natural or given; it is the product of tenuous and difficult conversations. Yet a groundless solidarity provides not absolute stability, but enough stability to create the conditions for those conversations. It signifies a shared recognition of the importance of the community and of the democratic and participatory practices it enables. The idea of groundless solidarity also suggests that the goal need not be the creation of a single community of agreement but, rather, the cultivation of links between communities, which support one another and seek one another's well-being.

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, we have explored several conceptions of solidarity. The term blossomed in political discourse in the mid-1800s, and among those involved in the conversation were anarchists. While they shared much with republicans and Marxists, acknowledging the need to rethink capitalist economic practices, they departed from their interlocutors in their worries

[29] Ibid., 188.

about the role of the state and the ways in which its concentrated power could become a source of domination.

The kind of solidarity advocated by anarchists, therefore, rejects the idea that national identity rises above other forms of affiliation. Instead, in its emphasis on the local, on friendship and affinity, solidarity is created in face-to-face community. It is a "groundless" solidarity because it is opposed to rigid identities and instead allows for fluidity, diversity, and autonomy.

As Marxists and republicans would argue, this is an unstable form of solidarity, which is vulnerable to the vicissitudes of community life, and the authoritarianism of strong personalities. In the absence of sufficient regulatory structures, it can fail to protect the community from domination by forceful insiders or outsiders. And yet, today this vision continues to inspire movements that face the alliance of capital and the state and the significant challenges in creating reforms within the current system. As we turn to late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century movements, such as the alter-globalization movement and Occupy Wall Street, we see anarchism play an important role in the prefigurative practices that activists and organizers have adopted to present a foretaste of the world they hope to see.

PART III: THE ENDS AND MEANS OF
CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

CHAPTER 6

# LOVE AND POLITICS: CATHOLIC SOCIAL THOUGHT AND THE POLISH SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT

> Reading the Holy Scriptures and reflecting on religion, the opposition asked questions that were simultaneously political and existential. We asked about the meaning of life and suffering, and how to relate to enemies. We were grappling with the relative and absolute nature of values, the meaning of tolerance, the law of love. And all of these questions informed concrete decisions that each of us had to make. For choosing to fight the dictatorship was not a decision to be taken lightly. It was a major decision and exacted a high price.
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> —Adam Michnik, *The Church and the Left* (1976)

> Solidarity is undoubtedly a Christian virtue. In what has been said so far it has been possible to identify many points of contact between solidarity and charity, which is the distinguishing mark of Christ's disciples (cf. Jn 13:35). In the light of faith, solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit. One's neighbor must therefore be loved, even if an enemy, with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that person's sake one must be ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one: to lay down one's life for the brethren.
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> —Pope John Paul II, "Sollicitudo Rei Socialis" (1987)

One of the most famous uses of "solidarity" was in the naming of the Polish workers' independent trade union, Solidarność. While Solidarity began as a movement for the rights of workers, it became a national phenomenon and an important part of what ultimately led to the fall of the Berlin Wall and the transition of Eastern Europe from communist control. As the quotation above shows, however, Solidarity displayed a complex relationship between religious,

political, and ethical practice. The movement demonstrated an attempt to imagine what solidarity looks like in the wake of the failure of past ideological experiments. It was an attempt to begin again, using the resources that remained, and construct a new path forward.

Much has been written on this movement, and therefore the main purpose of this chapter is not to review the history of the Polish workers' struggle but to continue our exploration into the idea of solidarity as an ethic and a political discourse. In particular, this movement provides an opportunity to explore the relationship between religion and social transformation. Solidarność was a manifestation of the solidarity between workers fighting for the rights of labor, and Catholics seeking to manifest a long tradition of ethical thought and practice. In this context, the very idea of solidarity is transformed into something not simply given, but a moral virtue. I want to mark this point as signifying a transition in the concept from one associated with "social cohesion" to its reconstruction as an ethical commitment to the dignity of every individual, requiring changes both at the social and the personal level.

I will begin this chapter with an introduction to the Polish movement before taking a step back to focus on the Catholic conception of solidarity. The Catholic idea of solidarity tries to mark out a way between liberalism and collectivism. It is a commitment to economic justice for workers, but it is also transformed by its relation to: (1) the doctrine of subsidiarity, (2) the sacrament of the Eucharist, (3) the philosophy of personalism, and (4) a theology of work. Each of these additional elements helped recast the idea as a religious ethic, which in turn imbued the Polish movement (and many other movements that have been shaped by Catholic social thought) with a politics rooted in charity and justice.

This chapter investigates the Catholic conception of solidarity while using the Polish movement as an example of this ethic in practice. These developments are part of the genealogy

of the concept of solidarity; and while tracing this story, I want to draw attention to how these moments relate to the political traditions we have surveyed thus far: the republican, Marxist, and anarchist. But I also want to show how the Catholic development of the term offered a new way of conceptualizing the struggle for economic justice, which would be taken up by later movements that desired to move beyond political opposition and toward more holistic spiritual, personal, and political transformation.

### I. Building a Movement: The Emergence of Solidarity

The Polish Solidarity movement was essentially a struggle for democracy. Specifically, it was a fight for an independent trade union in a country run by a centralized communist government. But Solidarity was more than that. As Jozef Tischner, a Polish priest who was deeply involved in the events, wrote, "We are living in an extraordinary moment right now. People are casting aside their masks, they are coming out of their undergrounds…Out from under the dust and out of the oblivion their consciences are coming to light…What we are experiencing is not only a social or economic event, but, above all, an ethical one.…The solidarity of consciences is an ethical movement whose basic principle is faithfulness."[1]

We can begin the story several decades earlier, when Poland was invaded and demolished by the Nazi and the Soviet armies during World War II. The Institute for National Remembrance tallies the loss of lives between 5,600,000 and 5,800,000, due to the extermination of Polish Jews by the Nazis, deportation by the Soviets, and the inhumane living conditions during the occupation. When the Nazi army was compelled to retreat, the Soviet army claimed control of the country; and by the time of the Yalta Conference in February 1945, the Polish government-

[1] Józef Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity,* trans. Marek B. Zaleski and Benjamin Fiori (San Fransisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 38. This is the English translation of Tischner's *Etyka solidarnosci* (Krakow: Znak, 1981).

in-exile was stripped of its power, and Poland was deemed a satellite state of the Soviet Union.

The implementation of communism was meant to create a "classless society," in Poland.[2] With the exception of some small enterprises, private property was abolished, which, in Marxist theory, would mean the elimination of social conflict between owners and laborers. But instead, the centralization of control in the hands of the state gave the government bureaucracy unlimited powers, and led to declining living conditions and the imposition of a totalitarian demand for silent acquiescence. The bottom 30 percent of Polish workers were living on the edge of survival. The government would conceal the economic decline by raising wages but simultaneously raising prices.[3] It was becoming difficult to afford food, and sickness and accidents mounted as safety conditions declined. Trade unions were centralized under the Party; and while they supposedly represented the interests of the workers, they in fact became means for surveillance and control.[4] Solidarity emerged among workers who sought to reject a system that failed to represent them. In its opposition to communist control, Solidarity attracted the attention of the democratic and capitalist West. But until it was pressured to adopt a set of liberal economic policies after it gained power, it resisted Western ideologies. Instead, it remained a movement close to the ground, to the needs for bread and shelter, truth and freedom, for worker's rights, and the value of dignified labor.[5]

Like most movements, Solidarity was actually the product of decades of organizing. The first wave of strikes began in 1956 at the factories of Poznan. After suffering from ongoing degradation and having their requests for wage increases rebuffed, workers flooded into the

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[2] W. J. Korab-Karpowicz, "Freedom from Hate: Solidarity and Non-Violent Political Struggle in Poland," *Journal of Human Values* 8, no. 57 (2002), 58.
[3] Lawrence Goodwyn, *Breaking the Barrier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 56.
[4] Michael Federowisz and Anthony Levitas, "Poland: Councils under Communism and Neoliberalism,"in *Work Councils: Consultation, Representation, and Cooperation,* ed. Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streeck (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 285. Also see Kock (1992) and Zukowsky (1987).
[5] Korab-Karpowicz, 61.

streets and engaged in combat with security forces for two and a half days. Over fifty workers were killed and several hundred wounded. While the workers received a few concessions, many were silenced for years afterward, and the government attempted to eliminate the events from national consciousness.

Although the Poznan strikes seemed spontaneous to onlookers, historian Lawrence Goodwyn traces the story back to discover the conditions that gave rise these events. Goodwyn argues in *Breaking the Barrier* that grievances are not generally the cause of democratic movements: "Grievances do not translate into movements; they merely make them possible. Movements happen when they are organized."[6] And indeed, Goodwyn finds the beginnings of organizing and self-activity in response to corruption of factory foremen in 1951 and again in 1953 and 1955. By 1956, the workers were organizing into small groups and making demands about certain factory conditions, such as broken machinery and ventilation. They also began to talk about the things that mattered to them deeply, about the direction of the country, about dignity, about solidarity.[7]

While the strikes at Poznan were crushed and the workers paid a high price, their activities paved the way toward the eventual creation of the independent trade union, Solidarność. Workers continued to organize over the next decades, with large, desperate, and violently rebuffed strikes in 1970 and 1976. Modes of communication were developed, an underground system for passing along strategies and plans. By 1980, there were hundreds of thousands of workers in the streets and ten million, out of a population of thirty-five million, who identified with and supported the struggle.

During the summer of 1980, dockworkers in Gdansk went on strike for higher wages. On

[6] Goodwyn, 60.
[7] Goodwyn, 62.

August 15, the workers won a small concession as the management of the Lenin shipyard agreed to a wage increase. Lech Walesa, an electrician who had been an organizer of the strikes in 1970 and 1976—and would go on to become a leader of Solidarity and, later, the president of Poland—declared the strike over. But a large number of workers decided that the strikes should continue in solidarity with the workers in other enterprises who had not yet received an improvement of their conditions. Ceding to this sentiment, Walesa declared, "we must continue the strike out of solidarity, until everybody has won."[8]

By this point, international pressure on behalf of the workers was mounting.[9] While the original strikes focused on immediate demands such as wage increases and safety, over time, in the midst of the ongoing struggle spreading around the country, the workers converged around a demand for an independent union to represent the interests of workers, free from the party apparatus. But Solidarity also came to signify something larger; it became a front for national solidarity, representing the rights of all people to dignity and freedom.

Now, there is extensive documentation of this movement and theories about why it happened, how it emerged. It is not our purpose here to go into all the details, but I will mention several explanations for this significant historical moment. In Maryjane Osa's review of the literature, she notes that analysis often mirrors intellectual trends, either emphasizing class conflict or using more political science methodologies. Timothy Garton Ash and Alain Touraine, for example, emphasize Marxian or Gramscian reasons for the success of the workers' movement.[10] For them, it was the development of class-consciousness that enabled the workers to overcome the hegemony of the communist state. Other authors have emphasized the

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[8] Touraine et al., *Solidarity: Poland 1980-1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) 37.
[9] Maryjane Osa, *Solidarity and Contention: Networks of Polish Opposition* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 121.
[10] Timothy Garton Ash, *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* (London: Penguin Books, 1999 [1983]), 32.

organizational structures and activities that created the conditions for the movement. Neal Ascherson takes a Luxemburgian twist arguing that the workers did not need an intellectual elite or vanguard in achieving class-consciousness, despite the emphasis on the role of intellectuals in this movement. Instead, they developed consciousness through their self-organized activities.[11] Osa demonstrates the infrastructural component, the importance of networks, and lateral communication, which enabled the workers to create a coherent movement. Goodwyn argues that intellectuals often overemphasize the role of "consciousness" and overlook the role of habits and practices. Fighting for decades, the workers built the infrastructure that finally enabled them to challenge the Party's rule:

> Political ideology moves from isolated thought to broad social practice only through a social experience of organizing that is intricate, often painfully and even dangerously learned, and is grounded in an intimate grasp of the milieu in which one is recruited. It is on this hard-won and sophisticated level of social experience that a given venture into the "politics of protest" stands or falls.[12]

Goodwyn, Ascherson, and Osa focus on the institutional conditions that made it possible for the workers to organize Solidarity. But I want to point also to the role of the Church in the movement and its impact on the ideological context, and specifically, the role of the Catholic Social Teachings, as a tradition. The Church's development of the concept since the late 1800s contributed to the ability of the workers to create a moral narrative that accompanied their social and political goals. And while there were Catholics who identified with Marxism, anarchism and republicanism, Catholic Social Teachings – the tradition of the magisterium – contributed a conception of solidarity and a political orientation that differed from each of these traditions, and had its own significant impact on the Polish movement. In addition to the decades of experience and practice that underlay the Polish movement, therefore, the relationship between the

[11] Neal Ascherson, *The Polish August: The Self-Limiting Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1982).
[12] Goodwyn, xxix.

organizing and the history of Catholic Social Teachings made a contribution to working out the idea of solidarity as a new ethical plane upon which significant differences might be bridged.

## II. A Theology of Solidarity

This was not the first time the Church played a significant role in movements for social or economic justice. Indeed, solidarity with the poor is a founding tenet of Christianity. The Gospels contain numerous reprimands of the rich and continually lift up those who are humble and poor as the children of God. And the Church has long been an important participant in a variety of social struggles – though its record is mixed. But in this section, I want to focus specifically on the Church's development of the precise concept and term "solidarity." In the past several chapters, we located the origins of the term, as a social and political concept, in the mid-1800s. The Church was also an important member of this conversation. But it contributed to the development of the idea as a way between individualism and collectivism. In the early part of the twentieth century, the concept is shaped by its association with the doctrine of subsidiarity and the sacrament of the Eucharist. Under John Paul II, it is further elaborated in relation to the philosophy of personalism and a theology of work. In what follows, I will explore each of these contributions while tracing the concept chronologically through the papal encyclicals before returning to its influence in the Polish case.

In the late 1800s, the Church began to take a strong stance on the rights of workers and the need for greater dignity in labor practices. In 1891, Pope Leo XIII authored an encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, consolidating the Church's reflections on the state of the working class and the need to pursue justice in the context of modern industrialization. This document is widely considered the founding document of Catholic Social Teaching, a body of thought on politics,

economics, and society. These teachings are largely based on the New Testament, as well as the history of theology, most significantly the work of Aquinas, who had impact both in method and in content.[13] But Catholic social thought was also fundamentally shaped by what was taking place in European society in the 1800s and by the responses of lay Catholics and clergy to the conditions that were surfacing around them.

Pope Leo XIII begins his encyclical with a passionate appeal, stating that it has become necessary for the Church to address the condition of the working classes:

> That the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been disturbing the nations of the world, should have passed beyond the sphere of politics and made its influence felt in the cognate sphere of practical economics is not surprising. The elements of the conflict now raging are unmistakable, in the vast expansion of industrial pursuits and the marvelous discoveries of science; in the changed relations between masters and workmen; in the enormous fortunes of some few individuals, and the utter poverty of the masses; the increased self-reliance and closer mutual combination of the working classes; as also, finally, in the prevailing moral degeneracy. The momentous gravity of the state of things now obtaining fills every mind with painful apprehension.[14]

Announcing the severity of the modern social crisis, Leo XIII set a tone for Catholic social teaching that would continue through the twenty-first century. Deeply concerned about the plight of workers and the disparity of wealth, he argued that capitalism and industrialization plunged workers into a situation of poverty, destroying their ability to flourish. He defended the need for a living wage and the rights of workers to organize and strike if necessary. But his recommendations were deeply informed, and would be contested, by movements on the ground, thus displaying the dialectical development of the Catholic concept of solidarity in thought and practice.

Several decades earlier, Father Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler of Mainz, Germany, had begun to preach on the responsibility of the Church to respond to the condition of workers in

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[13] Charles E. Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching: 1891–Present* (Washington, D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 175.

[14] Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* (1981), 1. All encyclical citations are noted by paragraph number.

Europe. In 1848, he delivered six sermons that some say gave rise to "social Catholicism."[15] He insisted on the need to develop a Christian alternative to both laissez-faire capitalism and socialism, and his words would influence Pope Leo XIII, who studied his writings. Later in the 1800s, after the Paris Commune of 1871, Albert de Mun and René de la Tour du Pin began a Catholic Workers' Club in Paris. De Mun travelled across France, and within three years, 150 similar clubs had been established.[16] Over time, the Association of Catholic Workingmen's Clubs developed a platform that reached beyond general calls for justice and charity in society. De Mun presented a number of bills between 1886 and 1889, addressing labor conditions by calling for a fifty-eight-hour work week for men and women, an end to child labor, insurance against accidents, and the right to organize. Study circles were created, as well as the journal *L'Association Catholique*, which spread ideas about the Catholic response to contemporary social conditions.[17]

In 1884, Catholics from Austria, Germany, and France formed the Fribourg Union, or "L'Union catholique d'études sociales et économiques." The group met from 1885 to 1891 to work out a Christian response to the problems of drastic differences in wealth. One of its leaders, Bishop Gaspard Mermillod, would preach to Parisian audiences about the immorality of capitalism: "The independence of the individual is proclaimed and his solidarity is destroyed, man is free, but he is alone."[18] The ideals of fraternity, brotherhood, or solidarity had been crushed under the weight of modern freedom and needed to be recovered.

While *Rerum Novarum* aimed to take positions on behalf of workers against laissez-faire

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[15] Mervin Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movement* (Mystic, CT: Twenty-Third Publications, 1998), 7.
[16] Parker Thomas Moon, "The Catholic Social Movement in France under the Third Republic," *The Catholic Historical Review* 7, no. 1 (April, 1921), 24.
[17] Mich, 8.
[18] Ibid., 9.

capitalism, Leo also worried about the rise of socialism. The encyclical begins with a forceful argument against the claims of socialists: "Their contentions are so clearly powerless to end the controversy that were they carried into effect the working man himself would be among the first to suffer. They are, moreover, emphatically unjust, for they would rob the lawful possessor, distort the functions of the State, and create utter confusion in the community."[19] Socialists, the Pope argues, foster class conflict and aim to use this situation to abolish private property and turn over its ownership to the state, depriving individuals of one of their fundamental rights.

In contrast with the Marxist and socialist alternatives prominent on the world stage at the time, Pope Leo XIII spends the first part of the encyclical arguing that "private ownership is in accordance with the law of nature."[20] This is one of the chief distinctions between man and animal, he writes. God gave the earth to man to govern and steward it. Man precedes the state and has the right to own and cultivate land and property as he chooses. We must begin from the inviolability of private property, he writes, and from there seek a solution to the ills of modernity. The Pope argued for harmony rather than class conflict, for the rich and poor to exist in brotherly love. He writes of the duties of workers to their employers, of employers to employees, and of gender roles, such as women's place in the home. The document shows a certain commitment to hierarchy and unquestioning acceptance of unequal social roles. Nevertheless, the document took great strides to address social injustices, even as it offered an alternative vision for their rectification.

In 1931, Pope Pius XI would commemorate Leo's breakthrough in the *Quadragesimo Anno*. In this document, Pius confirms the Church's concern for workers and takes an even stronger stance condemning existing social conditions and declaring the need for structural

[19] Ibid., 4.
[20] Ibid., 9.

change. As Christine Firer Heinz puts it in her commentary, "Pius recognized the structural dimensions of socioeconomic evils and the need for structural reforms to redress them."[21] Pius moved from concern for the workers and advice about how to create harmony to an investigation of laws and social structures.

Pius XI asserts that we must seek the root of social disorder, which, according to him, is in large part spiritual. But his concept of spirituality is interwoven with the institutions of society. Greed, lust, and idolatry are caused by, and reinforce, a social order that emphasizes the importance of material goods, wealth, and status. The remedies for these evils, according to him, are both Christian teachings and Christian-inspired institutions.

Pius writes that there are twin rocks that must be avoided to prevent shipwreck. The first is individualism. This he defines by the denial of the social nature of humanity, the social nature, in fact, of property. The second is collectivism, which makes the opposite mistake of denying the individual aspect of this right. Pius confirms the right to private property established by Leo but argues that individuals should not have sole right to determine the use of their surplus income, income over and above what they need to sustain their lives.[22] And he affirms the role of the state in aiding with this determination:

> When the State brings private ownership into harmony with the needs of the common good, it does not commit a hostile act against private owners but rather does them a friendly service; for it thereby effectively prevents the private possession of goods, which the Author of nature in His most wise providence ordained for the support of human life, from causing intolerable evils and thus rushing to its own destruction; it does not destroy private possessions, but safeguards them; and it does not weaken private property rights, but strengthens them.[23]

In these words, we see a strong argument for the distribution of wealth and private ownership as

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[21] Christine Firer Heinz, "Commentary on Quadragesimo Anno," in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004), 161.
[22] Ibid., 50.
[23] Ibid., 49.

measures that will reduce social strife. However, while Pius sees an important role for the state, one that is perhaps more expanded than Leo's articulation, he also begins to articulate the notion of "subsidiarity." Subsidiarity is the doctrine that holds that control should be held at the lowest, or most local, level possible. As he writes, "those in power should be sure that the more perfectly a graduated order is kept among the various associations, in observance of the principle of 'subsidiary function,'" the more effective and happy the society will be.[24]

Subsidiarity is one of the most constant directives of the Church's social teachings.[25] Embedded in this doctrine is a critique both of classical liberal economics, which allows for the concentration of wealth, and an overextended state, which creates excessive bureaucracy. The Church aims to validate the "creative subjectivity of the citizen" and empower individuals to help discern what is best at the most local level.[26] For as Leo XIII originally noted, centralization and bureaucracy deprive individuals of their right to participate in co-creating their communities. This emphasis on the local, therefore, is part of the Church's rejection of centralized state socialism. Indeed, it bears a resemblance to the anarchist emphasis on the priority of the local and the creative individual, which we explored in the previous chapter. But the Church would seek to carve its own way between the doctrines of republicanism, anarchism, and socialism, taking elements from these different traditions and developing its own recommendations about the relationship between centralized power and decentralized, participatory decision making.

