

Mob Work: Anarchists in Grand Rapids is a four volume exploration of the history of anarchists in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While a mid-sized town with a reputation for conservative views, below the surface Grand Rapids has a history of radicalism that has largely gone unexplored. Part of that history includes the presence of anarchists active in a number of different ways since the 1880s. Anarchist activity has often connected to what anarchists have been doing in the larger U.S. context and as such this history situates Grand Rapids anarchists in larger national trends.

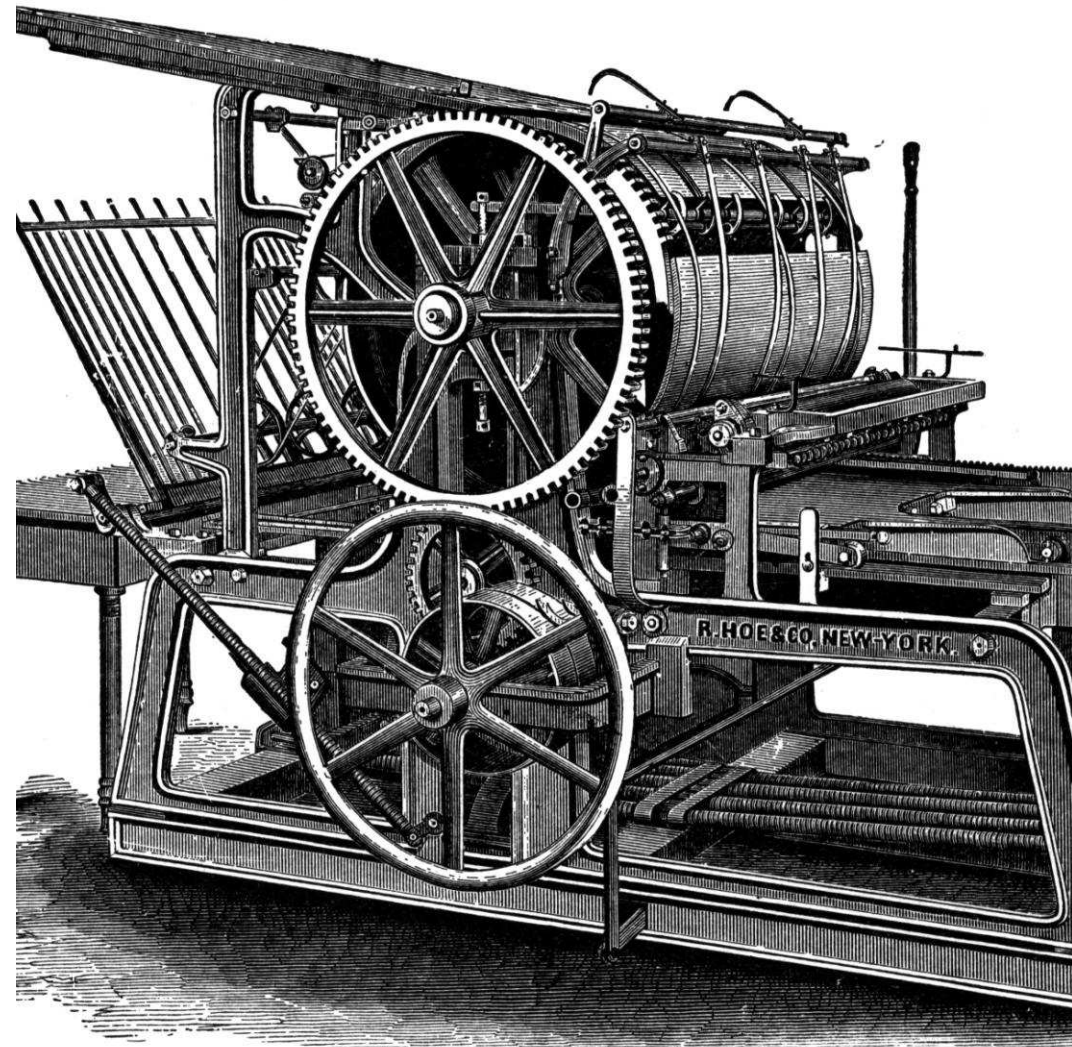
In this third volume of *Mob Work*, topics include Charles Bergman, an anarchist who organized visits for Emma Goldman and printed thousands of copies of a pamphlet called “State Socialism and Anarchism,” the repression of radicals and anarchists in Grand Rapids during World War I and the years following the War’s conclusion, the emergence of “anarchistic” counter-cultural and political currents in the 1960s, the underground press in Grand Rapids, and the anti-war movement. Along with this, there is an overview of what was happening nationally within the anarchist space during the period from World War I to the 1960s, as well as the increased visibility of anarchism on a national scale during the 1960s.



...from the occupied territory currently known as grand rapids, michigan
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MOB WORK

ANARCHISTS IN GRAND RAPIDS, VOL. 3



Superficial minds speak sneeringly of destruction. O, it is easy to destroy—they say—but not to build. To build, that's the important work.

It's nonsense. No structure, social or otherwise, can endure if built on a foundation of lies.

Before the garden can bloom, the weeds must be uprooted. Nothing is therefore more important than to destroy. Nothing more necessary and difficult.

—"Why The Blast?" from Issue #1 of The Blast



Anarchism and anarchy mean different things to different people and have meanings that differ depending on their context. Anarchism has a rich theoretical and historical tradition. For the most part, this publication assumes the reader has at least a basic understanding of anarchism. However, for those never exposed to the ideas, the following excerpt from Peter Gelderloos' *Anarchy Works* identifies the basic concepts in anarchism:

Autonomy and Horizontality: All people deserve the freedom to define and organize themselves on their own terms. Decision-making structures should be horizontal rather than vertical, so no one dominates anyone else; they should foster power to act freely rather than power over others. Anarchism opposes all coercive hierarchies, including capitalism, the state, white supremacy, and patriarchy.

Mutual Aid: People should help one another voluntarily; bonds of solidarity and generosity form a stronger social glue than the fear inspired by laws, borders, prisons, and armies. Mutual aid is neither a form of charity nor of zero-sum exchange; both giver and receiver are equal and interchangeable. Since neither holds power over the other, they increase their collective power by creating opportunities to work together.

Voluntary Association: People should be free to cooperate with whomever they want, however they see fit; likewise, they should be free to refuse any relationship or arrangement they do not judge to be in their interest. Everyone should be able to move freely, both physically and socially. Anarchists oppose borders of all kinds and involuntary categorization by citizenship, gender, or race.

Direct Action: It is more empowering and effective to accomplish goals directly than to rely on authorities or representatives. Free people do not request the changes they want to see in the world; they make those changes.