While Pius XI develops the doctrine of subsidiarity in the 1930s, he does not often use the term "solidarity." His successor, however, Pius XII, introduces the concept of "universal human solidarity" in his *Summi Pontificatus* (1939). In this document, Pius XII uses the concept

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[24] Ibid., 80.
[25] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (The Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004).
[26] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium*, 185.

to advocate for a basis for international peace; and while it is mentioned in passing, it is not developed as a significant Catholic principle. It is not until John XVIII, in the *Mater et Magistra* (1961), that the concept begins to take its place as a central pillar of Catholic social thought.[27] According to John XVIII, society must be regulated according to "the principle of human solidarity and Christian brotherhood. Unrestricted competition in the liberal sense, and the Marxist creed of class warfare, are clearly contrary to Christian teaching and the nature of man."[28] Economics is a moral enterprise and is insufficiently understood by both the liberal and the socialist paradigms.

This encyclical, along with developments of Vatican II (1962-1965), marked a turning point in Catholic social thought. Michael Schuck writes that "the most repeated complaint" in Catholic teachings after Leo is global economic inequity.[29] But the critique becomes increasingly systemic, increasingly articulate about the need for participatory democracy and distribution of wealth and property; and by the 1960s, it is strongly disapproving of developed nations and their global dominance. In the writing of Pope John XXIII and Pope John Paul II, we see a thread begin to tie together the notion of spiritual communion, breaking of bread, sacrificing of body, and the more political critique of a global order that has become ruthless and inhumane, captured by greed and the lust for wealth.

In 1962, John XXIII convened the Second Vatican Council to create a context in which the Church could revise its doctrines and position in society. Paul VI, who had become Pope by the end of the council, writes that the Lord provides a pledge of hope and strength, an assurance that the natural offerings of man will be transformed into the body and blood. Solidarity is a

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[27] Pope John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (1961), 23.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Michael Schuck, *That They Be One: The Social Teachings of the Papal Encyclicals* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1991), 124.

succor, a part of what is offered as hope and strength. In the closing encyclical of the council, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), he writes, "The Lord left behind a pledge of this hope and strength for life's journey in that sacrament of faith where natural elements refined by man are gloriously changed into His Body and Blood, providing a meal of brotherly solidarity and a foretaste of the heavenly banquet."[30] Solidarity is depicted as a part of what it means to be in communion and is a foretaste of heaven.

This idea of solidarity as a sacred communion ties together both the global reach of the Catholic vision and the careful attention to the development of each individual in relationship with others. Over and over in these teachings we see solidarity as requiring the correct ordering of institutions, universal concern, and attention to personal spiritual development. In many ways, this desire for order and commitment to the common good aligned the Church with republican thinkers who sought to build just and representative institutions. But the Church also began to emphasize disparities in wealth and economic exploitation in ways that provided resources for Catholics who would seek to combine their religious beliefs with political goals informed by Marxism and anarchism. While lay believers would take these doctrines into their local contexts and political situations, as an institution, the Church sought to create a way between these political ideologies, an ethical standpoint that united the dignity of each individual with a commitment to the common good, in intimate friendship and global communion.

### III. John Paul II: Personalism and a Theology of Work

While much of the Church's social doctrine emphasized the dignity of workers and the problem of exploitation, in practice, the Church had taken a conservative stance in Poland. During the early part of the century, the Church had been a reactionary force, claiming expansive

[30] Pope Paul VI, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), 38.

authority over citizens, Christian and non-Christian alike. Under Soviet rule, however, the Church became marginalized. In the 1970s, the Ministry of Internal Affairs pursued a campaign of *laicizacja*, or secularization, and attempted to replace Catholic traditions, such as weddings and funerals, with secular ones.

But despite the fact that the Church was oppressed alongside the general populace, many on the Left were loath to accept the Church as an ally. When the state began to repress and commit abusive attacks on clergy, Lescek Kolakowsky, one of the chief theorists of the Polish Left in the 1950s and 1960s, would be silent.[31] However, many of the workers, who were not ardent leftists but instead were shaped by their religious upbringings, saw their faith as a source of power. As the movement gained steam, the workers held masses in the shipyards and used rites and religious symbols as forms of resistance.[32] By 1983, Touraine and others would write, "the essential component in the Polish national consciousness and in the action of Solidarity is the Church and Catholicism."[33]

By the 1970s, the Church had joined the attempt to protect society from totalitarianism, and the militant atheism of the Left had become outdated. It was time to begin thinking differently about the possible relationships between politics and religion. In his 1975-6 writing of *Kościól – Lewica – Dialog,* or "Church, Left, Dialogue*,"* later translated to *The Church and the Left*, Adam Michnik, the founder of KOR, the Workers' Defense Committee, explores the different perspectives of Leftist intellectuals and organizers and the Church. Michnik challenges the supposed neutrality created by the idea of secularism. In the Left's advocacy of the

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[31] Adam Michnik, *The Church and the Left* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 33. Originally published in Polish in 1976.
[32] Jan Kubik, *Power of Symbols Against the Symbols of Power* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994).
[33] Alain Touraine, Francois Dubet, Michel Wieviorka, and Jan Strzelecki, *Solidarity: The Analysis of a Social Movement: Poland 1980–1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 45

separation of Church and state, a tendency developed that supported not simply the *separation* but the *subordination* of the Church to the state. This understanding of secularism, Michnik writes, fails to be true to its claims. "Separation" is not truly separation if in fact it is subordination. But not only did the Left look blindly on the subordination of the Church to the state; it also failed to see that this was the first step in subordinating all of society to the state. By overlooking these developments, Michnik argues, the Left made a fundamental mistake: we "must never forget this. We became an unwitting tool in the hands of a totalitarian power which, with a foreign mandate and foreign assistance, acted against the interests of the Polish nation."[34] In neglecting to defend the Church from the state, the Left began to lose its ground.

In the preface to the 1993 English edition of *The Church and the Left,* Michnik reflects on his own process of writing the book, back in 1975–1976,

> What exactly is religion? That was the question I asked myself while working on the book. I had come to believe that interpretations of religion as "ideology" or "false consciousness" were weak and inadequate. The opposition would do better to understand religion as an absolute, as mystery, as sacrum.… The opposition would survive, I felt, only by grounding itself in the culture at large. We had to be able to formulate our questions and values in the context of that culture.[35]

Michnik challenged the Left to move beyond a superficial understanding of religion as ideology and find resources within it to support a movement. An alliance between the Church and the Left offered an opportunity to translate the concrete demands of workers into the more expansive language of values and morality. The demand for better wages became a demand for human rights and freedom of expression. In this alliance, the particularity of the workers' struggle was transformed into a general demand, a demand rooted in the fact of being human.

In 1978, the Polish bishop, Karol Wojtyla, was elected Pope John Paul II. For many in the Polish movement, the election of this pope felt like a turning point. The cardinal was known

[34] Michnik, 44.
[35] Michnik, xii.

for his democratic stance and affiliation with worker struggles, and this seemed evidence that history was on their side. Michnik writes, "Wojtyla was the hope of intellectuals. He shunned nationalist rhetoric yet remained deeply rooted in the national tradition. He opposed communism in the name of human rights, broadly understood, yet maintained strong reservations toward the Western model of a tolerant society in a secular and democratic state." John Paul II would help offer an avenue toward a new kind of resistance, one rooted in faith and love.

More than any of his predecessors, John Paul II developed the idea of solidarity in profound and intentional ways. In particular, he associated the idea with a philosophical anthropology, through the philosophy of personalism, and he contributed to the creation of a theology of work.

Personalism is an effort to explore the development and existence of persons in relation to the world, as a response to the depersonalized systems of idealism and materialism. [36] While there are a variety of forms of personalism, they are tied together by the centrality they place on the person as the locus of philosophical, existential, and ontological thought. Wojtyla inherited his understanding of personalism from Max Scheller, on whom he wrote his doctoral dissertation, in addition to the work of French theorists such as Emmanuel Mounier and Maurice Blondel.[37] According to Scheler, all persons are essentially social, and the principle of moral solidarity is the acknowledgment of our interdependence and co-responsibility. Scheler's personalism distinguishes a person from a human being. A person "is an essential unity of acts." Or as Mounier would put it, "The person contrasts with the individual in that it is mastery, choice, formation, and self-conquest…. It is enriched by all communions, with the flesh of the world and of man, with the spiritual which animates it, and with the communities which reveal

[36] Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person* (Dordrecht: D. Reider Publishing Company, 1969).
[37] Kevin Doran, *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), 26.

it."[38] Scheler argues that persons exist in four types of communities, each with a different form of relatedness: the mass, the life-community, the society, and the person-community. Scheler defines each of these formations as exhibiting a certain level of group identification and a level of personal awareness and self-reflectiveness. It is only in the final form, the person-community, that Scheler identifies the basis for the highest form of solidarity, which is closely akin to love. It is neither the subordination of self to other, nor the subordination of other to self; it is, rather, the subordination of both to God. "By loving-in-God, the Christian can love all men individually and collectively, but without the cold universality of humanitarian benevolence. Through this love-in-God, there results the principle for the solidarity of all moral beings, a moral love between persons, which is the basis for person-community."[39] Solidarity becomes the basis for a community that recognizes the sacredness and individuality of each person while retaining the fundamental fact of interdependence. This spirit would imbue the Polish movement.

Wojtyla would make a significant contribution by bringing Thomas Aquinas to bear on these phenomenological studies. For Wojtyla, the person was both existence and action, and the fulfillment of the person is found in acting in a way that accords with one's purpose, with virtue. [40] This language of virtue would come to frame the notion of solidarity. In the 2004 Compendium, an overview of the history of modern Catholic social teaching that he would request be compiled when Pope, this idea would be elaborated:

> *The new relationships of interdependence between individuals and peoples, which are* de facto *forms of solidarity, have to be transformed into relationships tending towards genuine ethical-social solidarity*. This is a moral requirement inherent within all human

[38] Emmanuel Mounier, *Revolution Personnaliste et Communautaire*, in *Oeuvres de Mounier,* vol. 1 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1960), 176. John Paul II does not refer to the influence of Mounier as he does Scheler, but scholars have shown that there is ample evidence that Mounier's work was well known in Wojtyla's intellectual circles. See Kevin Doran, *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communalism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla*.
[39] Ernest W. Ranly, *Scheler's Phenomenology of Community* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966).
[40] Karol Wojtyla, "Thomistic Personalism," in *The Person and the Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).

> relationships. Solidarity is seen therefore under two complementary aspects: that of a ***social principle*** and that of a ***moral virtue*.**[41]

This notion that solidarity is both a moral virtue and a social principle indicates the connection between personal and political transformation. Wojtyla, by then Pope John Paul II, would write that the Church has two tasks: to address structures of injustice in the world and the social causes of inequity; and to address the structures of sin and the need for moral renovation. [42] As a social principle, solidarity signifies a characteristic of institutions. It is the principle that requires attention to the common good, to justice and fairness on a global scale. As a moral virtue, solidarity is a characteristic of persons. It is a trait that guides action, that orients individuals toward one another in generosity, hospitality, and equality. A just society is one that is correctly ordered, that is constituted of moral individuals and moral institutions. As John Breen writes, "Solidarity should impel the human person to break out of the isolation that characterizes so much of modern life and work to remove the structures that impede the cause of justice, as well as the impediments that lie within his or her own heart."[43] Solidarity would be the gateway between the political imperative of justice and the personal experience of love.

In *The Acting Person,* Wojtyla identifies solidarity as a kind of disposition, calling it an "attitude," an attitude oriented not only to the good of the community but to the good of every individual in it as well. He writes that solidarity is "the attitude of a community in which the common good properly conditions and initiates participation, and participation in turn properly serves the common good, fosters it and furthers its realization."[44] The common good is not distinct from but is fundamentally defined by the realization of the good of each individual.

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[41] Compendium (2004), 193.
[42] Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 51.
[43] John M. Breen, "John Paul the Second: Structures of Sin and the Limits of the Law," *Saint Louis University Law Journal* 52 (September 2008): 332.
[44] Karol Wojtyla, *The Acting Person*, 341.

Guided by modern subjective philosophy and the medieval tomes of Thomas Aquinas, Wojtyla argues that participation is an important prerequisite for the virtue and principle of solidarity. Participation in community is the way in which alienation is overcome and the individual is reconciled with the common good. Every individual, he argues, is a part of "I-you" and "we" relationships, and thus, it is through acting in community that the individual finds self-expression and self-fulfillment. Wojtyla notes that this emphasis on finding oneself by finding community rings of Aristotle's emphasis on the role of friendship in politics. Acting in community, one experiences oneself as an agent and also experiences the value of his or her act. Self-fulfillment is found in fulfilling not any free act, but morally good acts, acts that have value and worth.[45]

We see in these words Wojtyla's particular way of navigating between the dichotomy of liberalism and collectivism, a task of the church since the nineteenth century. As Pope, in contrast to more communist orientations, he would lift up the dignity of each individual, none of whom can be subordinated to the collective. The means cannot be sacrificed for the ends; that is, the dignity of each person cannot be sacrificed in the pursuit of a supposedly superior social order. The emphasis on the person marks a departure from the collectivism of the communist regime.

However, John Paul II's particular articulation of the notions of the person, freedom, and development also marks a departure from liberal individualism. These concepts are all conditioned by solidarity: "In order to be genuine, development must be achieved within the framework of solidarity and freedom, without ever sacrificing either of them under whatever

[45] See Dean Edward A. Mejos, "Against Alienation: Karol Wojtyla's Theory of Participation," *Kritike* 1, no. 1 (2007); Kevin Doran, *Solidarity: A Synthesis of Personalism and Communanlism in the Thought of Karol Wojtyla*.

pretext."[46] Solidarity and freedom unite in the concept of "positive freedom," which involves the right to engage in the formation of one's community. Unlike "negative freedom" or "freedom from constraints," which is the more typical liberal concept, positive freedom involves the active creation of a society that aims to support the flourishing of every individual. "Freedom, in other words, is realized by participating in the construction of a just society in order to promote the participation of others in that society.… Solidarity is therefore the outcome of both freedom and participation. Solidarity in turn promotes the freedom and participation of others."[47] Solidarity is the "outcome" of freedom because it is a choice, a free choice to stand beside others and see them flourish. This framework suggests that truly fulfilling freedom involves participation in a community in which one is responsible and accountable to others.

If this orientation is distinct from both the Marxist and the liberal conceptions, it resembles something closer to the republican perspective. Here, though, it is not the nation that holds the two poles together but the Church. In actual fact, in the Polish case, it was both. The republican tradition was deeply influential in the Polish movement; the idea of the Polish nation, the founding of the republic, acted as a beacon of an existence beyond the drabness of the communist party.

John Paul II's second contribution to the concept of solidarity can be found in his theology of work. In 1981, the ninetieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum,* Pope John Paul II authored an encyclical, *Laborum Exercens*, which he begins by discussing the sanctity of work. The Pope notes that work is a sacred aspect of human life, necessary for both our physical and cultural sustenance. The theology of work stems from the remembrance that God, taking the form of man, became a manual laborer, spending most of his years on a carpenter's bench.

[46] John Paul II, *Solicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987), 33.
[47] Ibid., 107.

> This circumstance constitutes in itself the most eloquent 'Gospel of work', showing that the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person. The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one.[48]

The Pope notes that different kinds of work have different kinds of value—from making windows to cleaning floors to solving physics problems. But in the end, it is not the product of work that truly matters; humanity is the purpose of work, and work is dignified because it is done by men and women who are created in the image of God.

In the modern period, work has become objectified as something that the worker sells to the employer, who in turn attempts to pay the lowest possible price. It is a commodity rather than a sacred activity. This reversal—when man is instrumentalized for the sake of production rather than vice versa—is an essential aspect of capitalism, though it also concerns state-based socialism. Economic liberalism privileges material goods over humanity, profit over community. But Marxism too missteps in its focus on the "material":

> In dialectical materialism too, man is not first and foremost the subject of work and the efficient cause of the production process, but continues to be understood and treated, in dependence on what is material, as a kind of "resultant" of the economic or production relations prevailing at a given period.[49]

In contrast to both capitalism and communism, John Paul II returns to the historical stance of the Church on work, property, and ownership. As we have seen, the Church validates private ownership, but in a way that subordinates it to the common good. If all that we have is inherited, from nature and those who have gone before, property too must be available for common use. For John Paul II, the solution is not a revolution in which the means of production are taken out of the hands of private ownership and put into the hands of the state. Instead, the Pope writes that true "socialization" occurs only when labor is understood to have priority over

[48] John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, Section 6.
[49] Ibid., Section 13.

capital, or more specifically, when "on the basis of his work, each person is fully entitled to consider himself a part-owner of the great workbench at which he is working with everyone else."[50]

John Paul II writes that work is the key, "perhaps the essential key, to the whole social question."[51] Work is a constant in our lives, is an essential aspect of the life of the community and the individual. If our work is unjust, our communities will be unjust, but if we can create justice in labor, we can create justice more broadly. However, his treatment of this subject draws attention to the changing nature of work at the global level. In the contemporary context, justice is not only tied to issues of class within a state but rather is tied to international political and economic forces. Justice will be achieved, he writes, not by concealing "unjust structures but [by] demanding that they be examined and transformed on a more universal scale."[52] He goes on to argue for greater international collaboration and planning to address the issues of unemployement and exploitation around the world.

Section 8 of the encyclical is entitled "Worker Solidarity." The call to solidarity, the Pope writes, has taken place particularly among workers in manufacturing and industries in which the human person is dominated by machines. This was an important emergence in social ethics, for it heralded the recognition of the dignity of human life and the threats modern industry poses to that dignity. The Pope notes that worker solidarity movements over the past century have brought about significant changes, introducing worker associations and the idea of worker-ownership. But the concept of solidarity must also be broadened to include all kinds of workers:

> In order to achieve social justice in the various parts of the world, in the various countries, and in the relationships between them, there is a need for ever new *movements of solidarity of* the workers and *with* the workers. This solidarity must be present

[50] Ibid., Section 14.
[51] Ibid., Section 3.
[52] Ibid., Section 2.

> whenever it is called for by the social degrading of the subject of work, by exploitation of the workers, and by the growing areas of poverty and even hunger. The Church is firmly committed to this cause, for she considers it her mission, her service, a proof of her fidelity to Christ, so that she can truly be the "Church of the poor."[53]

Ecclesial teachings emphasize that solidarity requires struggling together in the age of modern capitalism. In Poland, the Church joined the workers in the fight for a new political order, one that would protect the dignity of every individual in the context of the common good. But in this political context, we can see how the concept of solidarity would function as an ethical commitment to the sacredness of life and the dignity of work. This had important consequences for the Church and the movement. Michnik emphasizes the role of faith in forming the character of the activism and organizing. But I also want to address the way in which the Church's solidarity with the movement created a context for the development of the idea of solidarity as co-participation in struggle. Solidarity became not simply the unifying call for those who shared certain hardships or a common identity. On the contrary, it became a call to all people, regardless of their nationality, gender, or class, to stand together in an ethical communion. This context illuminates the way in which the idea of solidarity was transformed, during the latter part of the twentieth century, into a concept of standing together in difference, guided by a moral principle.

### V. The Politics of Catholic Solidarity

On the ground in Poland, Catholicism helped imbue the workers' movement with an ethical orientation. Michnik would write of the important role of love in the movement and the centrality of the opposition's moral uprightness. Józef Tischner, the first chaplain to the trade union and an important national moral leader, would make this relationship between love, politics, and solidarity explicit in his *Etyka solidarnosci.*

[53] Ibid., Section 8.

When Tischner takes up the concept, he does so not to be prescriptive, but "to examine the space of life illuminated by the idea of solidarity."[54] What is this phenomenon? What does it require? What does it mean about humanity and ethics and politics? He writes of it as a deeply personal and individual experience, as an experience of individuals who find themselves committed to one another, who are driven by their conscience and their desire to understand one another.

Tischner defines solidarity by turning to the Gospels. He writes, "The meaning of this word is defined by Christ, 'Bear ye one another's burdens.' What does it mean to be in solidarity? It means to carry another's burden."[55] For Tischner, "solidarity speaks, calls, cries, makes sacrifices." It is born through our interdependence and based on a sense of responsibility for one another, but it is also voluntary. It is not imposed but is the expression of virtue. Tischner writes that solidarity is not a theory or a system of justifications. Rather, it is an idea, and in this way, it remains indeterminate; it must be perpetually defined and redefined. It is like light; it can never be fully explained or completely captured; it justifies itself.

Tischner writes that solidarity is always "with someone and for someone."[56] Solidarity must be specific. The Good Samaritan, Tischner writes, acted in a specific way, for a specific person, at a specific moment in time. The common good, while a general concept, can only be understood in and through specific relationships, related to specific people. It is only through those relationships that we can begin to institutionalize solidarity in a particular way, appropriate to a specific context.

Tischner, like others in the Church, defines solidarity as a virtue. He asserts that it is the

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[54] Józef Tischner, *The Spirit of Solidarity,* trans. Marek B. Zaleski and Benjamin Fiori (San Fransisco: Harper and Row, 1984), 4.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid

most natural of virtues;, it is born of our good will for one another. Not every "Us," however, he writes, displays authentic solidarity. True solidarity involves steady relationships, trust, and good will. Importantly, because solidarity is a natural and inherent virtue, it does not require an enemy. This statement counters the widespread sense that group bonds often form around that which is excluded and considered other. But on Tischner's account, solidarity is intrinsic to every human, and it is natural to feel solidarity with all other humans. "We want to be a unified nation," he writes, "but not unified by fear. We want to be united by our simplest human obligations.… What we are experiencing today is not only a social or economic event, but, above all, an ethical one."[57]

Solidarity, he writes, must be about dialogue. Dialogue creates space for truth. Dialogue must overcome fear and provide safety for the co-existence of distinct opinions. True dialogue is far more difficult than we often give it credit for. It often requires the suspension of oneself to make room for another. One must restrain the ferocity of one's own feelings and the adamancy of one's own views to let the other share his or her experience. This requires strength and patience. But in the process, new things can be discovered. Each side's partial perspective grows as it gains greater understanding of the other. One must, to engage in true dialogue, admit the incompleteness of one's own truth and allow oneself to be changed by the process of engaging with another.

According to Tischner, solidarity emerges in a dialogue about suffering. It is the response to the pain of another. But dialogue alone is not enough. Solidarity also must be about liberating one another from oppression. Solidarity must be understood as an element of social structures, manifest in particular ways at particular times. "The ethics of solidarity develops and becomes manifest in a particular social system, in a particular time and place. Solidarity is with people and

[57] Ibid., 38.

for people, thus it is a social phenomenon. This implies certain consequences. Among others, it generates a question, 'what bonds connect the phenomenon of solidarity with politics?'"[58] While Tischner emphasized the ethical character of solidarity, he nevertheless made it clear that this ethic was tied to social structures, political institutions, and the facts of work and wealth inequality.

Tischner and others in the Church helped to articulate this movement as something both political and ethical. The Church helped to lift the struggle of Polish workers into universal concern by raising it up as a symbol, not only of justice but also of love. Yet as we often see, it was easier to find a path of moral and ethical resistance than it was to find a form of ethical governance. While Catholics, workers, and intellectuals all agreed that the communist regime needed to be overcome, the way forward was unknown.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the demise of the Soviet system in 1989, Solidarity came into power. But immediately, there was "a war at the top."[59] The Solidarity that formed a government in 1989 was no longer a labor union or a workers' party. It was a divided group, tasked with creating a functioning state in the shadow of an oppressive communist influence and under the threat of the powerful dogma of economic liberalism. Lech Walesa was marginalized, and chasms emerged between the intellectuals and the workers.[60] Without a clear vision of an alternative set of economic systems, how to transition from a communist state to a democratic society that was economically integrated into the global economy became a challenge that tore the movement apart.

The story of 1989 and 1990 is intricate and complex. The leaders of the movement and the new government were forced to make difficult choices. The international community

[58] Ibid., 38
[59] Beyer, 30.
[60] Beyer, 30.

supported the workers as they fought against the communist regime, but once the workers gained control of the country, the pressures to accept loans from the IMF, in return for adopting neoliberal reforms of privatization and deregulation, would be insurmountable.[61] Advisors such as Jeffrey Sachs, who had guided Bolivia and Argentina through economic liberalization, paved the way toward a new economic policy in Poland focused on foreign investment and exports. Sachs recommended what became known as "shock therapy," a term popularized by Lescek Balcerowizc, the Polish Finance Minister.[62] The desire for economic "normality," the faith in a "normal market economy" would lead to rapid privatization, undermining the sense of community and unity that animated the workers' resistance.[63] As Sheldon Wolin puts it, "Suddenly, Solidarity was rendered anachronistic by the faceless representatives of the International Monetary Fund. Solidarity-style democracy had become a burden."[64]

In 2000, Sachs stated that shock therapy had been a great success and "the Poles have acquitted themselves beautifully in the pages of history."[65] But the population bore the burden of this "success." Unemployment in Poland was the highest in Europe between 1990 and 1993 and remained high throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. Poverty, which was not a prominent

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[61] See Stuart Shields, "Transnational Social Forces and the Configuration of Polish Transition: Neoliberalism Revisited," *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 12 (2001); Stuart Shields, *The International Political Economy of Transition* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[62] Martin Myant and Terry Cox, eds., *Reinventing Poland: Economic and Political Transformation and Evolving National Identity*(New York: Routledge, 2008), 10. See Jeffrey Sachs, "Shock Therapy in Poland: Perspectives of Five Years," (Tanner Lectures on Human Values, delivered at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, April 6, 1994) for a defense of this approach. See also Naomi Klein, *Shock Doctrine* (New York: Picador, 2007) for a critique.

[63] Michael Federowisc and Anthony Levitas, "Poland: Councils under Communism and Neoliberalism," in *Work Councils: Consultation, Representation, and Cooperation in Industrial Relations,* ed. Joel Rogers and Wolfgang Streek (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995).

[64] Sheldon Wolin, "Norm and Form," in *Athenian Political Thought and the Reconstruction of American Democracy* (Ithaca: Cornell Univesrity Press, 1994), 30.

[65] Jeffrey Sachs, "Commanding Heights,"PBS, June 15, 2000.

category before 1989, became a more pressing concern as income disparities grew. For many observers of Solidarność, Poland had lost the ethic that animated the workers' movement.[66]

In *Recovering Solidarity,* Gerald Beyer argues that this outcome was due, in part, to a failure to understand that neoliberalism is not simply an economic program but also contains its own ethic—an ethic in stark contrast to that of Solidarity. Solidarność was built on an ethic of hope, of equality and dignity, and of the common good, an ethic that has political consequences. Well-being is inseparable from the conditions of one's work and ability to obtain one's livelihood. Solidarność emphasized the democratization of the economy such that workers could have more independence and control, but it also shed light on a way of being in the world toward others.

In turning to a neoliberal solution, much of this ethic was undermined. Many economists within and outside of Poland argued that short-term sacrifices were necessary to get the country on track financially and to grow its economy. But ultimately, this route placed an ideology of the free market, economic growth, and individual freedom above the needs of the people and eviscerated a movement that was once a global inspiration.

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I have explored the idea of solidarity as a personal and social ethic by discussing the development of the concept within Catholic social thought and touching on the importance of this ethic in shaping the character of the Polish workers' movement, Solidarność. I have argued that the Church's elaboration of the concept was part of a transition around the idea of solidarity from a concept of unity based on shared identity to an ethical concept that involves

[66] Beyer; David Ost, *The Defeat of Solidarity: Anger and Politics in Post-Communist Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005).

a choice to stand with others, in all their differences. Through Catholicism, solidarity was recast as a moral virtue.

The development of Catholic social thought since the 1890s brought the Church into debates with the traditions we have been exploring, with republicans, Marxists, and anarchists. Papal documents often drew from with these traditions in many ways, as they articulated the relationship between personal and political virtues. Along with each of these traditions, the Catholic concept of solidarity emphasized the interconnections between the common good and the dignity of each individual. Like the republican tradition, the Church's concept of solidarity was based on developing a shared recognition of the sanctity of life and community. Like the anarchist tradition, it emphasized the connection between solidarity and subsidiarity, the importance of local control. And like the Marxist tradition, it rejected the domination of capital over labor. But the Church also offered incisive criticisms of each of these traditions, such as the Marxist tendency to subordinate the individual to the collective and the anarchist aim to abolish property and the state.

While the Church tried to carve out a way between these traditions, in practice, lay Catholics around the world attempted to weave together these political ideologies with theology as they sought to transform social and political structures. The Christian anarchism of Dorothy Day and the liberation theology of Gustavo Guttierez have each made significant attempts to relate a theology of the poor to specific historical conditions. In Poland, where the Church played an important role in supporting the workers' movement as they combatted the strictures of communism, the question of what economic and political structures should be created in its place remained contentious. The Church's stance resembled something closer to the republican perspective, which emphasizes the relationship between the common good and the dignity of

each individual. Unfortunately, in the Polish context, this option became confused with the neoliberal ideology prominent at the time.

Today, faith continues to be an important part of the struggle against domination. Religious communities offer important resources for building solidarity and community cohesion. Catholic Social Teaching in particular continues to offer a way of understanding our responsibilities to one another in a world that is ever changing, drawing attention to the intertwining of our beliefs, values, practices, and politics. For the movements that would follow in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, social transformation would become intricately connected with personal transformation, and the cultivation of solidarity as an ethical commitment.

## Appendix

### Catholic Social Teaching—Selected Documents

1891: Rerum Novarum (On the Condition of Labor), Pope Leo XIII

1931: Quadragesimo Anno (After Forty Years), Pope Pius XI

1961: Mater et Magistra (Christianity and Social Progress), Pope John XXIII

1962–1965: Second Vatican Council

1963: Pacem in Terris (Peace on Earth), Pope John XXIII

1965: Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), Pope Paul VI.

1967: Populorum Progressio (On the Development of Peoples), Pope Paul VI

1971: Octogesima Adveniens (A Call to Action), Pope Paul VI

1971: Justicia in Mundo (Justice in the World), Synod of Bishops

1981: Laborem Exercens (On Human Work), Pope John Paul II

1987: Solicitudo Rei Socialis (On Social Concern) Pope John Paul II

1991: Centesimus Annus (The Hundredth Year), Pope John Paul II

2004: Compendium of Catholic Social Teaching

2009: Caritas in Veritate (In Charity and Truth), Pope Benedict XV

CHAPTER 7

# UNITY IN DIFFERENCE: THE MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS

At the end of the 1990s, "young opposition movements" found each other in Seattle, Porto Alegre, and in street protests around the world.[1] It was the birth of the global justice movement, otherwise known as the "antiglobalization movement," the movement for *alter-globalization,* or the movement of movements.

In the last chapter, we explored how solidarity has become a term that works as a bridge across difference because of its status as an ethic and moral principle. This has become ever more true in the past several decades. In this chapter, I want to explore how the idea of solidarity conditions our concept of community in a globally interconnected age. Taking the alter-globalization movement as our field of study, we can find ways to think about cosmopolitan identities and global justice, and investigate how contemporary movements are developing this ethic of solidarity into a basis for collective action. Turning to this movement provides an opportunity to raise theoretical and empirical questions about the ways in which global solidarity has been constructed at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

In his article "Internationalism Is Dead! Long Live Global Solidarity!" Peter Waterman explores the new global movements that emerged in the latter part of the twentieth century, including the women's movement, antiwar movements, and environmental movements, emphasizing the significant differences between the new and old forms of political solidarity.[2] The idea of internationalism, as we have seen, is far from new. The republican tradition made

[1] Tom Muertes, ed., *The Movement of Movements* (New York: Verso, 2004), vii.
[2] Peter Waterman, "Internationalism Is Dead! Long Live Global Solidarity!" in *Global Visions: Beyond the New World Order,* ed. Jeremy Brecher, John Brown Childs, and Jill Cutler (Boston: South End Press, 1993).

cosmopolitanism a central part of its vision. The history of Marxism is, in large part, a history of attempts to create class-based international identities based on the idea of the proletariat as the force for global revolution. Christianity and other world religions have similarly established frameworks for participating in a global community based on a shared set of beliefs and practices. Enlightenment thinkers like Immanuel Kant sought to establish a cosmopolitanism based on the universality of reason. Twenty-first-century social movements offer yet other ways of thinking about the aspects of individual and communal identity that cross territorial boundaries.

While different social movements construct their identities differently, I want to explore the example of the alter-globalization movement, in which the discourse of solidarity is used to bridge identities, issues, and geographies. In this example, solidarity indicates a way of thinking about the global without becoming universal, attending to the local without becoming provincial, and being connected without being unified. But this movement must be understood as building off of the traditions we have explored thus far. While its emergence can be understood as a response to global economic conditions, the alternatives many participants propose are influenced not exclusively, but significantly, by republican, socialist, and anarchist orientations. In these pages, I want to examine the role of these traditions in the alter-globalization movement, noting important continuities and discontinuities.

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first part, I offer a brief contextualization of this movement, focusing on how the language of solidarity represents a sharp departure from a paradigm of charity, aid, or development. "Solidarity," in this context, works as a concept of shared struggle and contestation in sharp opposition to the systems and structures of aid and international development. The central feature of the concept is its emphasis

on the way in which solidarity forefronts the agency of the oppressed.

In the second section, I explore three conceptual frameworks that have emerged out of this movement, each of which attempts to hold together unity and difference, commonality without universality. These include the ideas of counter-cosmopolitanism, *buen vivir,* and the commons. In each case, a concept establishes a global framework for unity while still allowing for significant divergence and diversity. The movement bridges what is often characterized as the cosmopolitan-communitarian divide, offering a way to hold the tension between the global and the local to establish a globally connected movement that is nevertheless based on deep, rooted, local commitments.

In the final section, I take up some of the criticisms of the movement. These criticisms shed light on the structural challenges of global solidarity, but I hope they also point toward the areas where work must continue to build stronger and more democratic global movements.

## I. GLOBALIZING SOLIDARITY

### 1. The Zapatistas

One of the initial incarnations of this movement began in the hills of Chiapas, Mexico. The Zapatistas are widely credited as central to the emergence of the global justice movement and its particular culture and sensibility. A largely indigenous group from the southern Mexican town of Chiapas, the Zapatistas launched a war against the central Mexican government in 1994 on the signing of the North American Free Trade Agreement. Two years earlier, as a condition for the agreement, the Mexican government began privatizing communal land, displacing indigenous farmers. This period was the culmination of an economic policy imposed during the 1980s and 1990s by Thatcher, Reagan, and the Chicago school of economics, which aimed to

integrate developing countries more deeply into the global economy. But it was also the culmination of what Alex Khasnabish calls "five centuries of creeping oblivion" during which the indigenous population of Mexico had suffered—and resisted.[3]

Led by Subcomandante Marcos, the Zapatistas took up arms for twelve days. They named themselves after Emiliano Zapata, who had led a peasant rebellion against the ruling class in 1910. A ceasefire was negotiated by the Catholic Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia, after which the Zapatistas declared that they would use only their words as weapons.[4] They had clear aims: the repeal of the free trade agreements, the right for indigenous people to work their land and live off of local subsistence economies, and autonomy for the region.

The cause of the Zapatistas—their emphasis on autonomy, local control, and sustainability—attracted significant international attention. In 1996, their International Encuentro for Humanity and Against Neoliberalism drew thousands of participants from around the world. The Zapatistas made a series of declarations, announcing their strategies and perspectives. And while they did not achieve everything for which they aimed and continue to struggle for new and sustainable forms of participatory democracy, they succeeded in one of their main aims: to challenge the neoliberal hegemony and "to open a crack in history."[5]

Alex Khasnabish explores the international resonance of the struggle, which gave rise to myriad solidarity networks. He notes the phenomenon of individuals on the streets from Seattle to Paris and Madrid who claim the Zapatistas as a symbol that "another world is possible." He writes that "in Canada and the United States, the resonance of Zapatismo has given rise not only to a diversity of organizations expressing direct solidarity with the Zapatistas but also to

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[3] Alex Khasnabish, *Zapatistas: Rebellion from the Grassroots to the Global* (London: ZED Books, 2010), 200.
[4] Subcomandante Marcos, *Our Word Is Our Weapon*, ed. Juana Ponce de Léon (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1996).
[5] Marcos, "To Open a Crack in History', in *Our Word is Our Weapon, 212.*.

movements, organizations and political activism that overflow the bounds of solidarity and have yielded new and unanticipated results."[6] Activists took the new meanings made by the Zapatistas and ran with them. They used the poetry of Marcos, the symbols, the art, and the techniques of the Zapatistas and applied them to their own struggles, creating a kind of global resonance. They invoked the Zapatistas not to indicate their active participation in the concrete struggles taking place in Chiapas, but instead as a way of signifying their commitment to a kind of politic, a translocal affinity. Khasnabish argues that this solidarity-as-resonance does not diminish the importance of the Zapatistas but in fact creates a new way of thinking about solidarity as a shared way of being, even if in a different context, using different tactics for different (locally specific) ends:

> This resonance alludes to the presence of Zapatismo as a sign in a globalized field of meaning that emerges from but is not limited to any specific context. This is not to say that Zapatismo is an "empty" or "co-opted" political project, on the contrary, it is a project that overflows with meaning from the perspective of many activists involved in the search for new political spaces and practices.… The echoes produced by the act of resonance are not identical to the original sound but neither are they entirely separate from it. Resonance is thus characterized by both affinity and difference.[7]

This signified an important development in the idea of solidarity. By this period, "international solidarity" had become a concept that signaled one individual or group, often "privileged" and "Western," forging a link with another group and advocating on their behalf.[8] But myriad voices emerged to criticize the lack of self-awareness in these forms of solidarity and the ways in which they might perpetuate inequality and imperialism. During the period of the Zapatista struggle, activists began to take up the challenges of solidarity and recreate its

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[6] Alex Khasnabish, *Zapatismo Beyond Borders: New Imaginations of Political Possibility* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 8. See also Thomas Oleson, *International Zapatismo: The Construction of Solidarity in the Age of Globalization* (New York: ZED Books, 2005).
[7] Ibid.
[8] Juanita Sundberg, "Reconfiguring North-South Solidarity: Critical Reflections on Experiences of Transnational Resistance," *Antipode* 39:1 (February 2007): 144-166.

meaning. Against the backdrop of a global economy, global power structures, and multinational corporations, the struggles of a wide variety of groups became understood as connected. Solidarity worked as a recognition of this mutual struggle. Solidarity would not be one group standing in for another; indeed, the possibility of this kind of republican representation would be rejected. Instead, solidarity would involve reimagining oneself and one's relations to others, creating new identities. For groups around the world, taking on the language, symbols, and imagery of the Zapatistas became a way of indicating the interconnectedness of struggles while one engaged in one's own local political context.

In his work on the "new internationalisms," Waterman suggests that the era of complex capitalism requires new, complex forms of solidarity. On his account, solidarity can emerge in a variety of ways: through identity, reciprocity, complimentarity, affinity, substitution, and restitution. Each aspect, Waterman suggests, has a role to play, though each also courts certain dangers. Waterman writes that the old socialist internationalisms displayed identity-based solidarity, with *workers* as the important collective identity. Philanthropic interactions, charity, and advocacy can be considered a substitution-solidarity, in which one party *stands in* for another, speaking up for a vulnerable group on the assumption that that group is unable.[9] Restitution-solidarity is based on a sense that one is complicit in the dynamic that has contributed to the exploitation and exclusion of a particular group and a desire to rectify that injustice. The "solidarity movements" that proliferated in the 1980s and 1990s with places like Nicaragua and El Salvador, Chiapas, Palestine, and South Africa often demonstrated a mix of these elements.

[9] See Annette Aurelais Desmarais, *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants* (London: Pluto Press, 2007) for a penetrating exploration of the dynamics between movements and NGOs, which aim to speak for the voiceless.

The past decades have witnessed attempts to analyze and critique transnational solidarity with attention to the power asymmetries and oppression that can occur *within* resistance movements. The global justice movement, I would argue, has been an attempt to build transnational solidarity with full cognizance of these dangers. We will explore this aspect of the movement in greater depth below, but for now, we can distinguish this solidarity from the designations that Waterman offers. This solidarity is not simply based on a shared identity, for on the contrary, diversity and difference are central to the movement. Neither is it simply based on shared interests (reciprocity or complimentarity), for there is an explicit rejection of transactional alliances that instrumentalize the support of other groups or individuals. It is also deeply opposed to "substitution" solidarity, which focuses on aid and attempts to represent the interests of those who are absent. "Humanitarianism" has come, in some cases, to represent a threat, a weapon by which imperialistic tendencies can make their way into vulnerable territories.

Increasingly, activists and organizers are talking about joint struggle as solidarity that resonates across diverse localities as activists fight their own fights, but in connection and against common (systemic/structural) targets. We can see this as tying back to the papal teachings on the relationship between subsidiarity (local self-determination) and solidarity (the common good). That is, this solidarity can include a diversity of strategies and tactics, depending on the specific location, but it is connected in its common aims, in a common world vision. This view of solidarity also relates to the emphasis we have seen on the importance of creating just structures, not simply relief within the structures that exist. For the republicans, this was the creation of a constitution, the rule of law, and systems of representation. For anarchists, this was the cultivation of organized communities and self-managed workplaces. Contemporary movements would face the challenge of what structures needed to be created at the beginning of

the twenty-first century. But they also insisted that, most importantly, solidarity needed to be imbued with self-critique and an analysis of power as operative both within and outside of social movements.

The Zapatistas embodied a new politics in the way they invited solidarity and modeled a way of thinking about global/local connections. They experimented with innovative forms of local participation; they attended to the global conditions that would make local flourishing possible; they insisted on the conjunction of social, political, economic, and cultural rights; they included song and dance and poetry in their communiqués, drawing from Mayan traditions, and expressed themselves in parables; they insisted upon the dignity of every individual, as well as the centrality of the community; they offered support to movements elsewhere who were fighting "for the cause of humanity" and received solidarity activists who visited them to learn about their practices and innovations. They have been insistent on autonomy, particularity, and self-determination while simultaneously enacting an exemplary global hospitality.

In addition to contributing to a new way of thinking about translocal (rather than transnational) movement building and the tension between the general and the particular, the cosmopolitan and the rooted, the Zapatistas helped shape a theory of change and a vision that would go on to characterize much of the alter-globalization movement. In their Fourth Declaration, they proclaimed, "In the world we want many worlds to fit. The Nation which we construct is one where all communities and languages fit, where all steps may walk, where all may have laughter, where all may live the dawn."[10] What this will mean, what it will look like to create a world where "many worlds" fit, will continue to remain a challenge to enact, but it presents a vision and framework for building solidarity between communities, across struggles, toward diverse, but shared, ends. In asserting this idea, the Zapatistas contributed to a key

[10] Fourth Declaration of the Lacondan Struggle, http://struggle.ws/mexico/ezln/jung4.html.

development. The post-modern concept of solidarity no longer signaled an asymmetrical standing in for another. Instead, it signified a new political consciousness, which would help reconceptualize movement building entirely.