Throughout this publication, we explore various facets of anarchist history as it relates to Grand Rapids, Michigan and try to situate it within its larger historical context. The purpose is not to make a case for anarchy—that has been made better elsewhere by others far more eloquent than us.

MOB WORK: ANARCHISTS IN GRAND RAPIDS, VOL. 3

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MOB WORK is a four volume set of zines documenting anarchy in Grand Rapids, Michigan from the 1880s to the 1990s.

For more information, please visit <http://www.sproutdistro.com>

CHARLES BERGMAN

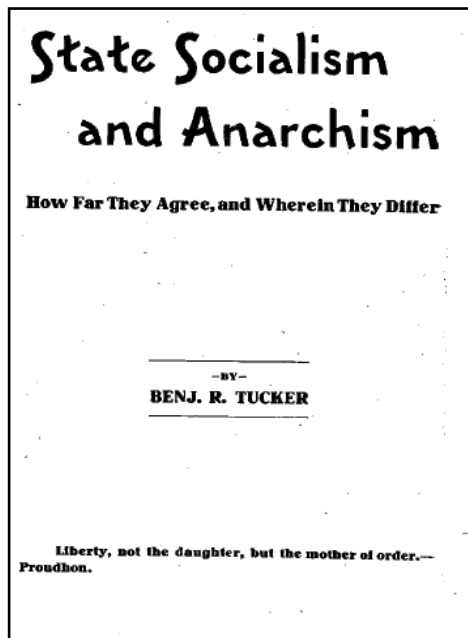
Charles Bergman was an anarchist who lived just outside of the city of Grand Rapids, in a northeastern area known as Alpine. Bergman was an active anarchist, having twice helped William Buwalda in organizing speaking appearances for Emma Goldman when she visited Grand Rapids.

Bergman also undertook an effort to spread anarchist propaganda. In the September 1912 issue of Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* the following announcement appeared:

ATTENTION!

About Oct. 15th I shall have printed (in sixteen-page, self-covered pamphlet form) ten thousand or more copies of "State Socialism and Anarchism," by Benj. Tucker. My object is to supply a complete exposition of Anarchism at cost for propaganda. I will take orders for any amount at the rate of \$4.20 a thousand, or forty-two cents a hundred, purchaser to pay expressage from Grand Rapids, Mich.

Chas. W. Bergman,
Alpine, Mich.!"



Inside Page of Bergman's Edition of *State Socialism and Anarchism*

"State and Socialism" was a basic introduction to anarchism culled from the pages of the individualist anarchist Benjamin Tucker's *Liberty* newspaper. The essay was originally prepared for publication in the magazine *North American Review* but after the magazine dragged its feet in publishing it (despite assurances that it would), Tucker made a few changes to it, delivered it as a lecture, and finally printed it in *Liberty* on March 10, 1888.² The article was reprinted several times, with Bergman's edition being one of two that appeared in the 1910s.³ Bergman

- 224 J. Kenneth Rabac, "What Can Be Done," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 2, March 4, 1971, 5.
- 225 David Horowitz, "Revolutionary Karma vs. Revolutionary Politics," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 2, March 4, 1971, 6.
- 226 "Where Disorders Occurred," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 30, 1967, 14.
- 227 "Negro Youths Calm Crowd," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 25, 1967, 19.
- 228 Todd E. Robinson, *A City Within A City: The Black Freedom Struggle in Grand Rapids, Michigan*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2013), 100.
- 229 Robinson, 121.
- 230 "Anatomy of a Riot," *Grand Rapids Press*, November 16, 1967, 17.
- 231 Mike Niemann, "Police Find Moving Mob Calls for Mobile Tactics," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 25, 1967, 19.
- 232 "How It Happened," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 24, 1977, 2-B
- 233 William Schiffel, "Show of Police Strength Averts Greater Troubles," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 26, 1967, 16.
- 234 "44 Are Hurt, 213 Arrested," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 26, 1967, 1.
- 235 "Governor Lifts City Curfew as Calm Envelops Riot Area," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 27, 1967, 1.
- 236 "S. Division Beset By Young Mob," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 25, 1967, 1.
- 237 "Negro Youths Calm Crowd," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 25, 1967, 19.
- 238 "Will it Happen Again?," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 24, 1977, 3-B.
- 239 "The Area Today," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 24, 1977, 1-B.
- 240 "The Neighborhood," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 24, 1977, 1-B.
- 241 Robinson, 124.
- 242 Robinson, 169.
- 243 "Black Man Rips Gang Activities," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 11, 1970, 3-C.
- 244 "Post-Riot Study Indicates Low Police Prejudice Against Negro," *Grand Rapids Press*, November 30, 1967, 67.
- 245 "The Trouble Is Symptommatic," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 26, 1967, 14.
- 246 "19 Injured in New Racial Outbreak, 28 Arrested," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 2, 1969, 1.
- 247 "Inner City Quiet as Storm Helps Police Quell Unrest," *Grand Rapids Press*, July 3, 1969, 2.
- 248 Brian Malone, "5 Hurt as Gangs Stone Cars Here," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 10, 1970, 1; "Rocks Fly Second Night in Inner City," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 11, 1970, 1; "Inner-City Rock Hurling Continues, Three Fires Set," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 12, 1970, 3-A.
- 249 "Negroes Demand Police Be Curbed," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 12, 1970, 2-B.
- 250 "'Law, Order' Demand Scored," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 13, 1970, 1-F.
- 251 Zig Zag, *Smash Pacifism: A Critical Analysis of Gandhi and King*, (n.p., Warrior Publications: 2012), 68.
- 252 Mike Lloyd, "Boelens Pledges Action To Curb Violence in City," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 13, 1970, 1-F.
- 253 Mike Lloyd, "Blacks Boycotting Police-Race Talks," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 7, 1970, 1.
- 254 "Black Man Rips Gang Activities," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 11, 1970, 3-C.
- 255 "Latin Group Backs City on Police, Race," *Grand Rapids Press*, May 14, 1970, 3-C.