### 2. Alter-Globalization

The coalescence of this new orientation was related to a fundamental change in the analysis of the dynamics of oppression and exploitation that many organizations and individuals were using. Instead of imagining the majority of struggles as domestic confrontations against local dictators or between ethnic groups, there was an increasing awareness of the ways in which global dynamics gave rise to similar, connected, but distinct challenges throughout the world.[11] As the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization became major players after World War II, communities around the world were presented with common dilemmas. Free Trade Agreements, hailed as the answer to economic decline, were put into place, making fragile economies—including the livelihoods of millions of peasants and farmers—vulnerable to global dynamics. A doctrine of privatization and deregulation became the dominant ideology for policy makers around the world—meaning the enclosure of large tracts of land across Africa and the extraction of natural resources for the benefit of a small number of business elites. Local conditions became increasingly obviously connected to international trade policies and the actions of international institutions and multinational corporations.

[11] Much of this was due to the rise of dependency theory in the 1970s, which argued that "underdeveloped economies" were not simply lagging behind the "developed world" but were in fact paying the price for such development. See Paul Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1957); Samir Amin, *Unequal Development: An Essay on the Social Formations of Peripheral Capitalism* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976); and later world-systems analysis: Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

In 1999, fifty thousand North American activists converged on the meetings of the IMF and the World Bank in Seattle to protest their policies of structural adjustment. The Seattle events were significant for North America, but similar protests were taking place around the world, marking a global reaction to a similar set of policies. In India, half a million farmers marched against the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1993; in Paris, protests against the Multilateral Agreement on Investment took place in 1998. Throughout the early 2000s, mobilizations against these economic institutions and policies were held in Washington, D.C., Prague, Sydney, Nice, Brussels, Quebec, Seville, and Hong Kong, among other locations.[12] It was the height of the alter-globalization movement. Though originally designated the "anti-globalization" movement by onlookers, participants referred to it as the "global justice movement," the "global justice and solidarity movement," the "alter-globalization movement," or the "movement of movements."[13] *Alter-globalization* signified the hope for a globalization that was not one of corporate capitalism, but of solidarity and sustainability. The "movement of movements" indicated the attempt to both unify and retain the diversity of the many struggles that found resonance with one another during this period.

As organizations and movements around the world began to find themselves tied together by global economic policies, they increasingly articulated their position as one of opposition to neoliberalism. ATTAC, an organization focused on financial transaction taxes, articulates this on their website:

> The alter-globalization movement is an emancipatory movement that opposes neo-liberal globalization. Its activists are convinced that access to basic needs for all and the emancipation of humankind cannot be brought about by global economic competition and free markets but can only result from pooling worldwide solidarity and global

[12] Geoffrey Pleyers, *Alter-Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), 5.
[13] Tom Muertes, ed. *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?;* Rebecca and David Solnit, *The Battle of the Story of the Battle of Seattle* (Oakland: AK Press, 2009); Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

> financing to guarantee these rights. They also think that the preservation of our planet cannot be attained through technological progress and the commercialization of natural resources, but that it requires a radical redefinition of economic development away from productivism and consumerism.[14]

Theorist Henry Giroux notes that opposition to neoliberalism must be understood as shorthand for opposition not simply to a set of policies but also to a set of values, a way of thinking.

> Neoliberalism is not simply an economic policy designed to cut government spending, pursue free-trade policies, and free market forces from government regulations; it is also a political philosophy and ideology that affects every dimension of social life. Indeed, neoliberalism has heralded a radical economic, political, and experiential shift that now largely defines the citizen as a consumer, disbands the social contract in the interests of privatized considerations, and separates capital from the context of place.[15]

The alter-globalization movement was, therefore, an effort to disprove the hegemonic idea that there is only one way forward, a way based on the priority of the free market. It was imperative not only to fight policies but to fight the war of ideas and insist that "Another World Is Possible," both in theory and in practice.

As was evident with the Zapatistas, fundamental to the orientation of this movement was a rejection of traditional paradigms of development, progress, and aid. Humanitarianism, as a logic displayed by USAID, the UN's millennial development goals, and other nongovernmental international organizations, is based on a sense that global poverty can be solved by addressing locally corrupt governments and the delivery of goods or services to rural or primitive communities. But for many in this movement, the logic of humanitarianism intersects with the logic of neoliberalism by using a specific language of progress and development, as based on economic growth and GDP, and ultimately increases the power of corporations around the world. The discourse of solidarity, in contrast, was an expression of a shared sense that the development

[14] ATTAC, http://www.attac.org/en/overview.
[15] Henry Giroux, *The Terror of Neoliberalism: Authoritarianism and the Eclipse of Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2004), 52.

paradigms pursued and imposed by international financial institutions do not work in the interests of most of the world's population. Peasants in East Asia, mine workers in sub-Saharan Africa, and unemployed graduates in the Middle East share in the awareness that they are not benefiting from the world's wealth, that their nation's resources are being privatized and extracted, and that they are bearing the burden of an unjust economic system.

If the idea of international solidarity indicated, for a time, a north-south, asymmetrical phenomenon, the idea of south-south solidarity was based on an attempt to reclaim the agency of the southern actors as the primary drivers of social and economic change. Reclaiming the "South" as an active agent was a way of validating alternatives to the development paradigms of the North. But participants in the global justice movement also talk about the "South" not simply as a regional designation but as a political project, which could take place regardless of location, in ghettos and suburbs around the world. Given the way in which development has created pockets of exploited labor and marginalized populations around the world, the South does not only indicate a geographic location but an economic position, in which the resources of one community are being extracted for the benefit of another.

The attempt to build solidarity in the alter-globalization movement, therefore, is largely based on an attempt to create an equivalence, to find a common ground in a shared analysis of power and domination in late capitalism. The solidarity established is the connection of those who experience oppression in a common system. But how does this equivalence get created in such a way that multiple particularities, a diversity of communities, begin to see themselves in one another? How did this global identification occur?

One helpful articulation of this dynamic can be found in the work of Ernesto Laclau. In his essay "Identity and Hegemony," Laclau writes that "universality exists only incarnated in—

and subverting—some particularity, but conversely, no particularity can become political without becoming the locus of universalizing effects."[16] Building on Marx and Gramsci, Laclau offers a way of understanding how a particular struggle comes to signify other struggles through a "chain of equivalences" across which a variety of individuals or communities begin to see themselves as united.

Laclau begins, however, by acknowledging the breakdown of the socialist and Marxist experiments, which looked to the proletariat to bring about emancipation for all. He offers a post-Marxist theory, which resonates with contemporary movements. The proliferation of struggles—around race, class, gender, environment, culture—exposes the need for a new theory about how solidarity is created, how the economy functions, and how a multitude of particular struggles unite to create a unified opposition.

Laclau suggests that this unification happens through the logic of hegemony, when one struggle begins to stand in symbolically for myriad others. This is a contingent process—it is not necessary or determined. At times, as we saw with the Zapatistas, one struggle can emerge and become a symbol for others. While that particular struggle is understood to be unique, it can carry global significance as a representation of the experiences of many local communities. But does this representation then smother the particularity of other struggles? Laclau poses the question as follows:

> How is this identification possible? Are we dealing with a process of alienation of the community which abandons its true aims to embrace those of one of its component parts? Or with an act of demagogic manipulation by the latter, which succeeds in rallying the vast majority of society under its own banners? Not at all. The reason for that identification is that this particular sector is the one which is able to bring about the downfall of an estate which is perceived as a "general crime."[17]

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[16] Ernesto Laclau, "Identity and Hegemony," in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* (London: Verso Press, 2000), 56.
[17] Laclau, 54.

Laclau argues that one struggle can represent others when it has potential to pose a threat to a form of domination that is generally experienced. It has this potential because its form of resistance exposes and confronts the limits of the dominant form of power. This is the process of establishing a new hegemony, of speaking to issues of universal significance, through the lens of a particular standpoint.

Laclau's analysis of hegemony is based on the idea that there are both democratic and authoritarian practices of hegemony. The democratic form constantly calls the validity and transparency of attempts at representation into question. It makes room for antagonism and debate. The particular is never absorbed into the universal. It is always present. But the function of democratic hegemony is to offer a new way of identifying such that diverse struggles can come together under a larger banner. Without that possibility, local struggles remain divided, disconnected, and powerless.

The ongoing presence of difference within commonality remains the fundamental challenge and opportunity for contemporary social movements. Nevertheless, this logic of hegemony displays an important form of solidarity that is not simply asymmetrical and altruistic but is dependent on finding a common narrative and story, a common political project.

**Continuities and Discontinuities**

In a certain sense, the orientation of this movement toward the global economic system resembled the class-based solidarity of Marxism and socialism. Solidarity was largely formed through a lens in which multinational corporations presented the main source of domination and exploitation. Indeed, some have thought of the movement as a potential Fifth International.[18]

[18] Ruth Reitan, "Coordinate Power in Contemporary Leftist Activism," in *Power and Transnational Activism,* ed. Thomas Oleson (New York: Routledge, 2011), 54.

Other commentators have identified the movement as a return of anarchism in its use of affinity groups as a fundamental organizing structure, its emphasis on differentiation and autonomy in solidarity, and the skepticism of many participants about the role of state power.[19] Still others see threads of radical republicanism in this movement, which seeks a global cosmopolitan order and the democratization of global institutions. Let us take each of these in turn.

First, there are important ways in which this phase of organizing differs significantly from previous Marxist and socialist methods. On closer inspection, this is not a movement focused solely on economic issues but is rather fundamentally intersectional, attending to the ways in which capitalism, patriarchy, and racism intersect. Following the development of identity politics between the 1960s and 1990s, it has become critical to understand the differential experiences of race-, class-, and gender-based oppression. The totalizing aspect of Marxism, in which a single unified strategy would facilitate the emancipation of humanity, has been proven inadequate. Post-WWII organizing shed light on the racism and sexism that proliferated in workers' rights movements, the classism of the feminist movements, and the misogyny in racial justice movements, illuminating the diverse ways in which oppression takes place.

In her study of resistance movements in the United States, Andrea Smith writes of this diversity as she ties together racist oppression and economic exploitation while untangling three distinct dynamics. She argues that

> the three primary logics of white supremacy in the US context include: (1) slaveability/anti-black racism, which anchors capitalism; (2) genocide, which anchors colonialism; and (3) orientalism, which anchors war.[20]

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[19] Richard Day, *Gramsci Is Dead: Anarchist Currents in the Newest Social Movements* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

[20] Andrea Smith, "Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, White Supremacy," *Global Dialogue* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2010). Published online: http://worlddialogue.org/content.php?id=488

This perspective illuminates the ways in which racial discrimination and economic exploitation intertwine to create discrete forms of domination and oppression. It is not enough to look at class as an organizing principle, when capitalist exploitation is also based on white supremacy. These dynamics must be understood as intersecting. The alter-globalization movement aims to illuminate the relationship between these distinct processes – diverse experiences of patriarchy, enslavement, exploitation, and environmental degradation – insisting upon both their uniqueness and their interconnectedness.

Emphasizing different life experiences involves, then, committing to a diversity of conceptions about what liberation and emancipation might look like. Without the proletariat as the single subject of the revolution, as Marxists would have it, the struggle for freedom takes on diverse and sometimes contradictory methods. For example, take the women's rights movement in the United States and its relationship with Muslim women. The assumption that women's liberation looks similar in each location overlooks the role of culture, religion, and other dynamics that might affect what *this* group of women may desire in comparison with *that* group of women.[21] A fundamental aspect of organizing in this context, then, is to hold solutions lightly, as always revisable and subject to critique by others who might have different experiences.

In its conception of power and its theory of change, the alter-globalization shows resonance with both republican and anarchist traditions. Geoffrey Pleyers, who has participated in and studied the movement, argues that the movement is composed of two tendencies, which he christens "the way of reason" and "the way of subjectivity." The first of these resembles the republican attempt to create institutions that more justly distribute power. For example, many in the movement pursue efforts to democratize local and international organizations like the IMF

[21] See Saba Mahmoud and Charles Hirschkind, "Feminism, the Taliban, and the Politics of Counter-Insurgency," *Anthropological Quarterly* 75, no. 2 (2002); Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).

and World Bank. The second tendency resembles the anarchist attempt to "create the new within the shell of the old," not through reform but through prefigurative practice. John Holloway exemplifies this tendency when he argues that the question for contemporary movements is how to "change the world without taking power."[22] For Holloway, these movements do not aim to take state power or influence international institutions; rather they seek a cultural shift through the creation of community and participation in practices of mutual aid. These two tendencies converge in their shared emphasis on the formation of individual subjects as a critical aspect of politics. Politics is not simply about structures and institutions but also about the character, practices, virtues, and habits of citizens. There is a sense in which the focus in this movement on local organization indicates this more classical Greek or Roman perspective on the relationship between ethics and politics. But the somewhat anarchist version of organization in this movement, in which horizontalism and nonhierarchy are important factors, signifies a departure from this tradition as well. For many in the movement, representation, or "speaking-for," has been questioned and challenged out of a concern that such structures lift up the voices of those who have more wealth, education, and access.[23]

There are significant ways that the alter-globalization movement builds off of previous movements. But it also demonstrates new ways of thinking about identity and particularity, new ways of conceptualizing connection and difference.

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[22] John Holloway, *Change the World Without Taking Power* (Ann Arbor: Pluto Press, 2010). Holloway addresses the distinction between power-to (potentia) and power-over (potesta) and explains that his provocative title refers to the latter term.

[23] Gayatari Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in *Marxism and Culture*, ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (London: Macmillan, 1988), 69.

## II. The Particular and the Universal

Thus far, we have noted that the alter-globalization movement is characterized by a form of solidarity that brings myriad local struggles into relationships of counter-hegemony, or shared struggle. In this section, I want to explore three concepts that emerged from the movement as exemplary of this complex dynamic. The movements that unite under the banner of alter-globalization find themselves connected but distinct, and I want to explore how exactly they achieve this relationship. The creation of new concepts, which orient the movement's activity, helps to reveal its contributions to political theory and the possibilities for collective action.

First, I explore the concept of counter-cosmopolitanism, which is both globally oriented and locally rooted. In particular, I look at this concept as practiced through the institution of the World Social Forum, which acts as a structural condition for the creation of global solidarity. Second, the idea of *buen vivir* illuminates a contemporary way of recalling, but also disrupting, the idea of the "Good Life," which was so important to classical Greek and Roman political thought. Finally, the idea of "the commons" offers a contemporary way to reimagine property and ownership in the modern age. In each of these cases, I want to explore how the alter-globalization movement has created specific institutions, practices, and conceptual frameworks that create the possibility for translocal solidarity.

### 1. Counter-Cosmopolitanism

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who has followed the movement from its naissance, describes it as emanating a kind of counter-cosmopolitanism.[24] In a movement of movements, the hope is to hold both similarity and difference in tension in a way that departs from the ideal

[24] We can note the disagreement between de Sousa Santos and Richard Day, for the first argues that the movement involves an attempt to build a counter-hegemony while the latter argues that the movement is fundamentally anti-hegemonic.

of cosmopolitanism. The traditional concept of cosmopolitanism signifies an ability to be at home everywhere. It is a Western ideal, and while it is one often used to promote peace and harmony, it also harbors an undertone of imperialism, projecting an image of the powerful individual who stands supreme against a submissive and homogenous background. To be counter cosmopolitan is to seek difference rather than homogeneity. If the cosmopolitan is the citizen of the world, the counter-cosmopolitan negates that ideal, emphasizing instead the world's incomprehensibility, vastness, and diversity. Nevertheless, it forms a new plane upon which global connections can be rethought.

One of the ways in which counter-cosmopolitanism has been cultivated is through the World Social Forum. The World *Economic* Forum has convened global political and business leaders yearly since 1987 in Davos, Switzerland. In 1996, at a meeting of the Tricontinental Center[25] in Belgium, the idea emerged to create a counter-Davos event.[26] The first World *Social* Forum took place in 2001, in Porte Alegre, Brazil, convening 5,000 participants from 117 countries and thousands from Brazil, totaling around 15,000. The following year, numbers rose to over 60,000, and by 2003 there were an estimated 100,000 delegates. The WSF has continued to take place regularly, hosted by cities in the global south from Nairobi to Mumbai to Dakar. The motto of the forum, "Another World Is Possible," and the initial practices of counter-forums around the world would indicate that the movement's starting point was one *in opposition to* the status quo, the dominant political and economic institutions, and the current conditions of global

[25] The Tricontinental Center is a nongovernmental organization that researches North-South relations. "Its aim is to promote understanding of the perspectives of the South and to contribute to critical analysis of the dominant concepts and practices in development in a period of neoliberal globalisation." http://www.deutsche-kultur-international.de/en/org/international-organisations-and-transnational-networks/centre-tricontinental.html.

[26] Teivo Teivanen provides a more thorough account in *A Possible World* (London: Zed Books, 2004); also see Jose Correa Leite, *World Social Forum: Strategies of Resistance* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2005), and *World Social Forum: Challenging Empire,* ed. Jai Sen and Peter Waterman. (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009). The same meeting gave birth to the Forum of World Alternatives, which launched in Cairo the following year, and was a critical actor in organizing civil society in the Middle East and North Africa between 2000 and 2011.

inequality. The task would be to shift from a position of negation, which is a simple format for creating common action against a common enemy, to a platform for alternatives, which would require a significant amount of patient, careful work.

While the WSF began as a distinct event, it quickly gave rise to a wide variety of meetings, regional gatherings, and thematic forums, such that it is now understood not as an event, but as a *process*. It designates an on-going effort to build relationships across communities and to develop deeper relationships, analysis, visions, and strategies for economic and political frameworks based on justice, sustainability, and solidarity.

De Sousa Santos writes that the WSF was a fundamentally new social phenomenon in the way in which it drew so many diverse and disparate movements into a new transthematic, translocal convergence.[27] In so doing, it created an opportunity for local movements to see themselves in new ways, to understand themselves as part of a global community that is interconnected but never totalized. This has important effects on the identities of the activists who attend. When a student from Brooklyn finds herself to have something in common with a student from Tunisia, new opportunities arise to see oneself in the life of another in a different regional, cultural, and political context.

The Charter of Principles of the WSF affirms that the purpose of the event is to build new forms of solidarity and new identities:

> The World Social Forum is a process that encourages its participant organizations and movements to situate their actions, from the local level to the national level and seeking active participation in international contexts, as issues of planetary citizenship, and to introduce onto the global agenda the change-inducing practices that they are experimenting in building a new world in solidarity.[28]

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[27] Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *The World Social Forum: A User's Manual*, http://www.ces.uc.pt/bss/documentos/fsm_eng.pdf (2004), 6.
[28] "Charter of Principles" (São Paulo, April 9, 2001) http://www.forumsocialmundial.org.br/main.php?id_menu=4&cd_language=2.

The ethic of solidarity that imbues the space of the WSF encourages the creation of global connectivity, and yet, it rejects the tendency to homogenize and assimilate. What does solidarity in this space look like?

Of central importance is the issue of agency. Whose ideas are pursued? Whose voices are heard? Who has power? The cosmopolitan has power over the world, but the counter-cosmopolitan acknowledges the world's power, the power of collectivities around the globe who are fashioning their own notions of the good life. It is crucial to note that the mention, above, of "participant organizations and movements" indicates the attempt to ensure that the WSF is a *social movement* space. The idea of *social movements* is important in that it signifies collective agreement (beyond an individual's wants or desires) and collective agency. The emphasis on social movements does not solve the problem of differing amounts of power and control, but it illuminates that an important condition for creating an equitable space is the act of getting organized and creating alignment. The main organizing body of the WSF, the International Council, has a relatively small role, with its primary function being the decision on location for the event. The rest of the forum is up to the movements to organize. Local organizers determine the venue, the physical structures and meeting spaces, the route of the opening and closing marches. And the content of the days, panels, and workshops is submitted by organizations from around the world. Through the process of organizing the WSF, relationships are built, which strengthen the work of many individuals and organizations in their respective and collective struggles.

The idea of counter-cosmopolitanism is, therefore, more of a collective ideal than an individual one. It is distinct from the more predominant idea of cosmopolitanism in that it insists on interconnectedness, interdependence, and solidarity rather than projecting an image of the

autonomous individual against the homogenous world. It forefronts diversity and difference by emphasizing local rootedness and community embeddedness.

But as de Sousa Santos argues, this requires a different epistemology, a different conception of knowledge itself. Politics, he argues, requires a questioning of the way knowledge and expertise are used as tools of power. He notes the false neutrality of scientific knowledge and suggests that knowledge produced in the global north can often be a source of power and domination. Thus, criticism and interrogation are at the heart of these movements. The WSF, he suggests, is not simply a meeting or convening of activists to share their experiences but instead must be a process through which participants can examine the ways in which "truths" are constructed and validated. It is an epistemological practice in which knowledge itself is contested.

Almost every year, there is a discussion about "the future of the Forum," in which participants criticize its inadequacies: the chaos, the lack of transparency of the International Council (the meetings are not recorded, nor are minutes posted anywhere), the fact that it is not truly representative.[29] In an IC conversation after the Forum in 2013, there was a discussion about how to make the IC more representative, followed by a debate about whether or not representativity was the goal, showing a disjuncture between those with republican and anarchist leanings. A conversation about whether the Forum should be an "open space" or an entity that actually takes coordinated action has carried on steadily since its beginnings.[30] In these ways, the space is constantly characterized by a spirit of self-criticism and openness. Counter-

[29] For example, Immanuel Wallerstein, "The World Social Forum: Great Success, Shaky Future, Passé?" http://ggjalliance.org/system/files/Wallerstein%20-%20WSF.pdf.

[30] Chico Whitaker, "The WSF As Open Space," in *The World Social Form: Challenging Empires,* ed. Jai Sen and Peter Waterman (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 2009), 86; Teivo Tievanen, "WSF: Open Space or Movement of Movements," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 21, no. 6 (2004); Walden Bello, "The WSF As a Moment," http://www.openspaceforum.net/twiki/tiki-read_article.php?articleId=602.

cosmopolitanism, therefore, is fundamentally based on a spirit of critique, while nevertheless always seeking to build toward a world better for all.

### 2. *Buen Vivir*

The WSF creates a space for encounter, which is a condition for the emergence of solidarity. But what exactly are people in this movement fighting for?

A recurring debate in modern Western political philosophy involves a contrast between the "right" and the "good." While the ancient Greeks emphasized the "Good Life" as the end and purpose of politics, modern liberal thinkers found this concept too constraining. "Whose idea of the Good?" they rightly asked. The concept seemed to carry too much substance, which could be imposed on individuals who had different ideas of what the good life might look like. Emphasizing the Right over the Good involved an attempt to create a structure and institutions that would treat every individual fairly and give them the ultimate freedom to pursue their desires in a context that would be just and equitable. The hope was to create justice without imposing a certain conception of the good life.

This effort has been contested and criticized for harboring its own unrecognized, substantive notion of the Good. In "Whose Justice? Which Rationality?" for example, Alasdair MacIntyre argues that even this most basic attempt to establish "just conditions" involves assumptions about the kind of life worth living. Rationality itself, he goes on, is historical and situated in communities. We cannot arrive at any universal conception of justice, right and wrong, that is over and above the traditions and experiences that have formed us.[31]

[31] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989).

In recent years, the idea of the good life has seen a revival in Latin America. Movements have begun to use a notion of "buen vivir" (often translated as the "good life" though more literally meaning "to live well") to signify their rejection of neoliberalism and colonialism. Particularly in Bolivia and Ecuador, the concept has gained traction and been enshrined in the new constitutions. And it is a notion that has gained prominence at the WSF and in the alter-globalization movement as a whole. While this concept recovers something of an ancient orientation, in contrast to the modern liberal approach, it also differs from a more static and elite notion of the good life in ways we will explore below.

*Buen vivir*, in Latin America, signifies a commitment to indigenous communities. Ecuador and Bolivia both have large Andean populations, and the election of Evo Morales, himself from an indigenous community, as the Bolivian president in 2006 was a significant step in addressing the history of oppression of indigenous people. Both countries have redefined themselves as plurinational states, recognizing the rights, and the differences, of the many communities within the state's borders.[32] In a 2011 study by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, the authors note that the new constitutions have a communitarian orientation and strengthen structures for participatory democracy. And while criticisms have emerged about the extent to which the constitutions have been put into action, they illuminate a direction, a vision, and a hope for a different kind of politic, which is radically innovative and, if implemented, will have important consequences for political thought and practice.

The Ecuadorian constitution deals in depth with the idea of *buen vivir,* the right to live well. Many of the rights included in "living well," such as the right to health, nutrition, education, and housing, resemble the economic and social rights that have been articulated

[32] Thomas Fatheuer, "Buen Vivir: Latin America's New Concepts for the Good Life and the Rights of Nature," The Heinrich Böll Stiftung (January 22, 2011), 15.

internationally as the third generation of human rights discourse. But on closer examination, there is a difference in emphasis in this concept, which illuminates a divergence from the traditional notions of progress and suggests a distinctive conception of development.[33] The concept of "buen vivir" is fundamentally in opposition to the idea that the quality of life relates to having more, or accumulating wealth. Instead, the idea is based on a sense of right relationship with the nature, and a rejection of colonialism, imperialism, and the privatization of indigenous lands and resources.

The concept of *buen vivir* also emphasizes the importance of agency and diversity. Even the phrasing, which uses the infinitive of the verb, "to live" or "vivir," indicates that it is an active process, a process in which individuals and communities are agentive and possess power. This distinguishes it from the traditional Western concept of the "good life," which is often conceptualized as more static and homogenous. The emphases on agency and diversity are evident in Article 275, which states, "*Buen Vivir* requires that individuals, communities, peoples and nations are in actual possession of their rights and exercise their responsibilities in the context of interculturalism, respect for diversity and of harmonious coexistence with nature." This shows the importance of responsibility and action as part of what it means to live well.[34]

In both the Ecuadorian and Bolivian constitutions, *buen vivir* includes the rights of "mother Earth." These include the right to clean air and water, to freedom from pollution. It also establishes a state authority that can legitimately exert force to protect these rights from attempts to privatize, and profit from, them. The idea that nature has rights has raised controversy, but it

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[33] Ibid. See also Philipp Altmann, "Proposal for Natural Resource Use: The Indigenous Movement in Ecuador" *Consilience: The Journal of Sustainable Development* 10:1 (2013) 59-71

[34] There are similarities between this approach and the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum draws heavily on Aristotle, but she also hopes to reconcile her theory with the general framework offered by Rawls, giving it a very different tenor from that which is coming out of this movement, a topic into which we cannot enter here.

has opened up space for new debates and innovative ways of conceptualizing the relationship and interdependence of humans, animals, nature, the environment, and climate.

For our purposes, we can note that the concept of *buen vivir* exists in the space of counter-cosmopolitanism. First of all, it is a concept that emerges from a particular tradition and culture, which, through deep grassroots organizing and power building, has become politicized and can now be used to protect the rights of the earth and frequently marginalized communities. It is a concept that reaches toward a universal application, toward the idea that everyone should have a right to live well. However, it defines this in a way that contrasts fundamentally with the development paradigm that ties progress to economic development and growth. It is not a concept of relativism, that each community should have the right to live as they please. On the contrary, it is a statement that emphasizes the need to take responsibility for ourselves, for one another, and for the planet to ensure that everyone has the chance to flourish.

**3. The Commons**

As a last example, the concept of the commons also indicates an important direction for thinking about solidarity in diversity as a fundamental, globally significant principle. The idea of the commons originally signified elements of nature that are shared—air, water, forests, fisheries, etc. But it has also come to include information, technologies, and other commonly held resources that should be considered commonly shared goods, which should not, therefore, on this account, be privatized.

As Stephen Meretz writes, the "commons" is not a set of goods but rather "a social practice that generates, uses and preserves common resources and products."[35] Meretz notes that

[35] Stephen Meretz, "The Structural Communality of the Commons," in *The Wealth of the Commons* (Amherst, MA: Levellers Press, 2012), http://wealthofthecommons.org/essay/structural-communality-commons.

our living conditions and structures of interaction and exchange do not simply exist but are created by human processes. The idea of the commons presupposes that people will need to establish new ways of relating to nature, themselves, and one another, in contrast to the idea of the market, which is ruled by an Invisible Hand and has a will of its own. This naturalization of the market is a historical development that, advocates of the commons believe, must be contested. As Meretz writes, we anthropomorphize markets; we think of them as beings that "decide, prefer, and punish.…They are nervous, lose trust or react cautiously." He goes on, "Before the onset of capitalism only religious ritual acts were seen as having a life of their own in this way."[36] This anthropomorphizing and naturalization makes it difficult to contest assertions about what the market is and what it does. It leaves little room for imagining new structures for social interaction.

The idea of the commons begins with people's needs, rather than assertions about how the economy works, and sets out from there to find ways to address and sustain those needs. It is based on the belief that people have the capacity to create and change the structures within which they interact and the potential for establishing new ways of producing, exchanging, and consuming the things we need. It also incorporates a notion of radical democracy, because it depends on the participation of individuals and communities who can speak for themselves and engage in deliberations about how best to use and distribute resources. By "radical democracy" I mean a conception of democracy that emphasizes the need for each individual to have a role in shaping his or her context. In contrast to the republican ideal of representative democracy, radical democracy seeks to incorporate democratic practices into everyday life along the lines that anarchist communities have demonstrated.

[36] Meretz, http://wealthofthecommons.org/essay/structural-communality-commons

This framework intersects with the idea of counter-cosmopolitanism, for it offers a way of thinking globally while rejecting the need to found institutions on abstract and universal principles. For example, Meretz writes, "In a commons, the implicit model of humanity is not about individuals' abstract equality, but rather their concrete uniqueness." Or again, the commons requires a sense of fairness, but "fairness is not the same thing as formal justice: It describes agreements that nobody feels they need intervene against." Because the commons depends on the participation of the individuals and communities involved, these groups do not find themselves subject to externally given laws, but rather, they participate in determining the rules and constraints to which they hold themselves.

The commons movement is essentially a movement for democracy, collective ownership, responsibility, and shared decision-making. It offers a form of ownership and management distinct from *both* the system of private property and the idea of public, or state, ownership. This movement focuses on the stakeholders to a given resource, whether that is a specific waterway, a forest, the internet, or the atmosphere, and attempts to determine how the stakeholders can all participate in protecting and benefitting from that resource.

Of course, there are significant challenges in a movement that aims to promote shared resources. In 1968, Garrett Hardin authored "The Tragedy of the Commons," an article that explored what happens when individuals maximize their narrow self-interest and deplete or overuse resources that should be available to all.[37] Hardin argues that conscience and good will are not enough to regulate the commons. But as he notes, and as has been elaborated since, there are a variety of institutions and techniques that enable such management.[38]

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[37] Garrett Hardin, "The Tragedy of the Commons," *Science* 162 (1968).
[38] Elinor Ostrom, Joanna Burger, Christopher B. Field, Richard B. Norgaard, and David Policansky, "Revisiting the Commons: Local Lessons, Global Challenges," *Science* 284 (April 1999): 278–282; Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984). Martin Beckenkamp, "Institutions and Trust in the

The commons movement provides a framework for thinking about models and systems that can work around the world but that require attention to the specifics of the communities and conditions in each given situation. It provides another example of the counter-cosmopolitan, which is concretely global but not abstractly universal.

## III. The Hazards of Global Solidarity

Thus far we have explored the origins of the alter-globalization movement, the particular concept of solidarity to which it contributed, and three examples of goals and practices that demonstrate the possibilities for global movement building that is attentive to the particular and local. But there are various reasons one might be skeptical of the possibilities of counter-cosmopolitanism and its role in global movement-building.

One interesting challenge is posed by Atalia Omer, who argues that international solidarity movements often manifest the problems of mainstream liberalism. In her article "'It's Nothing Personal': The Globalization of Justice, the Transferability of Protests, and the Case of the Palestine Solidarity Movement," Omer voices the concern that many contemporary solidarity movements are based on a liberal cosmopolitan sensibility, a thin conception of justice.[39] This approach, she suggests, fails to grasp the complexities of local conflicts and the diverse understandings of justice at stake in transnational negotiations. In particular, Omer looks to the "global Palestine solidarity movement" as an example of a thin cosmopolitanism based on an idea of "global justice" that overrides the particularities of a specific situation. Indeed, this problem throws the very concept of international solidarity into question. As she puts it,

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Commons: Dealing with Social Dilemmas," in *The Wealth of the Commons* (Amherst, MA: Levellers Press, 2012).

[39] Atalia Omer, "'It's Nothing Personal': The Globalization of Justice, the Transferability of Protests, and the Case of the Palestine Solidarity Movement," *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 9, no. 3 (2009): 489.

> These attempts to analyze the local-transnational dynamics of social activism still may invite further pondering over the concept of solidarity and what it might mean to stand in solidarity with a group which struggles for national self-determination. This question gains even further urgency when the support of national aspiration seems to be in tension with the presumption underlying the notion of a global civil society of the diminishing significance of nationalism and national spaces.

Omer turns to Talal Asad and Alasdair MacIntyre for support, two theorists who have both critiqued the generalizing tendencies of the tradition of liberal Enlightenment political theory and its reliance on universalized notions of reason and justice. On her account, the use of "human rights" discourse and appeals to justice do not engage the particularity of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Solidarity activists abstract from particular contexts and impose a certain set of outsider values and assumptions on conflicts that are not their own.

This perspective envisions solidarity as a vehicle of cultural imperialism. There are several issues here. First, it is easy to admit that there are certainly cases when solidarity is badly practiced and misapplied. Encounters of solidarity are replete with dynamics of power, blindness, presuppositions, and mistakes. And these need to be ever criticized. Jodi Dean argues that in the age of identity politics, solidarity becomes subject to suspicion for the ways in which it might gloss over important differences and become a tool to create exclusive communities.[40] Identity politics, she writes, has exposed the essentialism and exclusion often involved in solidarity. But this criticism also leads us to a central question: how, in the context of great global diversity, can individuals and groups struggle with and for one another without falling into this trap? Can there be relationships of empathy and compassion, across lines of difference, that do not sink into hierarchical forms of benevolence on the one hand or annihilate the identity of those whom one is "standing with" on the other? This is the question that contemporary transnational solidarity movements aim to answer.

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[40] Jodi Dean writes that critique must be the basis for solidarity in *Solidarity of Strangers: Feminism after Identity Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 27.

Omer offers the example of human rights language as itself a sign of the cultural imperialism of solidarity movements. To address this point specifically: activists and organizers within these movements do use the language of justice and rights, vocabularies that have been associated with Western prescriptions of individual freedom. Anna Tsing, who writes on globalization in *Friction,* raises a similar concern about the use of this language, noting that when people adopt an idea such as that of human rights, they "may be drawn into a framework of global observation and classification in which cultural difference becomes yet another brick of administrative data to be walled in."[41] This discourse, while seemingly neutral, actually conveys a particular way of seeing and imagining the world. And yet, while contemporary activists use these terms, many of them explicitly reject the liberal framework. Thus, Tsing suggests that we ask, "How do activists use globally circulating political rhetorics to devise and manage coalitions?"[42] How are linguistic and conceptual frameworks translated, adopted, used, and transformed in the process of struggling toward new futures?

Eschewing ideological purity, global activists use the resources they have on hand, the linguistic currencies that allow their claims to be translated into different languages and contexts. De Sousa Santos uses the idea of translation to clarify the processes necessary for bridging the vast differences present in this movement:

> If the project is to promote counter-hegemonic practices that combine ecological, pacifist, indigenous, feminist, workers' and other movements, and to do so in a horizontal way and with respect for the identity of every movement, an enormous effort of mutual recognition, dialogue and debate will be required to carry out the task.… Such a task entails a wide exercise in translation to expand reciprocal intelligibility without destroying the identity of the partners of translation. The point is to create, in every movement or NGO, in every practice or strategy, in every discourse or knowledge, a *contact zone* that may render it porous and hence permeable.… Through translation work,

[41] Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 14.
[42] Ibid.

> diversity is celebrated, not as a factor of fragmentation and isolationism, but rather as a condition of sharing and solidarity.[43]

The language of human rights can, at times, help create this contact zone, a space for shared understanding. But there are also many participants who contest the ideas of human rights as individualistic and Western. Thus, the vocabulary of the movement provides an entryway into debates over political orientation, debates important in the formation of new frameworks for global politics. Omer's concern points to the challenge of bridging differences and the resultant "thinness" of international solidarity. But our question is, can solidarity be created in the contact zone between thick cultural locations, which hang on to their differences but find reason to work together?

More fundamentally, Omer seems to be worried that solidarity between two groups can become a tool of violence and exclusion of others. It creates a new "we," which further solidifies the opposition of "us versus them." At times, this can be blunt and inconsiderate in regards to local dynamics. There is a question, then, about how solidarity movements define their borders and establish who is included or excluded. Who can be a part of these movements? What are the characteristics or commitments required? While we cannot go into more depth here, the Palestine-solidarity movements offer a fertile ground to explore the problems and possibilities of solidarity in the dynamics between Palestinians, internationals, and Israelis. In particular, there is much to explore around how Israelis have formulated their solidarity in ways that do not subordinate their own identity to their solidarity with Palestinians but instead attempt to embrace a vision of freedom for all people, including themselves. Palestinians and internationals then debate about how to think about Israeli solidarity, giving rise to questions around why the

[43] Boaventura De Sousa Santos, *The Rise of the Global Left* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 2006), 133.

solidarity of an American is any different from that of an Israeli citizen and what counts as true solidarity in this context.

In addition to the thinness of solidarity, the abstraction of ideas of global justice, and issues of exclusion, there are also a variety of challenges regarding the issue of power in contemporary transnational movements. One of the most important challenges is in the distinction, and power differential, between organizations and movements. In his very illuminating article "Solidarity, Cooptation, and Assimilation: The Necessity, Promises, and Pitfalls of Global Linkages for South African Movements," Richard Pithouse distinguishes global solidarity movements from "global civil society" on the one hand and "the multitude" on the other. The idea of "strengthening civil society," he points out, is frequently used by international agencies to create a base that supports market practices. He quotes a USAID document that indicates its aims to "broaden understanding of the free market system and prepare black business owners, managers, and employees for success in a post-apartheid South Africa."[44] Funding for "civil society," which comes from the World Bank, USAID, and other large international nongovernmental organizations, is directed to create "stability," which often means the suppression of critical social movements and unrest and the absorption of local individuals into the private sector.[45]

> These projects take on a variety of tasks but generally function to co-opt the expression of social antagonism by encouraging various forms of (always unequal) "partnership" that produce various anti-political corporatist arrangements for managing conflict (e.g. lobbying, public participation, etc.). Often there is lucrative encouragement to shift from large membership driven organizations ("social movements") to small, professionalised

[44] Richard Pithouse, "Solidarity, Co-optation and Assimilation: The Necessity, Promises, and Pitfalls of Global Linkages for South African Movements" *Challenging Hegemony: Social Movements and the Quest for a New Humanism in Post-apartheid South Africa,* ed. Nigel C. Gibson (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2006), 256.
[45] See Patrick Bond, *Elite Transition* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2000); Deepa Narayan with Raj Patel, Kai Schafft, Anne Rademacher, and Sarah Koch-Schulte, *Voices of the Poor* (New York: Oxford University Press/The World Bank, 2000), 279; Institute for Development Studies, "Foreign Aid, Democratization and Civil Society in Africa: A Study of South Africa, Ghana and Uganda," Discussion Paper 368 (2000), 19. http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ccs/default.asp?3,28,11,241.

NGOs.[46]

He also distinguishes these movements from "the multitude," as articulated by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri. This concept of the multitude helpfully allowed for the release of the idea of the revolutionary proletarian subject. As Pithouse notes, the realization that most resistance was happening at the point of consumption (housing, food, health) rather than at the point of production (the factory), and that it was organized by communities rather than work places indicated a need for rethinking the agency of the revolutionary subject.

But the concept of the multitude had the function of obfuscating power struggles and contestation within its ranks. Social movements are sites of internal struggle, with vast crevices and canyons that make their terrain difficult to navigate. Power relations within movements are often tied to the role of Northern allies and partners. For Southern organizers, knowledge of English and the ability to travel gives some individuals significantly more access to the money, support, and advocacy of Northern organizations, creating conflict at home. Annette Aurelie-Desmarais expands on this in her study of La Via Campesina, the international peasant movement. When Northern NGOs participated in the movements, in coalition, they often bypassed the peasant organizations' decision-making processes in the name of speed and efficiency and spoke on behalf of the peasants for specific policy solutions, without authority. They often used their association with peasant movements to give them legitimacy, while advocating for their own, often less transformative, aims.[47]

[46] Pithouse, 10.
[47] Annette Aurelais Desmarais, *La Via Campesina: Globalization and the Power of Peasants* (London: Pluto Press, 2007).

Pithouse also rejects "the postmodern fetish of recognition" as yet another way in which solidarity can be misunderstood.[48] The concept of recognition, as Hegel conceived of it and as has been developed by more recent political theorists including Jurgen Habermas, Nancy Fraser, and Axel Honneth, involves an understanding of another as *other* and yet as related to oneself. The articulation of this concept offered to aid in a move beyond the tendency toward assimilation and/or domination.[49] I interpret Pithouse to be saying that solidarity goes beyond recognition, essentially taking the next step. Having moved through a recognition of difference, it once again seeks a new commonality. It is something other than recognition because it involves the emergence of a new, though temporary and contingent, unity. The goal of solidarity is not simply recognition but shared struggle toward mutual freedom.

Juanita Sundberg contributes to this point when exploring the solidarity of Canadians with the movement to close the School for the Americas, which has been an outpost of imperialism in Latin America. She writes that the question cannot be, "how can we help?" Instead, she argues, attempts to be in solidarity must be based on mutualism, must be rooted in one's own experience and an understanding of how one's own liberation is bound up with others. She writes,

> Developing practices of solidarity built upon embodied experiences and mutuality is ever more urgent in light of neo-liberal restructuring in the Americas.… Mutuality in solidarity encourages individuals and collectives to speak for themselves, while walking with others to contest neoliberal models that privilege the concerns of multinational corporations over those of civilian populations.[50]

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[48] Richard Day supports this claim, adding that the politics of recognition lays the groundwork for liberal multiculturalism, which takes identities to be static and leaves little room for radical transformations. Richard Day, *Gramsci Is Dead* (London: Pluto Press, 2005).

[49] Nancy Fraser and Axel Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?: A Political-Philosophical Exchange* (London: Verso, 2003).