- 190 Arn Shackelford, "Non-violence with a storefront," *Grand Rapids Press*, June 17, 1974, 12-B.
- 191 Hargis, "Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)," 27.
- 192 Cornell, "'For A World Without Oppressors,'" 546-547.
- 193 Cornell, "'For A World Without Oppressors,'" 542-544.
- 194 "Advertisement: The People's Community Center," *The Salt*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October/November 1972.
- 195 *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 12, June 28-July 12, 1971.
- 196 "Eastown Food Co-Op Exemplifies Cooperative Approach to Business," *The FUNDamentalist*, September/October 1997, Vol. 6, #5, 12.
- 197 *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 3, February 17-March 3, 1971.
- 198 *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 17, December 9-23, 1971.
- 199 Bob Burns, "New Intellectual Freedom No Dream at Grand Valley," *Grand Rapids Press*, February 9, 1969, p. 2-A.
- 200 "Grand Valley's Thomas Jefferson College's Keep on Truckin' student recruitment poster", Accessed November 10, 2013, <http://gvsu.cdmhost.com/cdm/ref/collection/p15068coll7/id/30>
- 201 "GVSU History: 1970-1980," May 24, 2010, <http://www.gvsu.edu/anniversary/history---colleges--history--1970-1980---27.htm>
- 202 "GVSC's Token Radical," *Grand Rapids Press Wonderland*, September 19, 1976, 6.
- 203 Benjamin Zablocki, "Problems of Anarchism on Hippie Communes," in Rosabeth Moss Kanter, ed., *Communes: Creating and Managing the Collective Life*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), 168.
- 204 Stewart, 5.
- 205 Thorne Dreyer, "Liberation News Service," in *On The Ground*, 19.
- 206 Harvey Wasserman, "Liberation News Service," in *On The Ground*, 131.
- 207 Abe Peck, "*Seed, Rat Subterranean News*" in *On The Ground*, 97.
- 208 Allen Young, "Liberation News Service, *Gay Sunshine, Gay Flames*," in *On The Ground*, 176.
- 209 "Editorial," *The Salt*, Vol. 1, No. 1, October/November 1972.
- 210 *New River Free Press*, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 1973, 2.
- 211 "Purpose," *The Root*, Vol.1, No. 1, February 5-19, 1971.
- 212 "Whose Root?," *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 5, March 16-March 30, 1971.
- 213 *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 6, March 31-April 11, 1971.
- 214 *The Root*, Vol. II, No. 4, May 8-22.
- 215 "You And The FBI," *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 12, June 28-July 12, 1971.
- 216 *The Root*, Vol. 1, No. 14, August 16-August 30, 1971,
- 217 *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971.
- 218 "Pig Laws and Drugs," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 7.
- 219 "What Can Be Done at GVSC," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 9.
- 220 "Tears Shed Over Invasion Again," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 1.
- 221 "Tears Shed Over Invasion Again," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 10.
- 222 "Liberal Questions Nonviolence," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 4.
- 223 "Voting is Bullshit in Babylon," *Babylon Free Press*, No. 1, February 17, 1971, 9.

printed 10,000 copies according to the inside cover of the pamphlet.⁴ In the introduction, Bergman wrote:

"From the oppression, aggression, political and individual violence, and slavery of our times and in opposition to the attempted cure of social evils and change of conditions by legislation, regulation, prohibition and paternalism, the much misrepresented and little understood philosophy of Anarchism, offers relief both from a standpoint of justice and utility."⁵

For readers seeking additional information on anarchism, Bergman directed readers to Emma Goldman's *Mother Earth* and also their local library to check out authors such as Peter Kropotkin, Tolstoy, and Lysander Spooner.

In "State Socialism and Anarchism," Tucker contrasts state socialism with anarchism, arguing that only anti-state anarchism is compatible with liberty. Tucker offers a one-sentence description of anarchism, stating that it is "the doctrine that all the affairs of men should be managed by individuals or voluntary associations, and that the State should be abolished."⁶ Among the differences between anarchists and state socialists, Tucker said that anarchists were willing to discuss sexuality.⁷ For Tucker, autonomy and anarchy meant that individuals must be allowed to love whomever they want and to follow their desires without interference from the state or others.⁸ Moreover, Tucker's description of men and women using gender neutral language showed the depth of his critique.

Breaking the Isolation: The International Intelligence Institute

Reflecting what was likely the isolation experienced by an anarchist living in rural West Michigan, Charles Bergman worked towards developing a correspondence with anarchists and other radicals via the mail. He participated in a group called "The International Intelligence Institute" which was a network for debating general topics—they described it as existing for "the purpose of dissemination of intelligence and information"—but it had a definite liberal and radical tilt.⁹ Michigan anarchists including William Buwalda and Joseph Labadie participated, as did Voltairine de Cleyre (at the time living in Chicago).¹⁰ The group essentially functioned as a network for the exchange of ideas via the mail, with members' being able to request information from others, query members on a variety of topics, or seek correspondence via the International Intelligence Institute's semi-frequent bulletin.

Bergman was listed as interested in discussion of "social, political, and economic questions."¹¹ Reflecting his interest in organizing, he was also looking to exchange ideas and help start clubs to debate scientific, philosophical, and

economic ideas—even stating that he hoped that such clubs could “replace churches in time.”¹² In March of 1913, Bergman announced his printing of “State Socialism and Anarchism,” but also said that he was seeking “anarchist literature out of print” and in particular the works of Lysander Spooner and Proudhon.¹³

WORLD WAR 1 REPRESSION

During World War I and in the years immediately following the war’s conclusion, the United States government used the war to crack down on radicals of all stripes, especially targeting anarchists and members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW). Newspapers were targeted, mail was intercepted, radical groups were harassed, and individual anarchists were arrested.

The repression was directed towards a vague category of “reds” which encompassed a wide-range of contradictory ideologies including anarchism, socialism, communism, and later Bolshevism.

Based on available sources, it is difficult to get a scope of which types of groups and individuals were active in Grand Rapids. As has been discussed elsewhere, members of the IWW were targeted as was IWW propaganda, although it is not clear if there was an affiliate functioning at the time. In other cases, the terms “anarchist,” “IWW,” and “socialist” are used interchangeably making it hard to understand who was targeted and why. For the most part, repression seems to have been focused on the IWW and members of the Socialist and Communist parties. This repression is worth exploring as it gives an idea of the context in which radicals had to organize and the difficulties that one would have faced.