[50] Juanita Sundberg, "Reconfiguring North-South Solidarity: Critical Reflection on Transnational Resistance," *Antipode* 39, no. 1 (2007): 165.

If solidarity is to truly function, then, as a form of resistance to domination and oppression, it must be based not on benevolence or altruism, but on an attempt to understand the interconnectedness of experiences and work from a place of deep mutuality. But as Pithouse concludes, the attempt to be in solidarity, to find mutuality, is always rife with dangers and complexity:

> So when solidarities, local or transnational, do achieve a useful degree of mutuality.… it can never be assumed that this is permanent. Mutualities—grounded in the lived experience of struggles and not the postmodern fetish of recognition—must be constantly worked for. The movement towards mutuality has to be a permanent mode of being.[51]
>
> Solidarity is never final. It is always dynamic and always vulnerable.

## CONCLUSION

The alter-globalization movement represents an important moment in the history of social movement theory and practice. More than any of the periods that we have seen thus far, this movement emphasized the centrality of difference and diversity at the heart of modern politics. Nevertheless, it also was based on the acknowledgement of global interdependence, a shared context, which gave rise to the need for global coordination. This double orientation creates a tension between the pulls toward the local and the standpoint of the global. But participants in the movement are finding specific practices to manage this tension. The World Social Forum creates a space for encounter in which new identities are created, identities that hold together the local and the global. The concepts of *buen vivir* and the commons are two theoretical and legal/practical frameworks that are gaining traction in the movement as alternative paradigms for a development that is counter-cosmopolitan, sustainable, diverse, locally rooted, and yet globally connected.

[51] Pithouse, 25.

Admittedly, the discussion here raises more questions than it answers. How are new solidarities constructed? What is the relationship between identity and solidarity? What does solidarity require, and what are its limits? The alter-globalization movement's emphasis on solidarity aims to create unity amidst create differences, but disagreement abounds about principles, strategies, tactics, and perhaps most importantly, conceptions of power.

There are many challenges ahead for movements that are building solidarity across borders and seeking to establish new identities for collective action. But this movement continues to offer great resources as an experiment in post-Marxist, post-liberal politics. It points toward the need to rethink what we mean by "community" and imagine possibilities for radical democracy at a global scale.

CHAPTER 8

# THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE: OCCUPY WALL STREET

In his 1912 work *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, Emile Durkheim wrote that every society is characterized by the dichotomy of the sacred and the profane. This separation provides meaning and social cohesion. Solidarity is ensured through shared truths, agreement about what should be revered. But how are these agreements made, and how are they contested? In the last two chapters, we looked at examples of social movements—the Polish Solidarity movement and the Global Justice movement—that sought to contest the dominant modes of being and posit new political and ethical frameworks. In this chapter, I turn to Occupy Wall Street to address the relationship between religion, ethics, and politics in the modern U.S. context and to think about how new forms of solidarity are being created in the practices and rituals of contemporary street protest. For the newest social movements, community, not capital, is sacred.

In September 2011, over a hundred clergy and lay leaders set out from Judson Memorial Church, in lower Manhattan, and marched down to Wall Street, where activists had been occupying a park for over a week. At the front of the procession, demonstrators carried a golden calf, made out of paper mâché, in the shape of the Wall Street bull. The original is a larger-than-life statue that represents the strong market, the source of Wall Street's vast accrual of wealth and power. In this act, these communities of faith showed that their solidarity lay not with the dominant culture of capitalism but with the protesters who had begun to occupy Zuccotti Park to challenge the sacredness, or perhaps idolatry, of profit.

Sidney Tarrow writes that social movements "do not simply seek instrumental goods; they also make and manipulate meanings."[1] In a certain sense, social movements that set themselves against the status quo are contestations over the sacred values of society. Occupy caught fire and spread around the globe because it shed light on the modern quasi-religion of the market. It shed light on the fact that, because of the hold that money and profit have on contemporary society, as the sacred values that orient our days and give meaning to our lives, the most powerful institutions in contemporary society are the institutions of finance. To contest this power would require a change, not simply in who is in control, but in the structures of those institutions, as well as in culture, thought, and deep social practices.

In the spring of 2012, one organizer said to me, paraphrasing Walter Benjamin, "Occupy may not be the locomotive to the future, but perhaps it is an attempt to pull the emergency brake and halt our barreling towards an economic, political, and social cliff."[2] In this chapter, I want to explore the theoretical orientation that characterized Occupy, which so confused the public and media. For many, Occupy was an attempt to imagine possibilities that could not be perceived from within the current system, from within the confines of the locomotive that was barreling forward blindly.

This movement, like any social occurrence, did not arise in a vacuum. It was deeply shaped by movements that have gone before—by the New Left, the era of identity politics, the alter-globalization movement, and the history of anarchism—and its character was formed through the adoption of some previous organizing practices and the rejection of others. What is interesting for our purposes is how the Occupy moment wove together historical threads to fit a

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[1] Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements and Contentious Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 142.

[2] Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken, 1969), 253. "Marx says that revolutions are the locomotive of history. But perhaps it is quite otherwise. Perhaps revolutions are an attempt by the passengers on this train—namely, the human race—to activate the emergency brake."

new context. Richard Day writes that these contemporary anarchist-oriented movements are based on a rejection of the politics of demand, which has largely characterized the past several decades of protest, and an embrace of the politics of affinity. These movements rest, he writes, on principles of "groundless solidarity" and "infinite responsibility," concepts that have developed in the era of post-structuralism, post-anarchism, post-Marxism.[3] Occupy was not simply a reaction or a sign of the current crisis. It was an event with a history that says much about both the context in which it emerged and the evolution of social movement practices.

This chapter is not an analysis of the movement but an attempt to think with Occupy about the possibilities of solidarity in the twenty-first century. In particular, what becomes clear is the need to think about politics not simply as a sociological science, but also as a field of contested values, practices, and beliefs. Solidarity, as Durkheim said, emerges in this contestation as a shared commitment and piety toward what should be held sacred. Occupy sought a transformation in cultural values and practices, and it posited a very particular position on how such a transformation would take place.

## I. The Early Days

Jez was one of Occupy Wall Street's librarians. The People's Library was a place where books were donated and borrowed, all on the faith that there is plenty in this world that can be shared. The library was stocked with books by Noam Chomsky, Howard Zinn, a variety of works in modern philosophy, and a random slew of novels. As people swarmed about the park, they would stop and hover over the eclectic variety of literature after passing by the Kitchen for a snack and listening to the debate taking place at Think Tank.

[3] Richard Day, 18.

Jez had been involved in the General Assemblies that had taken place throughout the summer, initiated by New Yorker's Against Budget Cuts (NYABC), a grassroots coalition of activists, labor, students, and community members. This group had attempted to occupy downtown Manhattan once before, sleeping for a week in front of City Hall in an action they called "Bloombergville." The police broke up Bloombergville several days in, and the media hardly made mention of the events. That was June 2011.

Throughout the summer, NYABC continued to meet. Around the world, activists were experimenting with models of taking public space to protest against the political and economic systems that represented the interests of the few. The Indignados set up camps around Spain, declaring opposition to neoliberalism, to the privatization of the world's resources and the deregulation of corporations, and attempted to instantiate practices of participatory democracy.[4] In Israel, activists erected a tent city in Tel Aviv to protest rising housing prices. Not to mention the full-blown uprisings in Libya, Tunisia, and Egypt, which toppled dictators in the name of democracy. The global air was thick with unrest.

It was August when the Canadian magazine Adbusters put out a call to "Occupy Wall Street." "Are you ready for a Tahrir moment?" the article asked, invoking Midan el Tahrir, or Liberty Square, which, during January of 2011, was filled with Egyptians protesting their president. A few days later, Adbusters sent the article directly to the email account of NYABC.[5] The group had already done a trial run with Bloombergville and was looking for its next opportunity. The email was discussed at a meeting, and as Doug Singsen reports, people became

[4] Diego Beas, "How Spain's 15-M Movement Is Redefining Politics," *The Guardian* (October 15, 2011), http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/15/spain-15-m-movement-activism.
[5] Doug Singsen, "A Balance Sheet of Occupy Wall Street," *The International Socialist Review* 81 (January 2012), http://isreview.org/issue/81/balance-sheet-occupy-wall-street.

excited and nervous. The hope Adbusters declared was for 20,000 to descend on Wall Street with one single demand.

On September 17, after extensive organizing with labor and community groups, about seven hundred people arrived to occupy Wall Street. The police anticipated the protesters with barricades, and on being rebuffed, the tactical team led the demonstration to the back-up location, Zuccotti Park—soon to be renamed after the Egyptian revolutionary square, Liberty Park.

Everyone was surprised that the Occupation lasted as long as it did. Even the original organizers were unprepared for the events that transpired. Several days in, it became apparent that they needed to produce a public statement of their intentions. The declaration began:

> As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.
>
> As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbors; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

The declaration went on to list the problems by which these "occupiers" felt afflicted: the foreclosure crisis in which banks were bailed out while families lost their homes; the pollution of natural resources; workplace discrimination; student debt; etc. The disparate grievances were connected by a single fact: that corporations were profiting by exploiting individuals and communities. The profit motive was the link that connected fights for racial justice,

environmental justice, health care, education, and democracy, for it was creating a condition in which a few benefitted at a great cost to many.

As Joseph Stiglitz wrote in his influential May 2011 article "Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%," "Americans have been watching protests against oppressive regimes that concentrate massive wealth in the hands of an elite few. Yet in our own democracy, 1 percent of the people take nearly a quarter of the nation's income—an inequality even the wealthy will come to regret."[6] Stiglitz noted that in terms of wealth, the top 1 percent of the American population owns 40 percent of the national wealth. The middle class has declined. And, he argues, this is not good for anyone. "An economy in which *most* citizens are doing worse year after year—an economy like America's—is not likely to do well over the long haul." It was in the face of these declining economic conditions that Occupy sent out its call.

In September and October of 2011, Liberty Park, usually a barren concrete park where mid-level bankers took their lunch, was vibrant with activity, all day and all night. The perimeter of the park was constantly lined with men and women carrying signs declaring a variety of messages such as, "Corporations Are Not People" and "I lost my job and found an Occupation." Around the country, and across the globe, similar encampments were erected. And quickly, organizational structures were put into place. Occupy was said to be "leaderless" but quickly changed its language to "leader-ful," acknowledging the right of every individual to play a role. Leadership was defined, in large part, by initiating projects, persevering with the necessary tasks, and facilitating the leadership and reception of others. The idea of "facilitation" as an important part of leadership signaled the centrality of efforts to create spaces where many voices could be heard.

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[6] Joseph Stiglitz, "Of the 1%, By the 1%, For the 1%," *Vanity Fair* (May 2011), http://www.vanityfair.com/society/features/2011/05/top-one-percent-201105.

Every night, starting at 7 p.m. and often lasting for several hours, a General Assembly (GA) was held. While anyone could become a GA facilitator, one needed to go through facilitator training, which was held each day at 4 p.m. The GA was a place for group decision making, and hand signals were created to indicate agreement, reservations, disagreement, and strong objections. The GA could make decisions regarding proposals presented by working groups, such as Sanitation, Kitchen, Medical, Occupy *en Español*, Education and Empowerment, Comfort, Direct Action, Media, Think-Tank, Outreach, Movement-Building, and Vision and Goals. Several organizers formed Inter-Occupy, holding regular conference calls to facilitate national coordination. Anyone could start or join a working group to address issues that had bearing on the occupation, either politically or pragmatically. Community spaces nearby were taken over as meeting areas, including a public atrium owned by Deutsche Bank on Wall Street and, through an anonymous donor's help, an office was rented on the sixteenth floor of a building at 52 Broadway.

Occupy succeeded in gathering so much attention so quickly that it became a global phenomenon. But its boundaries were difficult to decipher. Who was Occupy? The 99% purported to descriptively include 99 percent of the population, but there were clearly organizers who spent all day every day in meetings, working on websites, and organizing actions. The idea of leaderlessness, which permeated the movement and the media in the beginning, meant that it was difficult to point to the specific agents as responsible for what unfolded. Unlike a republican model, in which leaders are elected and held accountable, the rejection of spokespeople within Occupy, while meant to create the widest possible opening for the action and initiation of new participants, made it difficult to create accountability. The idea that no one could represent or "speak for," Occupy came out of a sense that representation can be a source of power, power

*over* others who do not have the opportunity to speak. But this doctrine created significant challenges. For one, the lack of spokespeople made it hard to deliver explanations about Occupy's purpose and goals, creating a sense of incoherence. Onlookers struggled to understand what the movement was about. Was it a gathering of angry belligerents? An anarchist stunt?

Occupy was intriguing to the public for the same reason it was frustrating. Originally, the Adbusters call to Occupy Wall Street, which came out in July, was accompanied by an image of a ballerina pirouetting atop the charging bull of Wall Street. Above her graceful uplifted arms was a statement: "What is our one demand?" Down on the street, therefore, in the first week of the occupation, this question resounded in a display of life attempting to respond to art. What did the occupiers want? What was their demand?

Soon, a General Assembly was held to determine this question. Andy Smith, who came to New York for the occupation and became involved in the "facilitation working group," later told me that this assembly was one of the most challenging and profound experiences of his life. While the movement did display a coherent message about the root cause of a variety of social problems—the dominance of finance that led to the corruption of democracy—the idea that the solution would come in the form of a single demand seemed ill fitting. The assembly began to falter. The facilitators were getting tired and frustrated.

Not only did it become apparent that no single demand would be enough to address the root causes of injustice, but soon, the very idea of a "demand" was put into question. As theorist John Holloway puts it, "A demand is addressed to someone and asks them to do something on our behalf in the future, whereas in the politics of living now there is no demand. We ask no permission of anyone and we do not wait for the future, but simply break time and assert now

another type of doing, another form of social relations."[7] The "politics of demand," as Richard Day calls it, assumes that the power to create change lies in the hands of the state.[8] But the new movements, like Occupy and others around the world, rejected this theory of power and politics.

Occupy was motivated by a sense that representative democracy had been corrupted by the influence of moneyed interests. Solutions would come, in this case, not from government, but from the self-activity of people working together. Movements like Occupy advocate for the empowerment of individuals and communities to act for themselves. As Day writes, they seek a *social* source for change rather than a political one. They look to communities as sources of power and responsibility rather than to the state.

In Occupy's theory magazine, *Tidal: Occupy Theory, Occupy Strategy*, Judith Butler attempted to explain this orientation.[9] Butler argued that one way to understand the movement was as a demand for justice. But to demand justice requires asking a profound question about what justice looks like:

> The reason it is said that sometimes there are "no demands" when bodies assemble under the rubric of "Occupy Wall Street" is that any list of demands would not exhaust the ideal of justice that is being demanded. We can all imagine just solutions to health care, public education, housing, and the distribution and availability of food—in other words, we could itemize the injustices in the plural and present those as a set of specific demands. But perhaps the demand for justice is present in each of those demands, but *also necessarily exceeds them*. We do not have to subscribe to a Platonic theory of Justice to see other ways in which this demand operates. For when bodies gather as they do to express their indignation and to enact their plural existence in public space, they are also making broader demands. They are demanding to be recognized and to be valued; they are exercising a right to appear and to exercise freedom; they are calling for a livable life. These values are presupposed by particular demands, but *they also demand a more fundamental restructuring of our socio-economic and political order*.[10]

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[7] John Holloway, *Crack Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2010), 241.
[8] Richard Day, 14.
[9] *Tidal* was published by a working group within Occupy. Funds for it were raised independently. Submissions were competitive, and there was contention about the possible elitism of its courting of Leftist intellectuals.
[10] Judith Butler, "For and Against Precarity," *Tidal* (2011): 11.

Butler suggested that there was a demand: a demand for justice. But this demand went so deep that it could not be captured by practicable requests. Such a demand could not simply be fulfilled by the state. In fact, the most pernicious problems identified by the movement could not be solved through demands at all, for they had to do with who we have become as people and what we have come to value as sacred.

If Occupy were to have a demand, therefore, it would need to be a demand of the public—to "Occupy!" To occupy meant to be in the place that one was, to claim that space, to be responsible for it and for the others to whom one is connected by being in that space. To occupy—to "Occupy Love" or "Occupy the Food Supply" or "Occupy Homes"—meant to draw attention to specific aspects of our lives in common and take responsibility for them. It meant to focus on what mattered. To care. And to participate in ensuring that love, food, homes, the things we value and hold sacred, are rightly revered.

……

A few days after my first trip to the park, I came back and ran into Jez once again. In his hands were large sheets of white paper, covered in writing. "These are for the archive," he said after we greeted one another. He showed me pages and pages of notes from the General Assembly that had been held the night before, the assembly that aimed to determine Occupy's one demand. But when the conversation stalled after several hours of debate, someone suggested that instead of shared demands, the group could articulate its shared values and principles, the Principles of Solidarity. This list would capture the reasons they had come together and the reasons for which they would stand by one another in their many diverse, but connected, struggles. It included "Engaging in direct and transparent participatory democracy," "Exercising personal and collective responsibility," "Empowering one another against all forms of

oppression," and "Redefining how labor is valued." This put the question of demands to rest and laid the foundation for a principle-based movement, a radical experiment in organizing.

The turn from the question of "demands" to the framework of "solidarity" epitomized the character of this movement. Solidarity was a principle of unity in difference, of coming together across borders, of finding the intersections between issues, the reasons for groups of diverse backgrounds and traditions to band together against a common target: the economic structures that benefit the few to the detriment of the many. But it also involved an attempt to be in community in new ways, ways that modeled a different vision of society.

## II. Contesting the Sacred: Occupy Faith

Occupy was understood by many as a movement informed by anarchist tendencies, which caught on because of the particular moment of crisis that characterizes the United States in the twenty-first century. But I want to also draw attention to the relationship between this movement and ideas about religion and the sacred. I want to emphasize these aspects here to say not simply that Occupy included religious communities, but that its very structure was composed of an analysis of rituals, practices, and beliefs, which establish the contours of even secular political communities.

Durkheim suggested that solidarity is created around shared concepts of the sacred. The sacred is not equivalent to the Good. On the contrary, it can often be something prohibited, or dangerous, but it gives meaning to community. Whereas in his early writings, Durkheim believed that a common faith and religious rites strengthened social solidarity primarily in primitive societies, in his final work, he indicates that, while the content of our religions has changed, modern societies continue to create social cohesion by establishing shared practices and rituals.

In these expressions of faith, individuals find themselves to be part of something greater, a larger story, a narrative. They find purpose.

Durkheim argued that the individual is the sacred object of the modern cult. But in *Capitalism and Religion*, the British philosopher Philip Goodchild argues that it is the Economy that has in fact come to occupy the place of the sacred in contemporary society. Religion, Goodchild writes, is that which asks us to take time and to direct our piety toward certain beings or objects. Rituals give order to our lives and create social memory and cohesion. But in modernity, to a significant extent, the rituals of production, consumption, buying, and selling orient our lives. The struggle around what to hold sacred and cherish, then, requires an encounter with the market. It requires interrupting the patterns of exchange and inserting a moment for contemplation. It requires asking questions about why things are as they are and if this is how they must be. Occupy Faith, a group of clergy and people of faith, took up this challenge explicitly.

Occupy Faith was in the works almost as soon as Occupy hit the ground. Bringing together a variety of faith and secular traditions, the group embodied the idea of solidarity in difference, holding together vastly different metaphysical and religious orientations. But it also reframed the pertinent question from one of "us versus them" to one of love and justice.

Michael Ellick, a minister at Judson Memorial Church and a key organizer, supported Occupy and its unconventional tactics, for as he said, "There is something wrong with us (our society). Let's go ahead and say something beautiful and wonderful instead of just asking for this or that. I thought, eventually we'll lose this moment and then we'll go back to conventional avenues of organizing."[11] Occupy Faith brought together congregations from around New York City, including churches, mosques, and synagogues. Like Occupy in general, faith-based

[11] Michael Ellick, interview by Leah Hunt-Hendrix, New York City, August 28, 2012.

communities saw the need not simply for policy changes within the existing system, but for a deep look at the fabric of society, contemporary practices and institutions, and the causes of the inequalities and injustices that so permeate society. But in addition, it would call for a prophetic awakening, a revival, for economic justice.

Judson Memorial Church is nestled in the heart of the Village near the campus of New York University and the greenery of Washington Square Park. It is a short distance from Zuccotti Park, and its meeting rooms and assembly halls soon became welcoming places for Occupy organizers to hold their discussions of strategies and tactics. Judson's work on social justice began long before Occupy. The staff and congregation had been deeply engaged particularly in gay and lesbian as well as immigrant rights. Increasingly, however, it became clear that one could not think about justice without thinking about economics. The constraints on communities were so fundamentally a product of their lack of power, lack of ability to participate in the democratic process because of its domination by moneyed interests. Thus, by the spring of 2011, the congregation had already turned toward economic justice issues.

Through his activism and friendships, Ellick was aware of the plans to occupy Wall Street in September, but he was hesitant:

> They were saying that they were going to do this stunt. People had invited me in as a friend, but not so much as a religious person. And I had to admit I was a bit wary, dubious of whether or not this was going to work. It was a fun escalation of tactics, but I had organizer questions. I didn't see how it would work. My naiveté. Then it worked. Immediately.[12]

Soon, Ellick was down at the park every day. He would wear a minister's collar to gauge reactions and see how communities of faith might be received. There was wariness from some, he noted, but on the whole, people seemed receptive. And it soon became clear that religion might in fact play a constructive role in the movement. The media had begun to disparage the

[12] Ellick, interview, August 28, 2012.

activists and emphasize their marginality, and faith communities had the opportunity to bring more language and legitimacy to the encampments. For Ellick, Occupy might also play an important role in religious communities by bringing the galvanizing energy to participate in the struggle for social and economic justice. So Judson and its friends began to develop a plan.