Repression during World War I

The Espionage Act was signed by President Woodrow Wilson on June 15, 1917, which gave the government new powers to suppress anarchists. Individuals judged to be helping “the enemy” or interfering with the draft could be penalized for up to 20 years. The Postmaster General was able to prevent the delivery of printed material advocating “treason, insurrection or forcible resistance to any law in the United States.” This covered all manner of materials from newspapers to views expressed in letters. Similarly, distributing such material was used as evidence of “conspiracy,” making it even easier to arrest anarchists.¹⁴ These laws were used to target anarchist newspapers including *Mother Earth* and *The Blast!* Additional laws were passed including the Trading with the Enemy Act that required foreign-language publications

- 161 Sale, 575.
- 162 Bookchin, “The 1960s: Myth and Reality,” 101.
- 163 James W. Cain, *Students for a Stalinist Society*, (Freedom Press, 1969), <http://www.lust-for-life.org/Lust-For-Life/StudentsForAStalinistSociety/StudentsForAStalinistSociety.htm>
- 164 Sale, 530.
- 165 “Future Features,” *Lanthorn*, January 1969, 4.
- 166 An SDS member is cited in Ed Hoogterp, “Council Makes Tissue Number Two Issue,” *Lanthorn*, June 1, 1972, 6.
- 167 “S.D.S. Discusses Tactics,” *Lanthorn*, February 10, 1969, 6.
- 168 Maury DeJonge, “Agnew for ‘New Federalism’ As Clashes Mar Visit Here,” *Grand Rapids Press*, Oct. 19, 1969, p. 1.
- 169 Paul Chaffee, “Anti-SDS, Membership Drive is Started by YAF,” *Grand Rapids Press*, Oct. 21, 1969, p. 19-A.
- 170 “SDS Denied Use of Youth Ministry Site,” *Grand Rapids Press*, Oct. 4, 1969, p. 2-A.
- 171 “Antiwar Protest Slogans Spary-painted at 2 Schools,” *Grand Rapids Press*, Sep. 12, 1969, 2-B.
- 172 Shin’ya Ono, “A Weatherman: You Do Need a Weatherman to Know Which Way the Wind Blows,” in Harold Jacobs, ed., *Weatherman*, (Berkeley: Ramparts Press, 1970), 156.
- 173 Wallace Turner, “Tip Leads to the Arrest of Radical Sought in 1970 Oregon Case,” *New York Times*, January 22, 1987, <http://www.nytimes.com/1987/01/22/us/tip-leads-to-the-arrest-of-radical-sought-in-1970-oregon-case.html>
- 174 Paul Chaffee, “Demonstrators Heckle Ford at GVSC Flag Presentation,” *Grand Rapids Press*, January 16, 1970, 1-B.
- 175 “Cambodia, Student Deaths Suspend Classes,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 6, 1970, 2-E.
- 176 “War, Protest Demonstrations Continue on Michigan Campuses,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 7, 1970, 8-C.
- 177 “GVSC Flags Dip In Rite for War, Campus Victims,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 7, 1970, 2-C.
- 178 Paul Chaffee, “Area College Students Protest ‘Nixon’ War, Kent State Deaths,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 8, 1970, 1-D.
- 179 Paul Chaffee, “Calvin Students Join Protests,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 7, 1970, 1-C.
- 180 See *Letters to the Future: Anarchy in Grand Rapids, 2004-2008*, (Grand Rapids: Sprout Anarchist Collective, 2012) for a discussion of these dynamics.
- 181 Richard A. Whitaker, “Moratorium—Grand Rapids Style,” *Lanthorn*, Oct. 27, 1969, 7.
- 182 Liz Hyman, “Peace Marchers Here Ask Halt in Bombing,” *Grand Rapids Press*, August 14, 1968, 30.
- 183 “Peace Marchers Decry Bombing of N. Vietnam,” *Grand Rapids Press*, December 31, 1972, 5-A.
- 184 “Rice in Their Mouths, Vietnam in Their Minds,” *Grand Rapids Press*, June 27, 1967, 19.
- 185 “College Students to March on Pentagon Against War,” *Grand Rapids Press*, October 19, 1967, 40.
- 186 Hyman, 30.
- 187 Robert Alt, “‘Vietnam Summer’ Set,” *Grand Rapids Press*, June 14, 1967, 17.
- 188 Ed Hoogterp, “GVSC Student Arrested at Agnew Demonstration,” *Lanthorn*, October 9, 1970, 1.
- 189 “City Adopts Anti-War Resolution,” *Grand Rapids Press*, May 26, 1971, 1-C.

- 126 Max Elbaum, *Revolution in the Air: Sixties Radicals Turn to Lenin, Mao and Che*, (London: Verso, 2002), 160.
- 127 Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 410-411.
- 128 Jason McQuinn, "The Life and Times of Anarchy: A Journal of Desire-Armed: 25 Years of Critical Anarchist Publishing," accessed November 10, 2013, <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/jason-mcquinn-the-life-and-times-of-anarchy-a-journal-of-desire-armed-25-years-of-critical-anar>
- 129 Rosemont, 14.
- 130 Rosemont, 15.
- 131 Rosemont, 16.
- 132 Rosemont, 22.
- 133 Rosemont, 61.
- 134 Hargis, 27.
- 135 Hargis, 29.
- 136 Hargis, 29.
- 137 Murray Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," *Anarchism, Marxism, and the Future of the Left: Interviews and Essays, 1993-1998*, (Oakland: AK Press, 1999), 73-74.
- 138 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 74.
- 139 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 85.
- 140 Avrich, "Kropotkin in America," 34.
- 141 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 108.
- 142 David Graeber, "The Rebirth of Anarchism in North America, 1957-2007," *Historia Actual Online* 21 (2010), 128.
- 143 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 108.
- 144 Fischler, Steven, Francis Freedland, Joel Sucher, Howard Blatt, Eileen Nelson, James M. Hester, and John V. Lindsay. 1994. *Inciting to riot*. New York, N.Y.: Cinema Guild [distributor].
- 145 Hargis, "Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)," 32.
- 146 Hargis, "Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)," 32.
- 147 Epstein, "Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement"
- 148 Rosemont, 71.
- 149 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 67 and Cornell, "'For A World Without Oppressors,'" 520-522.
- 150 Graeber, "The Rebirth of Anarchism," 124.
- 151 Hargis, "Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)," 28.
- 152 Rosemont, 72.
- 153 Cornell, "'For A World Without Oppressors,'" 574.
- 154 Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS*, (New York: Random House, 1973), 358-359.
- 155 Sale, 464.
- 156 Sale, 375-379.
- 157 Woodcock, *Anarchism*, 403.
- 158 Sale, 558.
- 159 Bookchin, "The 1960s: Myth and Reality," 100-101.
- 160 Sale, 575.

to provide translations of articles critical of the government, the Sabotage Act that made it a 30-year felony for acts of violence and slowdowns in "war industries," and the Sedition Act which outlawed "disloyal, profane, scurrilous or abusive language about the form of government of the U.S. or the constitution of the U.S."¹⁵



Cover of *The Blast*!

In Grand Rapids, repression focused on those opposed to the draft. The Socialist Party was particularly vocal and circulated anti-conscription materials around Grand Rapids in May of 1917. Socialists maintained visibility in the city in the lead-up to the war, with regular events including a packed speaking appearance by well-known Socialist Party presidential candidate Eugene Debs.¹⁶ According to newspapers of the time, a federal grand jury was convened to investigate their activities. This led to the arrest and indictment of several socialists and a pastor at whose church literature was distributed.¹⁷ Others indicted as part of the conspiracy included another clergyman, a member of the Board of Education, and a social worker.¹⁸ The socialists reported distributing at least 15,000 anti-draft pamphlets and discussed making plans to distribute more.¹⁹ However, their open meetings were heavily (if not openly) infiltrated by police, establishing cause for a raid in which large quantities of literature and membership records were seized.²⁰ This material was used to help bolster the government's case and to bring indictments.²¹ Even before the indictments, steps were taken to limit the Socialists' ability to pursue their anti-draft work. In the weeks after the literature first appeared, two postal workers affiliated with the Socialists were dismissed from their jobs and the owner of a hall where the group met was asked to disallow the group's meetings.²² Federal agents were also called in from Chicago to assist in the investigation.²³

Along with formal repression through the courts and in accordance with various anti-radical laws, the government also made use of less official means of repression. Federal investigators frequently met with radicals and urged them to be patriotic and/or keep their opposition to the war to themselves.²⁴ Detectives relied heavily on intimidation and when they couldn't find a particular suspect; in some cases they tried to pressure family members to get radicals to stop their criticism.²⁵ These individual meetings were used frequently against rank-and-file members of radical organizations such as the Socialist Party, of whom there were too many to file individual cases.²⁶ As with other forms of repression during World War I and the subsequent "Red Scare," the net was cast widely by investigators and it wasn't just those with

clear anti-war positions who were targeted, but also German cultural groups, pro-German plays, etc.²⁷ The government regularly investigated clergy and attended church services, fearing that they might use their influence to sow opposition to the war.²⁸

In addition to government repression, vigilante groups—often with the approval or cooperation of the state—campaigns against anarchists and other radicals. Halls and meeting places were pressured to cancel meetings and known radicals were harassed from all quarters.²⁹ Grand Rapids had an active chapter of the American Protective League, a citizen group that worked with the Justice Department to monitor radicals during the war as well as investigate a wide range of “crimes” from “socialist propaganda,” “IWW infractions of the laws,” to the use of “German language in schools.”³⁰ In its first year, it investigated “thousands” of cases in Grand Rapids including 828 draft cases.³¹ It investigated people who dodged the draft³² (or even weren’t quick enough in returning their questionnaires³³) and those—including a German barber believed to be “insane”—who expressed “support” for Germany.³⁴

A Period of Reprieve and Regroupment

By the end of World War I, repression had lessened to some degree. While many Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) members were still in prison and the organization was severely weakened following the repression of the war years, radicals were able to organize more visibly. In the wake of a shortage of consumer goods, raising prices, and changes in the labor market, there was a significant increase in the number of strikes in the country and radicals were even able to make some gains.³⁵ Bankers and industrialists had profited significantly from the war, with forty-two thousand new millionaires and soaring corporate profits.³⁶ In 1919, almost one in five workers participated in strikes in response to economic conditions.³⁷

In Grand Rapids, after a period of repression, radical activity began to increase. Owing to the Russian Revolution and the implied threat that such a revolution might come to the United States, the sensationalism that usually accompanied newspaper coverage of “anarchists” started to be directed more forcefully at “Bolsheviks” or the catch all term “reds.” Whether or not this meant actual Communists is up for debate, as the newspapers of the time were not known for nuance in language or their understanding of political ideology. Still, because the various Communist groups organized themselves into political parties, they were more visible than anarchists.

In the first half of 1919, Communists were quite active in the city. They sponsored regular weekly lectures that attracted up to 150 people each week. Topics covered included “The Class Struggle,”³⁸ “The Materialistic

p. 186.

- 93 Marcus Graham, “What Ought To Be The Anarchist Attitude Towards The Machine?,” in *MAN!*, 186.
- 94 Hillary Lazar, *MAN! And the International Group: American Anarchism’s Missing Chapter*, December 2011, <http://www.sociology.pitt.edu/documents/ManandtheInternationalGroup.pdf>
- 95 “Government’s Foul Conspiracy to Destroy MAN!,” in *MAN!*, 613.
- 96 Marcus Graham, “U.S. Government Raids ‘MAN!’ And Jails Editor,” in *MAN!*, 620.
- 97 Marcus Graham, “United States Government Succeeds in Suppressing MAN!,” in *MAN!*, 638.
- 98 Avrich, “Jack Frager,” in *Anarchist Voices*, 434.
- 99 Avrich, “Sidney Solomon” in *Anarchist Voices*, 450.
- 100 Mike Hargis, “Notes on Anarchy in North America, 1940-1995 (Part 1)” *Libertarian Labor Review* 20, Summer 1996, 25.
- 101 “Philip Trupin,” in *Anarchist Voices*, 298.
- 102 Avrich, “Jack Frager,” in *Anarchist Voices*, 434.
- 103 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 300.
- 104 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 324-325.
- 105 Avrich, “Franz Fleigler” in *Anarchist Voices*, 434.
- 106 Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 417.
- 107 Hargis, *Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)*, 26.
- 108 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 495.
- 109 Hargis, *Notes on Anarchy (Part 1)*, 26.
- 110 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 437.
- 111 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 440.
- 112 Free Society Group of Chicago, *The World Scene from a Libertarian Point of View*, (Chicago: Free Society Group, 1951).
- 113 Avrich, *Anarchist Voices*, 417.
- 114 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 382-383.
- 115 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 396-397.
- 116 Cornell, “For a World Without Oppressors,” 398.
- 117 Avrich, “Sam Dolgoff,” in *Anarchist Voices*, 425-427.
- 118 George Woodcock, “Anarchism Revisited,” in Terry M. Perlin, ed., *Contemporary Anarchism*, (Transaction Books, 1979), pgs. 25-26.
- 119 Woodcock, “Anarchism Revisited,” 30.
- 120 Woodcock, “Anarchism Revisited,” 26.
- 121 Woodcock, “Anarchism Revisited,” 39.
- 122 George Woodcock, *Anarchism*, (1986; reprint, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 417
- 123 Michael Lerner, “Anarchism and the American Counter-Culture,” in David Apter and James Joll, eds., *Anarchism Today*, (London: Macmillan, 1971), 45.
- 124 Barbara Epstein, “Anarchism and the Anti-Globalization Movement,” *Monthly Review*, September 2001, <http://monthlyreview.org/2001/09/01/anarchism-and-the-anti-globalization-movement>
- 125 Sean Stewart, ed., *On The Ground: An Illustrated Anecdotal History of the Sixties Underground Press in the U.S.*, (Oakland: PM Press, 2011), 109.