> I went to a lot of our allies in immigration organizing, an interfaith cabal, to think about how we do that. We knew we wanted to do something creative and fun. We had a bullpen in our garden room about how to do this and we had about five ideas. One idea was to go down and worship the Wall Street Bull as the golden calf and that was going to be our action. Meanwhile, as we were sending every religious leader we could down to the park, we were starting to have interfaith services there, because the act of bringing people down would radicalize them. I had a lot of good friends who were there and were our interface. So simultaneously, groups like Faith and Public Life and Sojourners were starting to circle, and people were sending them to us. So we got on some conference calls with them, and they had been brainstorming a media event, and they wanted to build a golden calf in the shape of a Wall Street Bull. So we all were like, yes, we'll do it. Because they didn't know how to enter the park. It was a bit of a weird environment. I think a lot of the Occupiers had suspicions of religious communities because they didn't want to get coopted by "the Man." That felt weird to me—I've never been The Man before. But I am in a lot of ways—I'm white, I'm straight, I've got a good job. But so I was brokering a lot of that relationship, saying we're all allies, we're all seeing the same new world. Religious communities are natural allies of this movement because their bread and butter is visualizing another world and trying to incarnate it. So let's just do this.

A week or so into the occupation, a group of faith leaders was ready to demonstrate their support of the movement. With a paper mâché golden calf, they marched from Judson to Zuccotti Park. As they walked, their numbers grew. There was caution and concern, a hope that they would be well received by activists, but also uncertainty and hesitation. "It was kind of a hold-your-breath moment," Ellick says. But as they entered the encampment, their worries were swept away. The park erupted in cheering and thunderous applause. The symbol of the golden calf resonated, and the overlay of that symbol with the giant statue of the Wall Street Bull was a revelation not only of Wall Street's greed, but of the idolatry that has become intrinsic to daily economic practices.

The juxtaposition of these symbols posed a question to the world: what do you hold sacred? In many ways, Occupy was a cultural movement in the broadest sense, a movement focused on the battle of ideas and values. But if Occupy was a contestation over sacred value, what were the means to wage such a challenge? How do the central values of a community change? In what ways can individuals and groups within a society assert their disapproval and desire for something new?

There are a variety of ways in which such debates over sacred value occur. In *Blessed Are the Organized,* Jeffrey Stout refers to these processes as intrinsic to political life. Ideas of sacred value are not unique to people of religious persuasions. On the contrary, there are many nontheists—secularists and humanists—who believe that human beings are deserving of dignity, that they should be treated in certain ways, that they hold sacred value that should not be trespassed against: "To attribute sacred value to something is to imply that its value can neither be measured exhaustively in quantitative terms, nor reduced to utility, nor subjected at someone's whim to trade-offs of the sort that markets are designed to facilitate."[13] And this has important impacts on politics.

Stout suggests that one of the most contentious debates in contemporary U.S. society is between those who believe that there are lines that should not be crossed because of some intrinsic value and those who believe that any situation can be determined by a cost-benefit analysis:

> There are many political controversies that have to do with where the limits of commodification should be set. Chattel slavery commodifies human beings by treating them as mere property to be bought and sold. Prostitution commodifies sexual activity by exchanging it directly for money.… We need to decide whether these things take the mentality of cost-benefit calculation too far. Our sense of what the limits should be is intertwined with what strikes us as horrendous, profane, or unjust.

[13] Jeffrey Stout, *Blessed Are the Organized* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 219.

It was this kind of thinking that motivated many who became involved in Occupy. Many participants sought to contest the right of those with excessive wealth to increase their profits limitlessly in the midst of massive foreclosures around the country, high unemployment, and decreases in services for the elderly and disabled. They attempted to expose the causal relationship between the declining conditions of the majority and the increasing prosperity of the few. But until Occupy, there were few effective ways to challenge this situation, given the privacy and power exerted by the wealthiest individuals and institutions. Occupy shifted emphasis away from government and back to class.

Upon identifying capitalism as a religion, Philip Goodchild draws the conclusion that transformation must come through the way in which we direct our attention, the daily habits that constitute our everyday life. It is not enough to state one's opposition to the status quo, for "in an age of enlightened false consciousness, truth alone is not sufficient: a consumer may know that they contribute to the destruction of the planet, but they continue to do so. The action and consciousness of people go separate ways. Power, in capitalism, is operational."[14] No level of convincing will serve to alter social conditions without a concomitant change in practices. What emerged in both Occupy and Occupy Faith, therefore, was the attempt to begin to engrain new habits, new ways of being.

What was striking was that in these practices, new solidarities were formed. People of vastly different backgrounds found themselves in meetings, ate meals together, debated politics. They marched together in the streets and chanted together. People were encouraged to form affinity groups—to choose a few other people with whom they would march to ensure their safety. In these practices, over the extended period of time that the occupation offered, relationships were formed, community was created.

[14] Goodchild, *Capitalism and Religion,* 65.

Occupy characterized itself as a transformative process, which transcended quotidian politics. Rejecting electoral politics as narrow and overly constrained, the movement displayed an attempt to create change at the levels of culture and belief. There was something religious about the entire effort. Nathaniel Mahlberg, a Union Theological Seminary student who was interning at Judson during Occupy, expressed it this way:

> I felt from the beginning what I believe to be the religious dimension of Occupy. It's in contrast to a political orientation. At the heart of Occupy there is this deep, deep, desire for full-scale transformation. That we are going to live together in a way that expresses our deepest belief that everybody is equal, a dignified human being that can participate in this society of mutual aid….
>
> [Occupy's] aim is different than affecting the political sphere. Its aim is cultivating networks of communities that are made up of transformed and activated individuals—and that's religious, as far as I'm concerned. That's what religious communities ought to be doing. You know, you do the right thing, regardless of the consequences. You behave in the right way toward one another, toward your resources, toward your history, in protest of what's wrong, regardless of the consequences. Which isn't to say Occupy hasn't done real work. It's just hard for the media and folks who aren't within that worldview to understand it.[15]

This idea of transformation permeated the movement. "Transformative organizing," or "relational organizing," is highly attentive to the process of organizing itself and what impact that process has on the individuals and communities involved. It is based on the idea that the opponent is not simply unjust individuals or unjust laws, but an array of social structures and systems that inculcate ways of thinking and being, which reinforce oppression. Not only systems and structures but we as individuals and communities need to be transformed.

One of the shared beliefs within Occupy was that engagement in one's community, standing in solidarity with others, was a crucial form of resistance. If capitalism functions by isolating and separating, resistance takes the form of coming together as a community. It involves taking time for things that are not profit oriented, for things that reject commodification.

[15] Ellick, interview, August 28, 2012.

It involves claiming an identity as an agent, a decision maker, and a moral being rather than simply a consumer. These were the goals that made Occupy an enigma.

### III. The Practices of Prefiguration

If Occupy rejected the idea of having a single demand, the role of the movement increasingly came to be the construction, cultivation, and demonstration of solidarity. Social movements build collective identities that create new formations of social organization across lines of previous division. These identities do not simply exist, ready to be activated. As E. P. Thompson wrote of the British labor movement, for example, working class identity was *made,* not found.[16] The question of how to build solidarity in the U.S. context would present one of the main practical and theoretical challenges to the movement. In a certain sense, more than any other political aim, fostering solidarity is the critical condition for democracy.

Occupy used a particular strategy to build solidarity. The encampments were strategic in that they provided a space to organize, but they were also prefigurative in that they created temporary communities within which organizers could build relationships, experiment with participatory democracy, and develop deeper forms of identification. They were expressive spaces of protest in which people literally occupied Wall Street, using their bodies to manifest their political claims. But they were also temporary constructions of alternative worlds, worlds based on solidarity and a commitment to the common good, which were transformative for those who lived in them. In these spaces, new solidarities were created, new identities emerged.

[16] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966).

Prefiguration refers to "building the new within the shell of the old."[17] It involves rejecting the notion of revolution as a cleaning of the slate and instead signifies an attempt to live in the way one hopes will one day be adopted by society at large. During the first few months of Occupy, between September 17 and the eviction on November 15, the encampment at Zuccotti Park was vibrant and bustling, and a sense of hospitality permeated the air. Working groups met constantly around the area. People felt they had purpose and responsibility. Healthy meals, shared books, medical care, spaces for meditation and yoga, and time for political education and organizing were all components of the kind of society many in the movement hoped to create. Old identities and divisions were challenged and transformed through shared practices and new ways of being together. A sense of unity across difference was made possible.

Nevertheless, this orientation would be contentious. Prefiguration is a politics that attempts to transform society, to bring together ends and means, to enact the future in the present rather than projecting a distant time at which the revolution will have occurred. But questions of efficiency, strategy, and impact would all be debated heatedly. In this section, I want to explore the dynamics of prefigurative politics and the limits and potential it offers for social movements in the twenty-first century.

**A. Means and Ends**

Like the alter-globalization movement, Occupy was largely characterized by an explicit rejection of Old Left dogmas and structures. Though it focused on class oppression as a central issue, it departed from much of the history of Marxism in its theory of change. Occupy embodied

[17] A saying originally coined by the Industrial Workers of the World and later adopted in anarchist and pacifist traditions. See the Proceedings of the 2nd Annual Convention of the IWW (Chicago: Industrial Workers of the World, 1906).

a rejection of the grand plans that characterized the last century's liberal and communist empires. As one Occupier told me, "the means matter."

There was significant contestation within the movement, however, about how to understand means and ends, who to include or exclude, and the process of social change. For the most part, Occupy came to be largely dominated by an anarchist orientation that rejected the entanglement of capital and the state and sought to create change through the construction of alternative, prefigurative communities that modeled a different way of being.

In thinking about movement politics, we can identify two kinds of means that matter: tactical means and organizational means. Regarding tactics, the Leninist view would suggest that any effective means are appropriate in the struggle against the great power of capital. The means may be unpleasant or violent, but they are appropriate if they are justified by the ends. In Occupy, debates raged about tactics, particularly in response to the police forces that were often violent against the protestors. This issue erupted when there was a violent response to Occupy Oakland, and the demonstrators began to use violence in return. New York's organizers discussed this issue extensively and ultimately decided to choose a stance of "autonomy in solidarity," a position that withheld judgment about the tactics chosen in different Occupy communities around the country. Nevertheless, in New York, organizers tried to avoid violent tactics by creating the "clown brigades," channeling angry energy into displays that were equally striking, but silly rather than violent.

In addition to tactical means, there was also debate about organizational means. As we saw in the debates between Luxemburg, Lenin, and nineteenth-century anarchists, the structural organization of a movement can have impact on its goals. An overly top-down structure within the movement has the potential to result in authoritarian practices when the movement is over.

Anarchists would be on guard against vanguardism as harboring the potential for domination, turning instead to horizontalism and widespread participation. But the structures established during Occupy were weak, and when they were suddenly flooded by media attention and much greater participation than had been anticipated, it became difficult to retain the horizontalist ideal.

The central prefigurative aspect of Occupy was the form of participatory democracy enacted in the encampment. This component of the movement went largely overlooked by the media, but it is the clearest example of Occupy's perspective on organizational means as prefigurative practice. Participatory democracy requires a sense of solidarity at its core, a sense of equality and collective agency. When decisions are made collectively, the hope is that they work in the interest of all. A consensus process, which emphasizes time for deliberation, enables every participant to voice concerns or opposition with the goal of arriving at a conclusion that is stronger and more appropriate than any individual could achieve on their own. At its best, consensus decision making can be not simply a method, but an epistemology, a way of collectively creating knowledge.

In an effort to enact such a politic and manifest solidarity as a social practice, regular General Assemblies were held to provide opportunities for shared decision making. Working groups were tasked with posting all of their notes so that there would be full transparency. Almost all groups were open to anyone who wanted to join. Because meetings were often very large, Occupy Wall Street used a modified consensus process, which included hand signals to indicate agreement, disagreement, or uncertainty. A facilitator would take proposals and then gauge the agreement within the group through the hand signals. Proposals could be modified by amendments, but if, after such modifications, some in the group continued to be dissatisfied, they

could block the proposal. Blocks could be overridden by supermajorities, which were set at 90 percent.[18]

The concepts of consensus and horizontalism were not unique to Occupy. Similar practices were used in the movements of the 1960s and more recently in the alter-globalization movement of the 1990s. These efforts drew from the history of anarchism and direct democracy but came more immediately out of a deep frustration with representative democracy, a sense that the republican electoral process was corrupted and broken. In general, this leaning toward anarchism seemed to be pragmatic rather than ideological. In a context in which government officials are beholden to their financial contributors more than their constituents, democracy becomes an illusion. The solution for such an ailment could not, therefore, be found in the traditional channels, in policy changes or appeals to representatives. As Marina Sitrin, a frequent commentator on the movement wrote, "The question for the future is not how to create a plan for what a better country will look like, but how to deepen and broaden the assemblies taking place and how to enhance participatory democracy in the process."[19] The challenge, that is, is to rethink democracy itself and the ways in which authority, responsibility, and trust are formed.

Political and social theory offered important building blocks for the movement. Organizers would create spaces for political education. They drew on the work of post-modernists and feminists. The trove of anarchist literature was particularly prominent, such as the works of David Graeber and Murray Bookchin. Several times throughout the fall and winter, participants in Occupy organized seminars in "social ecology," based on Bookchin's work, to offer other organizers theoretical and practical tools for movement building. Bookchin's vision

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[18] Doug Singsen, "A Balance Sheet of Occupy Wall Street," *The International Socialist Review* 81 (January 2012), http://isreview.org/issue/81/balance-sheet-occupy-wall-street.

[19] Marina Sitrin, "Horizontalism and the Occupy Movements," *Dissent* (Spring 2012), http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/horizontalism-and-the-occupy-movements.

involved an emphasis on local decision making in such a way that communities can be autonomous and empowered. Assemblies, he argues, not only fill a decision-making role but also reshape the character of those who participate. In a way evocative of classical virtue theory, he suggests that the process of participation cultivates practices of shared thinking and cooperation, which are central to democracy: "the assemblies themselves should function not only as permanent decision-making institutions but as arenas for educating the people in handling complex civic and regional affairs."[20] Participation in direct democratic practices on the local level can be seen as a form of cultivation into the ethical habits appropriate to a democratic society.

One could certainly question the viability of this enterprise. And indeed, there were many within Occupy who disagreed with this process. It was critiqued as utopian, unrealistic, and insufficiently strategic. Meetings seemed endless, and worse, the structure enabled them to be derailed by a single individual.[21] But just as the participatory practices of Occupy were not new, neither were its challenges. Jeremy Brecher writes of attempts at participatory democracy in the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and relates the failure of SDS to ever resolve many of the complexities of such efforts.[22] As Brecher notes, participatory democracy can resemble mob rule if not paired with structures of accountability. When anyone can enter into a meeting and vote, while others have endured many days and hours of debate and long-time involvement, this can create a sense of unfairness and resentment.

Doug Singsen, one of the founders of NYABC and organizers of September 17, noted that while the consensus process was meant to ensure that no part of the group felt alienated, the

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[20] Bookchin, *Social Ecology and Communalism* (Oakland: AK Press, 2007), 104.
[21] Joreen Freeman, "The Tyranny of Structurelessness," *The Second Wave* 2, no. 1 (1972), was widely circulated during Occupy meetings, originally a talk delivered at the Southern Female Rights Union, Beulah, Mississippi (1970).
[22] Jeremy Brecher, *Save the Humans* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2011), 66.

GAs leading up to September 17 were long, acrimonious, and often unproductive.[23] They continued to be challenging during Occupy Wall Street, at times breaking down into shouting and argument. For many observers, this signaled the impossibility of participatory democracy and the absence of direction in the movement. But others expressed a sense that the practices did not fit the context in which they were being tried. Such practices require a deep level of trust and shared interests, but in the Occupy context, meetings were largely populated by strangers. Over time, they argued, as people got to know one another more deeply, and in smaller meetings, the practices could be used to great effect. But Occupy was too sudden and the community too artificial to work as a testing ground for these methods.

**B. Inclusion/Exclusion**

One of the most contentious issues in the movement was who should be included or excluded. While Occupy presented itself as open, there were significant obstacles to getting involved. There were structural issues: confusion around how to engage, where to find meetings, the fact that few had the time to commit to hours of debate. But there was also suspicion. Anyone with ties to a political party, or even a mainstream nongovernmental organization, was questioned about whose interests they represented. While some advocated for greater collaboration with large organizations, which could move forward on specific reforms, others rejected that process, denying the value of such incrementalism and instead pointing out the potential for cooptation by the more status-quo-oriented mainstream. Given the professed goal of movement building and an expansive notion of solidarity suggested by the 99%, boundaries emerged that limited inclusion.

[23] Doug Singsen, "A Balance Sheet of Occupy Wall Street," *The International Socialist Review* 81 (January 2012), http://isreview.org/issue/81/balance-sheet-occupy-wall-street.

Romand Coles writes that grappling with the possibilities of coalition politics has been a central problem for progressive movements, which have been caught between totalizing Marxist theories and an enchantment with a neo-Nietzschean politics of difference.[24] The result has been a challenge in formulating possibilities for working together across lines of difference. Coles suggests an ethic of "receptive generosity" as a guiding ethic for grassroots organizing. As Coles writes, however, the move toward coalition politics, or an ethic of solidarity, is not a solution as much as it is a site for new questions.

While many Occupy organizers shared the Marxist concern that capitalism depends on the alienation of workers from the object of their labor and on the division between those who work and those who own, many attempted to articulate a wider conception of the possibilities for transformation based on the multiplicity, diversity, and difference constitutive of contemporary society. In the movement's theory publication, Isham Christie writes,

> The convergence of isolated social struggles signals the greatest hope for this movement and clarifies (if we needed further clarification) that the notion of universality in relation to social struggle and emancipation has changed as history and society developed. The classic single emancipatory subject (the proletariat) has taken on another shape. It is no longer that a single social subject will emerge to emancipate itself and with it the general interests of all those in society. Multiple social subjects which in-itself, or themselves, have emancipatory potential can unite in a universal movement to abolish and/or challenge social oppression (implying emancipation beyond economic determination).

Isham goes on to posit that in the history of labor organizing, workers built solidarity on the factory floor. The most dangerous aspect of contemporary society is the way in which people are divided from one another in ways that make it difficult to see themselves as part of a common project. For several weeks, until Occupy was evicted, Zuccotti Park resembled a factory floor, creating the space for a diverse array of individuals and groups to come together and discover

[24] Romand Coles, "Liberty, Equality, Receptive Generosity: Neo-Nietzschean Reflections on the Ethics and Politics of Coalition," *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 2 (June 1996): 375.

what they had in common. And the hope was that in that space, new collective identities, new friendships could be formed, which would bridge across difference.

"The 99%" would serve as a new collective identity to some extent, but it was not a monolithic identity. While focused on the economic system, Occupy attempted to display how class is tied together with race, gender, and other aspects of identity, which are often loci of oppression. But this coming together of a wide variety of communities was rife with complications. While the causes of oppression might be identified in common, their different and diverse effects needed to be understood with nuance.

Despite the initial euphoric experience of finding oneself united with many diverse others, it became clear that the 99% was replete with difference and even conflicts of interest. "Decolonize" groups started in Oakland and New York as rejections of violence in the language of "occupation." Issues of race and gender arose as it became apparent that many of the self-selected leaders of Occupy were white, male, and middle class.[25] One common expression of frustration during Occupy had to do with the fact that things that low-income communities had been saying for decades were only being heard now that white people were saying them. The effort to posit unity in difference would tend to privilege one part of the new coalition: the loudest and most assertive.

Aware of these concerns, organizers attempted to construct procedures and mechanisms to deal with them. There were antiracism trainings for white allies and caucuses based on particular identities, such as the People of Color Caucus or the Women's Caucus. There were also meeting procedures aimed at creating space for individuals whose voices were often

[25] See Costas Panagopoulos, "Occupy Wall Street Survey Results October 2011," Fordham University, Center for Electoral Politics and Democracy (October, 2011), http://www.fordham.edu/images/academics/graduate_schools/gsas/elections_and_campaign_/occupy%20wall%20street%20survey%20results%20102611.pdf. The survey shows that 68% of Occupy self-identified as white, 61% was male, and the average age was 33.

marginalized. In participatory meeting spaces, there was often a procedure in which one must get on "stack," the list of people who have comments, to speak. Occupy used "progressive stack," which meant that women or people of color could be bumped up the list if white males had been dominating the conversation. The structures developed within Occupy therefore attempted to create widespread convergence with attention to particularity and difference.

Nevertheless, there were important reasons that Occupy remained primarily white and middle class. Despite the transformative hopes and visionary imagination of the organizers, despite the sincerity of their efforts and their attempts at learning history and theory and creating impact—not simply spectacle—there was a dogmatism that developed that made it difficult for others with contrasting theories of change, or more immediate priorities, to engage. Like almost any community, Occupy developed standards for participation, for qualification, which were based on a rejection of certain others. In many cases, these "others" were individuals and groups seeking reforms. Mention of political parties or legislative agendas was almost taboo. There was a distrust of the "republican" process, in which one delegates representatives to speak on behalf of a community. This was due in large part to the empirical facts of U.S. politics, in which candidates are more closely tied to political donors and lobbyists than to their constituents. But for some, it was also a principled stance, which asserts that such representation can never be adequate for a healthy political community.