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Conception of History,”³⁹ and “Problems of a Hungry Peace.”⁴⁰ Speakers were brought in from across the U.S. and in some cases internationally, with one speaker sharing his insights from Russia. Aside from the speakers, evidence of an increase in Socialist/Communist activity was found in the fact that Grand Rapids was the host of a statewide conference in February.⁴¹ When interviewed by *The Grand Rapids Herald* one organizer with the Socialist Party said their organization had grown by fifty percent in the first two months of the year.⁴²

Of course, Communist activity did not always go unopposed. The police department frequently sent officers to meetings and lectures. It was their position that allowing the meetings was preferable to driving the organization underground.⁴³ Independent groups also organized against radicals. The American Legion actively sought to make it difficult for Bolsheviks to hold meetings.⁴⁴ In one case, they pressured a hall rented to Socialists to cancel a meeting, leaving the police to inform the Socialists and those planning to attend that it was canceled.⁴⁵

The Palmer Raids

By 1919, the resurgent radical activity across the United States had also garnered significant public attention. The American Protective League continued to send reports on radical activity to Washington⁴⁶ while “reds” were increasingly discussed in the newspapers.⁴⁷ Around May Day in 1919, postal investigators discovered a number of bombs mailed (but not delivered) to prominent industrialists and government officials responsible for repression of radicals. The attempted bombings—combined with rioting on May Day—pushed the government to actively repress radicals. When another round of coordinated bombings happened on June 2nd, nationwide surveillance of anarchist groups was instituted⁴⁸ and the government launched the Justice Department’s “Radical Division” to keep permanent tabs on radical organizations.⁴⁹ Local newspapers reported on these raids, placing the blame squarely on anarchists⁵⁰ and running a “letter to the editor” that explained the historical association of anarchists and bombs.⁵¹

The government settled on a plan of simultaneous raids in multiple cities that would cripple radical organizations. The first target was the Union of Russian Workers, an anarchist federation that existed in the United States from 1908 to 1919. The Union of Russian Workers had a membership estimated at 10,000 with locals in 50 cities.⁵² On the night of November 7, 1919, the federal government raided the organization’s offices in eleven cities, including Jackson and Detroit.⁵³ The raids were aggressive—in New York dozens were clubbed and bloodied and newspapers, organizational records, and files were confiscated.⁵⁴ The attack on the Union of Russian Workers was a test run for a subsequent operation aimed at Communist organizations. While anarchists

had always been a thorn in the side of the government and a favorite target of the press (not to mention responsible for the bombings that had in many ways launched the Palmer Raids), their place as the most-feared radicals had largely been eclipsed by the Communists after the success of the Bolshevik Revolution.

In December 1919, the government began drawing up plans for larger coordinated raids on the Communist Party and Communist Labor Party.⁵⁵ On January 2, 1920, they launched operation, this time arresting hundreds in 35 different cities.⁵⁶ The raids had an immediate effect: the Communist Party had 23,000 dues-paying members in December 1919 and in January, 1920, only 1,714.⁵⁷ Raids took place on January 2nd in Grand Rapids, as they did in cities across the country. Raids and arrests continued throughout January and February. On January 13, twenty additional “reds” were arrested, primarily on the city’s west side. Those arrested were said to be “foreigners” and no U.S. citizens were taken in the raids.⁵⁸ In February, five women “alleged to be more radical than any of the 30 men taken in recent raids” were arrested.⁵⁹

Criminal Syndicalism Laws

As they were across the United States, a law was passed in Michigan restricting “criminal syndicalism” in 1919. The bill described “criminal syndicalism” as “the doctrine which advocates crime, violence, sabotage, or other unlawful methods as a means of industrial or political reform.”⁶⁰ These laws were designed specifically to target the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), in part because of their actual organizing activity and in part because of how they were hyped up by the media.⁶¹ In Michigan, the bill was introduced by a Representative who had campaigned on an anti-municipal ownership and open shop platform and in the seven years prior to his election had published the Michigan Manufacturers Association’s publication.⁶²

Criminal syndicalism was one of many forms of legislation aimed at inhibiting radical activity in the state. In addition to these laws, Michigan also had laws that banned the red flag (seen to be associated with anarchy and socialism) and state-level laws against anarchy and sedition.⁶³ In 1919, Michigan banned the display of red flags at any public assembly, parade, or demonstration—making it punishable by up to five years in prison or a \$1,000 fine. Even though the red flag is primarily a symbol of socialism, the measure said the red flag is “an emblem of anarchy” when it is used in such a manner.⁶⁴ The red flag law was praised in the business press as being “one of the best that has ever been placed in the Michigan statutes.”⁶⁵ These laws were common-place across the United States and by 1933 forty-two states had laws restricting radicals and radical activity.⁶⁶

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ENDNOTES

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Anti-Radicalism

Following the repression of the war years, radicals regrouped in Grand Rapids only to see these tentative steps crushed by the Palmer Raids. Continued repressive measures—such as the passage of criminal syndicalism laws—created a climate hostile to radical organizing. Reflecting larger trends in the United States, anarchists and anarchism faded from public view, crushed by the state and outflanked by the Communist Party.

WORLD WAR 1 TO THE 1960s

With the repression of anarchists during World War I and the Palmer Raids, anarchists entered the 1920s in a considerably weaker state than they had been prior to the war. Newspapers were shuttered, anarchists deported, and groups broken. There were many reasons for the decline: government repression, the rise and victory of the Communist movement which opposed anarchism, and new restrictions on immigration which deprived anarchists of immigrant recruits.⁶⁷ Similarly, anarchist communication networks largely collapsed during the post-World War I years, with suppression of publications older anarchists passing away, and literature going out of print.⁶⁸

At the same time, the Communist Party reshaped the culture of the left in the United States. The Communists were hostile to anarchism and forced anarchists to have to respond to frequent attacks—while anarchists were marginalized and excluded from the larger left.⁶⁹ Previously, anarchists had maintained visibility in what had been called the “Lyrical Left” a kind of “utopian, pre-Leninist socialism” that allowed for crossover between circles.⁷⁰ Lines between political factions were not strictly delineated and different views mingled.⁷¹ In the pre-war era, some anarchists focused on sexuality and gender which was important for making connections outside of traditionally anarchist circles. However, the Communist Party avoided talk about sexual liberation.⁷² Communist hostility only increased as anarchists began to publish critical accounts of the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik rule based on their experiences in Russia.

Many histories of anarchism in the United States end around 1920, stating that anarchism went into decline and receded from relevancy until the 1960s. One historian famously wrote that “the anarchist groups became largely social and educational circles for the aging faithful.”⁷³ Despite this, things still happened: the letter bombing campaign of 1919, the bombing of Wall Street in 1920, and the Sacco and Vanzetti case, but for the most part these are seen as the

last gasps of a dead movement. Anarchists themselves were faced with doubt, wearied from the previous decade's repression and the continued fight against communism and fascism. Among those anarchists who came to doubt the movement's ability to achieve its goals was Lucy Parsons. By the mid-1930s, she was expressing concern that anarchism had "...not produced an organizing ability in the present generation ... anarchism is a dead issue in American life today."⁷⁴ Parsons would fill the void by working with the Communist Party.