For many Occupy organizers, the "othering" of reformists was rooted in the sense that reformism was bad strategy and carried with it the dangerous possibilities of cooptation. There was a widespread sense that reform efforts could be easily coopted by a political party and made to work in the interests of those who were contesting for political office. But this also became a

way of excluding many groups and individuals who tried to participate, including groups that had closer relationships with communities of working-class people and people of color.

For example, in the spring of 2012, over fifty organizations co-organized a training in nonviolent direct action for 100,000 people around the country. It was an initiative inspired by Occupy, and some Occupy organizers were involved; thus, they called it the 99% Spring. It felt, for many, like an important step in building a broad-based movement. Within Occupy, however, the 99% Spring was dubbed an example of cooptation. The use of the 99% seemed like an effort on the part of these organizations to associate with the energy of Occupy and benefit from its popularity. Emails sped through inboxes with questions, concerns, and suspicions about these activities. But others pointed out that these reactions exemplified typical Left sectarianism.[26] Moderate groups were designated as threats, an opposition that absorbed energy and attention that could have gone into building alliances against the fundamental causes of domination.

Occupy, and the idea of the 99%, captured the world's attention in large part because of the vast new possibilities it offered for organizing across lines of difference. There were many moments that Durkheim refers to as "effervescent," where a magic emerges in the convergence of diverse individuals coming together in a new unity. And Occupy attempted to create practices to catch these moments of convergence and develop ways of making the diversity integral to the purpose and strength of the movement. But this would prove to be a challenge, and important questions would linger about the extent of differences that were actually welcome. In the end, it would seem that at the level of building an active coalition of movement organizers, solidarity would be limited. It was limited, in large part, to those who shared a very specific political

[26] Harmony Goldberg and Joshua Kahn Russell, "New Radical Alliances for a New Era," *Znet* (May 9, 2012), http://www.zcommunications.org/new-radical-alliances-for-a-new-era-by-joshua-kahn-russell. MoveOn was vilified as a democratic front group. The Working Families Party held this tension relatively well, to my knowledge, allowing several of its staff to participate in Occupy as organizers without imposing an organizational agenda.

perspective and theory of change. It was also limited to those who had the flexibility to be present for long meetings and risk arrest during direct actions. The lines between inside and outside were apparent in the fact that many people who were sympathetic with the movement called themselves "supporters" rather than participants. This was the result of certain structural and methodological aspects of the movement that failed to create a sense of inclusion, a sense of shared identity. In a certain way, therefore, Occupy failed to build a mass movement; it built what it set out to avoid: a vanguard.

## CONCLUSION

Occupy Wall Street garnered global attention because of the surprising energy and creativity with which it manifested a critique of Wall Street, the financial industry, and wealth disparties. For a few months, it captured the imagination of the public and motivated people around the world to participate in collective action. While it faded from public perception relatively quickly, its rise to the global stage illuminated widespread frustration with the traditional political channels for social change and possibilities for new solidarities.

Occupy emerged out of the history of strategies and lessons learned from past attempts to create change. Its emphasis on prefiguration was an attempt, a collective argument, to the effect that change would not take place by petitioning government officials but instead by amassing a populace that was vigilant, critical, and engaged in practices that prioritize the common good. This would require rejecting the dominant values and beliefs, such as the sacredness of profit, and insisting instead on reverence for life and community.

There was a vision that proliferated among many involved in Occupy that had to do with strong communities that were organized, politically aware, and connected, such that individuals could have impact on the conditions that affected their lives at the local, state, and national levels. This vision requires constant analysis of the sources of potential domination, whether those are located in capital or the state. And it requires constant community building and organizing to create new forms of solidarity and the conditions for collective action. The central task of contemporary movements is to create new ways of imagining community in the modern age, new institutions in which solidarity can be made manifest.

# CONCLUSION

This dissertation has explored the discourse of solidarity from its first emergences in Europe, through several traditions that have used the term to develop ideas about social and political relationships, and into contemporary social movements. The sudden rise of the term in the nineteenth century—in the heyday of industrial capitalism and the consolidation of the nation state—indicated the need for new language to describe new social conditions, concerns, and desires. The historical moment was one of significant tumult and change as the revolutionary possibility that monarchies would be abolished and new forms of governance would emerge had finally become a reality. But how to create the appropriate forms of community in the midst of these transitions would remain a central question.

The term "solidarity" marked a hope for an alternative to atomistic individualism, scientific rationality, and liberal economics. It displayed a concern about the disintegration of social cohesion and the subjugation of community to the blind laws of economics. And it signaled a desire to restore an emphasis on the importance of relationships and friendship in politics.

One of the most important questions of the twenty-first century is how to build solidarity in the midst of diversity, how to create new political subjectivities and identities that are able to facilitate pluralistic ways of being and flourishing. After many decades of emphasis upon the rights and freedoms due to each individual, there is a need to return to the question of community and how solidarity is constructed in ways that still allow for autonomy and difference. Essentially, this is the question of the common good. How is it identified, articulated, embodied, and pursued? How does it hold the tension between likeness and difference?

Recent social movements have displayed a preoccupation with this question and the relationship between ethics and political change. The question of solidarity is a question about how one stands with others, builds new identities, and strives toward collective goals. It is about the texture of relationships in the midst of political action. In many movement contexts, we see discussions about how the internal dynamics of movements, the relationships of individuals within them, have the potential to affect the external goals and achievements toward which such movements strive. There has also been important attention to the ways in which attempts at solidarity can cover over power dynamics and reinscribe social hierarchies. Understanding solidarity as a virtue that can be practiced well or badly, and that is not simply individual but is also social, organizational, and structural, helps us think more deeply about the ways in which the process of social change influences the outcomes.

With these contemporary questions in mind, we have turned to the history of the concept of solidarity, tracing it through several traditions. In each of these traditions, solidarity is the bridge between ethics and politics. Nineteenth-century republican, Marxist, and anarchist traditions all looked back to Greek and Roman thought to recover the idea that politics is about creating the conditions for each individual and community to flourish. Solidarity was the expansion of fraternal love to the compatriot, the fellow proletarian, and at times, the stranger. But advocates of each tradition had fears about the potential that the domination of some over others would impede this flourishing. They worried, on the one hand, that the few would dominate the many, that political and economic elites would dominate those with less power. And they worried, on the other hand, that the many could dominate the few, through the oppression of individuals, or minority groups, which might be outnumbered by strong majorities.

Thinkers and practitioners from each camp sought new social structures and institutions to protect from such threats and enable liberty while at the same time deepening social solidarity.

While members of each of these traditions agreed that the concept of solidarity seemed to provide a vision that could reconcile personal freedom and the common good, they had differing views about the best way to achieve their hopes for change. Most generally, each tradition identified a distinct basis of solidarity: republicans looked to the nation—what Benedict Anderson called the "imagined community"—as that which could create a shared identity. Marxists looked to the material, economic conditions, which created divisions between classes as the basis for an oppositional unity. Anarchists looked to the local community, the community of affinity, as the source of solidarity, identifying the role of personal attachments and affiliations at the core of political activity. But these distinct orientations are further complicated by differing views about the process of political activity and social change. Debates between these traditions centered on questions of (1) the primary sources of domination to be avoided, (2) the boundaries of the community (inclusion and exclusion), (3) methods of participation (direct or representational), (4) the relationship between leaders and followers, and (5) the relationship between ends and means. We can identify general ways in which these traditions took distinct positions on these questions, but as we have seen, there is also significant debate within each tradition on these questions.

Much of this is already seeded in Greece and Rome. Aristotle and Cicero both emphasize the importance of friendship as a political virtue, but they describe two ways of thinking about politics. Both agree that politics has to do with the search for the good life. But for the one, political participation is intrinsically good, while for the other it is an instrumental good. For Aristotle, the community is the fundamental site of ethics and virtue. While the polis includes

individuals with diverse capabilities and philosophical perspectives, it is oriented toward concord, agreement, and unity. For Cicero, politics is the space in which the struggle for power takes place, and to participate, or be represented, is a way to protect oneself from the encroachment of others. While the first model imagines small communities in which citizens participate directly in public life, the second is based on a vision of a larger society in which political representation allows for the creation of a just and virtuous republic. Quentin Skinner has distinguished these traditions by classifying the one as civic humanism and the other as civic republicanism. Both traditions go on to influence developments in Renaissance and modern political thought.

The revival of the republican tradition in early modern Europe harkened directly back to Cicero for insight into the construction of political community. The attempt to overthrow monarchic institutions would necessitate a simultaneous effort to create a new basis for solidarity. For the republican tradition, the construction of a common political identity would take place through the cultivation of piety toward the Republic as the representative body of the people.

For republican thinkers, liberty is an important political ideal, and part of the purpose of the state is to protect the liberty of each individual through the establishment of the rule of law. Drawing on the early modern social contract tradition, political society is understood as constituted by the agreements of individuals to understand themselves as in relationship to one another, with rights and duties to the larger whole. While certain thinkers took this in a more individualistic direction, imagining the single individual as the basic unit of this contract, many republican thinkers like Fouillée, Bourgeois, and Durkheim saw society to be that which preexists the individual and, therefore, as requiring a commitment not simply to the pursuit of

one's personal interests, but to the common good. This tradition sought to create harmony between the collective (the state) and the individual by arguing for their co-creation and interdependence.

For republicans, a system of representation was the best form of government, for it allowed for broad participation in the political process and empowered the citizenry to hold those in power accountable. The state is limited by a separation of powers, a system of checks and balances. Nevertheless, the state holds coercive powers so that it can protect those within its borders against forms of domination that could occur from within or without. In governing over its own citizens, the state enacts the desires of the majority while ensuring certain protections for minorities. In regard to outsiders, it uses its coercive power to protect from hostile incursions, and careful processes for incremental inclusion. Republicans see a strong state, characterized by this set of structures (a limited government based on representation and a separation of powers) as superior to the proposals of Marxists and anarchists, who call for the state to wither away. For in the absence of a state with coercive powers, they argue, other forms of domination could proliferate.

Part and parcel of this republican vision of society is an emphasis on the role of a virtuous citizenry. From Aristotle and Cicero to Bourgeois and Fouillée, politics is meant to enable the flourishing of each individual. But this requires not only a just political context, but also just practices and dispositions. It is the virtue of the citizenry that enables and reinforces the possibilities of a virtuous commonwealth. While Marxism has often been presumed to lack a moral theory, more recent work on Marxist ethics has shown that Marx shared something like Aristotle's perspective on virtue, excellence, and flourishing. Though Marx saw discussion of morality and duty to be superfluous liberal hobbies, he sought to create social structures that

were in and of themselves ethical configurations and that would reshape individuals to be oriented toward the common good. As George Brenkert puts it, "In this sense, morality is not primarily concerned with rules and principles, but with the cultivation of certain dispositions or traits of character" through social practices.[27] This is evident in the writing of Luxemburg, who emphasizes the virtue of discipline and self-sacrifice, and it is also apparent in the prefigurative politics of anarchists. Each of these traditions emphasizes different kinds of virtues, but they share the recognition of an ethical politics distinct from abstract duty and a morality based on shame.

From the Marxist and anarchist perspectives, republican structures are insufficient to ward off other forms of domination, such as the discrepancies of wealth and power that continue to prevail in the modern context. Since the 1800s, socialists have argued for the need to focus on the role of capitalism, private property, and the accumulation of wealth as fundamental obstacles to social solidarity. Rather than imagining domination as occurring simply in the fabric of individual relationships, they have pointed to the structures of class and the kinds of domination that occur through the economic system. While Fouillée, Bourgeois, and Durkheim identified these dangers, their recommendations for how to overcome them tended to look to the rule of law as a source of protection. Meanwhile, Marxists would argue that the law would always be the law of the ruling class and therefore turned to class struggle as that which could rectify social power imbalances. Harmony could not be achieved directly, through the creation of a secular patriotic religion, but instead, taking a more Hegelian perspective, Marxists argued for the need to move first through the contradictions of society, the structures that purported to offer freedom but instead enabled domination, to reach the possibility of unity. In the meantime, solidarity would be the cry to workers to join in the struggle.

[27] George Brenkert, *Marx's Ethics of Freedom* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 17.

As we noted, there were many divisions among Marxists about the relation between means and ends, in particular, organizational and tactical means versus political ends. Identifying the severe obstacles to overcoming class rule, Lenin would set out to build an army among the proletariat, which could act together, quickly and decisively. Solidarity would signify a commitment to the party. While aiming toward the creation of a proletarian state, Lenin saw the use of force and the leadership of a vanguard to be justified; these were necessary in order to raise consciousness about the interconnections between struggles and to overcome the trade-union orientation that sought incremental changes in hours and wages. But what Lenin did not see was the way in which this subordination of means to ends would allow for forms of domination to emerge within the party structure, within the opposition itself.

In contrast to Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg would argue for greater attention to the dialectical relationship between means and ends. She did not assert the *unity* of ends and means—she did not take up an anarchist or pacifist position that the means must *prefigure* the ends—but she did believe that workers needed to have direct control over the process of revolution if they were to be able to govern after its achievement. I have called this an ethical position because it looks toward the aspect of the formation of individuals and communities through the processes of struggle, through strikes and collective action, and the ways in which this would shape the character of those involved. Solidarity, in this context, could be considered a virtue; it is characterized by discipline and sacrifice, as it was for Lenin, but it is a virtue, a disposition, cultivated through practice in relation to other workers. It is not simply an order to follow the dictates of an abstract or centralized party.

The founders of nineteenth-century anarchism would agree both with the republican aim to protect individual liberty and the Marxist analysis that private capital was one of the greatest

sources of domination. But in contrast to both republicans and Marxists, anarchist thinkers identified the state as a primary source of potential domination. While there is great diversity among anarchists, ranging from collectivist to libertarian, most have sought ways to organize society through cooperativism and mutualism. In contrast to a revolution that would seek to take state power, many would follow Proudhon and Bakunin in arguing for a social revolution, which would establish the new society within the shell of the old.

The anarchist vision of society was not without order but instead was based on the idea of local self-organization. Worker collectives and cooperatives could potentially be the basis for a society that did not require the interference of the state. Following Richard Day, we have called this a logic of affinity, for it emphasizes the importance of personal relationships and community as the basis for a healthy political society. As Aristotle argued in the *Nichomachean Ethics*, friendship seeks a justice beyond justice. This vision is not far from the Catholic doctrine of subsidiarity, which the Church developed in the early 1900s. The doctrine of subsidiarity would recommend that control be as localized as possible and only when necessary referred up to higher authorities. Similarly, anarchists would emphasize the importance of local control, connected through federated structures.

The Paris Commune of 1871 and the Spanish Revolution of 1936 both exemplified the potential of this vision, though both were eventually crushed by militarized state powers. Critics of anarchism thus argue that the philosophy is undermined by its inability to create structures strong enough to protect from external sources of domination and prevent the emergence of internal sources of domination. Nevertheless, in the wake of a century characterized by severe state violence and ongoing economic exploitation, the failure of Marxist-Leninist experiments,

and the engulfment of the republican process by class interests, the anarchist vision continues to inspire contemporary social movements.

The discourse of solidarity was picked up not only by revolutionary movements but also by the religious establishment. In the late 1800s, the Roman Catholic Church began to address the problem of economic inequality. The Catholic tradition offers a theological story that grounds concern for justice and equality. In particular, solidarity has theological resonance in Christianity, where Christ is seen as God's solidarity, God's attempt to stand with humanity. The Eucharist offers a ritual reminder of the grace that occurs in the act of sacrificing oneself for others, for the community.

The Catholic Magisterium developed the concept of solidarity as a central tenant of Catholic Social Teaching. But in addition to these theological resources, many Catholics drew from the political traditions we have been examining. Lay Catholics and priests concerned with social questions between 1848 and 1890 sought to support the workers' movements, and many saw resources within republican theory to organize for more social services and the rights of workers. In the 1920s, Christian democratic parties would be established in the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany, and Norway. These parties would expand on Catholic social thought, attempting to mediate between the collectivism of Marxism and the individualism of liberalism. Using the Catholic concepts of the person and subsidiarity, they adopted a conception of solidarity that gave greater priority to individual freedom.

But not all Catholics adopted this republican orientation. Peter Maurin and Dorothy Day would develop a Christian anarchism that adhered to principles of self-organization and horizontalism. Building off of Proudhon and Kropotkin, they would position themselves against state violence and establish hospitality houses, Catholic Worker houses, which exemplified the

principles of mutualism and friendship. In the 1960s, Liberation Theology would more explicitly integrate a Marxist analysis into a Catholic framework, a theology that would challenge the Vatican in an explicit attempt to take Catholicism in an anticapitalist direction on the basis of Christ's concern for the poor.

In the 1980s, the Church would play a central role in the support of the Polish workers' movement, Solidarność. This movement can be understood as motivated by a convergence of republican, Marxist, and Catholic traditions. The memory of the Polish republic was deeply important to the formation of Solidarity and worked as a vision of an ideal national community that would guide the movement. While Solidarity was fundamentally a resistance to the communist regime in Poland, it was nevertheless built on socialist principles of the rights of workers and equality and dignity as fundamental values. The Church brought to the movement a moral narrative that would enable widespread international support. Unfortunately, when Solidarity came to power, the dominant alternative to communism was a neoliberal model that promoted not the republican idea of freedom as connected to solidarity, but the liberal notion of freedom as the absence of constraints, a philosophical, political, and economic doctrine that makes the market the fundamental tool of social organization.

I have pointed out that the Church's involvement in Poland can be seen as emblematic of a transition in the concept of solidarity from one that is largely based on likeness to one that is an ethical commitment to unity in difference. This continues to be true for anticorporate globalization activists in the 1980s and 1990s. This period displays a wrestling with the idea of solidarity and unease with the idea of altruism. In the alter-globalization movement, there is an explicit attempt to restore the focus on economic exploitation as a central form of domination, and yet, to overlay this analysis of capitalist neoliberalism with an awareness of the importance

of different cultural identities and social locations. The Marxist notion of solidarity as class struggle is reformed by the age of identity politics, which illuminated distinct experiences of oppression and domination. Solidarity, in this period, becomes reconceptualized as joint-struggle in the midst of diversity rather than the struggle of a singular revolutionary subject.

This movement, and the Occupy movement that emerges a decade later, offer examples of Richard Day's "logic of affinity," revealing the profound and ongoing influence of anarchism. In the past several decades, resistance movements around the world have attempted to use horizontal structures for decision making, attempting to distribute power as they resist both capital and the state. Both of the examples I explore used "affinity groups" as the basic unit of organizing, groups of five to twenty people, who can initiate actions autonomously. But within the context of what is understood to be a larger resistance movement, they nevertheless prioritize a principle of autonomy in solidarity. The idea that affinity would be at the heart of organizing signals the emphasis in these movements on community, friendship, and the priority of the social over the political.

Contemporary anarchist-influenced social movements have played an important role in illuminating the problems of the liberal, republican, and Marxist proposals for organizing society. They identify the ways in which the republican legal structures, which are erected to protect individual liberties, often become coopted as tools of political domination. And they reject the Marxist subordination of means to ends. But they are often criticized for failing to propose sufficient alternatives for organizing economic and political life in the modern world. Their search for utopia leads to a rejection of the structures necessary in order to protect from domination. In rejecting the republican process of representation, anarchism often fails to create clear mechanisms of leadership, accountability, and responsibility. The hope that democratic,

self-organized, autonomous communities will be the adequate basis for contemporary social organization can be easily criticized as utopian. Nevertheless, communities in resistance are actively searching to find ways forward, learning from the traditions of the past.

In the dynamic that emerges between these traditions, we see how efforts to address one problem lead to the emergence of other contradictions and challenges. Republican attempts to protect individual liberty end up being insufficient to address the problems of capitalism and imperialism. Marxists and anarchists, while they are attentive to the problem of class inequality (and the way in which it undermines the liberty of the working class), have failed to formulate structures that adequately balance the freedom of the individual within the larger context of the common good. Each tradition attempts to identify certain sources of domination that must be combatted, but in doing so, they ignore others. The question we are left with is whether or how these traditions might be built upon and developed to better address the tensions between the welfare of the individual and the community.

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This survey of three political traditions, each of which has sought an alternative to atomistic individualism and the free market, reveals that broad agreement about what we are against leaves us with the greater challenge of articulating what we are for. Each has made solidarity a fundamental principle, in contrast to a dominant emphasis on liberty and individual freedom. But they have each sought to implement the concept differently, whether through state and political mechanisms or through social and communal structures.

In debates within and between these traditions, we see efforts to uncover the meaning of solidarity but also to sort out the different sources of oppression, and forms of resistance, and put forward ways of organizing that protect the dignity of each individual in the context of the

whole. Solidarity is determined in large part by the ways in which information is shared, participation is enabled, physical space is negotiated, etc. To better grasp the cultivation of solidarity, it is critical to look not only at the arguments made for difference in unity, but at the structures that allow solidarity to be embodied. The fact that the idea of solidarity comes out of Roman and, later, French law indicates that the concept was originally a structural concept, which legally bound people together in ways that assured just financial relations.

In closing, I want to suggest that we are seeing important forms of innovation and experimentation in activism and organizing today. Innumerable efforts are taking place around the world to build solidarity across lines of significant diversity and to establish broader and more inclusive collective identities. A multitude of grassroots organizing efforts are attempting to synthesize the prefigurative practices of anarchist traditions with the struggle to put in place the structural reforms, the policies and political institutions, which will create the context for the flourishing of humanity and the planet. New movements are blending the rich history of organizing and theory, as they seek ways of thinking about the role of the state, structures of representation, and the tools of resistance. What they are able to accomplish will be largely determined by their ability to inhabit an ethic of solidarity.

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