However, anarchists never went away. Their visibility and influence undoubtedly declined, but they spent the years leading up to "the sixties" engaged in a range of projects and continued to develop theory and analyze the world. Anarchists coordinated defense campaigns, started colonies and communities, published newspapers, and formed groups, just as they had before the war, albeit on a smaller scale. At the same time, there was—over the period of several decades—a shift away from the immigrant and working-class base that had comprised the majority of the anarchist movement. In many cases, this activity largely escaped public attention. It was a difficult time, but perhaps not as bad as has been traditionally considered.

During the period, there seems to be no visible anarchist activity in Grand Rapids. In lieu of that history, the following is a brief overview of what was happening nationally from about 1920 to 1960. Given the low state of activity, it is not a surprise that anarchists would not have had much of a presence in Grand Rapids. The shifts that took place within anarchism both in terms of theory and practice would have an impact on later generations, while in some cases creating openings for anarchist activity during "the sixties" both in Grand Rapids and elsewhere.

Into the 1920s

In the 1920s, anarchists took on a range of activities, much of which were in reaction to world events. Wary from repression, some anarchists moved to rural colonies and artists' compounds.⁷⁵ These colonies gave them a place to experiment with their radical and cooperative ideas. Some colonies had "Modern Schools," continuing anarchist experiments in libertarian education begun in the previous decade. In many cases, these schools—based on the theories of Spanish educator Francisco Ferrer—were the centers of the colonies, reflecting the belief that through education libertarian values could be realized.⁷⁶ This was especially true for English-speaking anarchists, many of whom shifted their focus to arts and education. Italian anarchists focused on Sacco and Vanzetti and the rise of fascism (both in working out attempts to free Sacco & Vanzetti from jail or extract vengeance for their murders and in confronting fascists on the streets).⁷⁷ Jewish anarchists fought the communist takeover of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union.⁷⁸ In the 1920s and

THE SIXTIES: ANARCHISM EMERGES, LONG-TERM IMPACTS

The period collectively called "the sixties" from about 1960 to 1975 opened up a range of possibilities for those who dreamed of a world outside of capitalism. After years of stifling political climates, both in terms of anti-radical hostility on the part of the government and rigid political groupings of the Communist left, a collection of differing ideologies, practices, and possibilities congealed into a "movement" that promised a new world. In the best cases, the emphasis was on total liberation, examining all spheres of life from the personal to the political. Everything was up for question.

While things weren't always rosy, the sixties opened up a space for anarchism to emerge. In Grand Rapids, the movement largely mirrored what was happening elsewhere. The amorphous movement was largely anti-authoritarian and non-hierarchical with different political groups, collectives, protests, publications, and institutions making up "the movement." At the same time, leftist political parties never took hold in Grand Rapids, leaving openings that anarchists could use in the future. Moreover, compared with past efforts, there was a shift away from the working-class and the process of liberation being one connected directly to class and more toward one linking liberation with counter-cultural and personal actions (frequently melded with confrontation with the state). Explicit forms of anarchism weren't easily found, but the vague anti-authoritarianism was a step. However, this tentative step would also raise issues in the future, when conflicts would emerge between a new generation of anarchists and the veterans of the sixties movements.

community now must guard against it is the attitude that the lawless behavior of a few Negro citizens has made a mockery of civil rights and that everything that has been done up to this point to improve the Negro's social and economic standing has been a waste of time, money, and effort²⁴⁵—in other words, people should be thankful for all that they have been given.²⁴⁵

In 1969, additional riots would take place. On July 1, eleven fires were set causing \$29,000 in damages, with crowds attacking both businesses and police.²⁴⁶ After two days of riots, the streets calmed as thunderstorms seemed to be as influential as the forty-six arrests made by police.²⁴⁷ However, these paled in comparison to several days of conflicts in May of 1970. There were reports of rock-throwing, arson, and sniper fire during the three days of conflict.²⁴⁸

Once again, more liberal elements used the riots to push for long-term reformist goals, including the imposition of a black assistant to the chief of police and a similar assistant to the city manager.²⁴⁹ They sought to unite the community—rioters and others—for the common interest of the “black community.” Other organizations made similar steps, using the riots as a way to demonstrate how bad conditions were while maintaining their distance from the actual riots.²⁵⁰ This was a pattern that would play out throughout the 1960s, where a symbiotic relationship existed between the reformists and the state.²⁵¹ Both approaches contrasted with the City of Grand Rapids' response, which was simply to make arrests and call for more respect for “law and order.”²⁵² Moreover, the Fraternal Order of Police was hostile to evidence of police brutality and rejected the demands of various citizen leaders for more racial diversity on the police force and the withdrawal of tactical units from the inner city.²⁵³ This was a complete rejection documented evidence of police brutality, as well as the lived experience of those in the inner city. *The Grand Rapids Press* went to great lengths to give voice to those who supported a “law and order” approach played up divisions within the inner city, giving space to a “Negro businessman” to denounce the riots while praising the virtues of capitalism²⁵⁴ and eagerly printing the views of a Latino group that opposed the riots.²⁵⁵ The message sent by the ruling elite and many community organizations was clear: riots were inexcusable and “official” voices were all that the City would listen to.

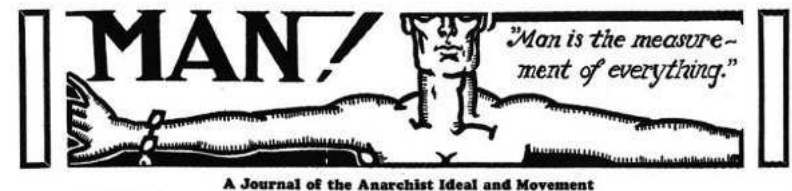
1930s, Spanish speaking anarchists had a vibrant—but isolated—movement with about 2,500 active anarchists and an estimated 4,000 sympathizers.⁷⁹

As immigration declined, anarchists turned their efforts to producing English language propaganda and building up English language groups. One of the most important efforts was the publication of *Road to Freedom*.⁸⁰ The newspaper began in 1924 and was initially edited by Hippolyte Havel, a former associate of Emma Goldman.⁸¹ The paper had an estimated 3,000 subscribers.⁸² It helped to give anarchists a voice, while also organizing conferences and lecture tours to build up the anarchist space.⁸³ A national tour by Rudolf Rocker in 1925—with 162 speaking engagements—helped to reconnect anarchists and build local groups.⁸⁴ *The Road to Freedom* launched a mail order literature service as well, helping to circulate anarchist propaganda.⁸⁵ During the decade, the *Anarcho-Soviet Bulletin* was another important publication that gave updates on and raised funds for anarchist victims of the Russian revolution.⁸⁶ In many cases, anarchist colonies would frequently provide funds for anarchist activities like these or support anarchist causes like the Sacco and Vanzetti defense campaign.⁸⁷

New Opportunities in the 1930s

Following up on anarchist activities in the 1920s and the reestablishment of their networks, anarchists continued doing many of the same things in the 1930s. They continued to hold lectures and meetings, formed groups, and established colonies. However, they continued to be in a weak position overall and when it came to events such as the Great Depression, they were outflanked by Communists and unable to get their views out to a larger audience. Newspapers for that purpose, *Freedom* (in 1933)⁸⁸ and *Challenge*, were formed directly for workers, although their circulation was limited.⁸⁹

An important publication—*MAN!*—was formed after Italian-speaking comrades approached editor Marcus Graham to produce an English language newspaper as the product of an international group containing English, Chinese, Italian, and Yiddish speaking anarchists.⁹⁰ *MAN!* was published from January 1933 to April 1940 and covered a wide range of topics from theoretical pieces to poetry. The newspaper billed itself as offering “no programmes, platforms or pallatives on any of the social issues confronting mankind.”⁹¹ The paper discussed important issues of the time, while also advancing anarchist



theory by discussing the nature of democracy⁹², technology⁹³, and raising difficult strategic questions (for example, about the nature of the C.N.T. and anarchists' actions in Spain). Other features included biographies of lesser-known anarchists such as Kate Austin and Luigi Galleani. *MAN!* provided an important resource in publishing news and analysis, and also formed chapters of "the International Group" to carry on activities in areas like Detroit, Chicago, and Philadelphia.⁹⁴ Over the years, the paper was consistently dogged by repression with its editors being raided in 1934,⁹⁵ Marcus Graham being jailed and ordered deported,⁹⁶ and eventually the paper was stopped in 1940 after a printer handed over the newspaper to the government.⁹⁷

Another important group during the 1930s was associated with the anarchist newspaper *Vanguard*. It was the primary "youth" group during the era that represented the new anarchists.⁹⁸ Their newspaper had a circulation of 3,000.⁹⁹ Immigrant newspapers were also still published, including *Freie Arbeiter Shtimme* (Yiddish), *L'Adunata dei Refrattari* and *Il Martello* (Italian), *Cultura Proletaria* (Spanish), and *Dielo ruda-Probuzhdenie* (Russian).¹⁰⁰ By the end of the 1930s, all English-language publications had stopped publishing. As it had before World War I, the looming of World War II and the anarchist response to it would be the subject of considerable debate.

Aside from publishing, anarchists undertook a variety of other efforts. Emma Goldman toured the United States in 1934, speaking to large crowds. Anarchists also continued efforts to build colonies as places to practice their ideals. One such colony was started in Michigan: The Sunrise Cooperative Farm in Alicia. Although it would only last a few years in Michigan before moving to New Jersey, it did attract anarchists from across the country.¹⁰¹ The anarchist movement to some degree was able to rally around a common cause—support for the Spanish anarchists—with the publication *The Spanish Revolution* being a catalyst for this support.¹⁰² It brought together members of a variety of different anarchist groups in New York City—publications, unions, etc.—for the common purpose of publishing a paper to aid the revolution.¹⁰³ The defeat of the Spanish revolution was demoralizing for anarchists in the United States, some of whom had placed their hopes on the Spanish anarchists.

The 1940s, the 1950s, and the Rise of Anarcho-Pacifism and the Counter-Culture

Early in the 1940s, anarchists began publishing the newspaper *Why?*,¹⁰⁴ started in response to fascism and World War II. *Why?* would eventually become *Resistance*, backing away from its original anarchist-syndicalist politics to focus on anarcho-pacifism.¹⁰⁵ Literary and cultural publications were a primary source for circulating anarchist ideas.¹⁰⁶ Publications ran the gamut from art and culture oriented publications such as *Retort!* to anarcho-pacifist

However, such a claim ignored the reality that the inner-city offered little hope for those who lived there. For years white Grand Rapids had downplayed the problems in the inner cities as one pertaining to black character and culture.²²⁸ This "managerial racism" contributed to a strong distrust in so-called "progressive reform" efforts in the city among black youth.²²⁹ A later study showed that of the 320 arrested, "nearly all" were from the area of the riot and that most had previous run-ins with the police. Similarly, it showed persistent lack of employment and poor housing conditions in the inner city. Many believed police actions prior to the riot were a key motivator for participants.²³⁰ However, in a retrospective ten years after the riots, the media and government opinion was that Grand Rapids was caught up in "the national mood," minimizing local causes for the riots.

As the tension mounted it was the police who escalated the situation by a clumsy attempt to make an arrest based on a report of a stolen car.²³¹ According to a later report, it was the sight of white police tackling a black man with a cast that sparked the riot.²³² On the second night, the police made an overwhelming show of force, with some 400 cops moving around the city and the police aggressively moving in the late evening to thwart the rioters²³³ after a day of fires, rock-throwing, and occasional sniper fire.²³⁴ Following the routine stopping of all traffic in the affected area, an intensive curfew, and a "state of emergency," the riots subsided after the second night.²³⁵ A group called the Sheldon Complex Task Force physically positioned itself to stop the rioters, at one point forming "a blockade" on Wealthy and Division and almost preventing the riot.²³⁶ Their efforts were praised by the police who said they were particularly effective because they were "young, hip and black."²³⁷

In a retrospective ten years later, "the Task Force" was still remembered for its efforts—although one former member was forced to admit that nothing had changed for the people living in the neighborhood and that a new riot was a possibility.²³⁸ Various social programs aimed at "improving" the area—the construction of housing projects, the demolition of dilapidated houses, and the opening of an industrial park²³⁹—seemed to have little effect, as residents surveyed ten years later said the changes were few.²⁴⁰ Integration of the public schools was pursued, in part to deal with long-term complaints but also more cynically to reduce the concentration of black youth within the schools.²⁴¹ A jobs program was hastily launched by the Chamber of Commerce to try to diffuse the situation.²⁴² When riots again took hold three years later in 1970, one opponent of continued action praised post-1967 riot efforts aimed at increasing funding for black-owned businesses.²⁴³ As a final insult, a study several months after the 1967 riots claimed the Grand Rapids Police Department was not racist, a slap in the face for those who felt it on a daily basis.²⁴⁴ Perhaps the *Grand Rapids Press* best summed up the establishment's attitude towards the rioters in an editorial during the midst of the riots: "If there is one thing this



Graphic from Babylon Free Press

picture of Karl Marx.²¹⁷ Images of raised fists and guns decorated its pages, reflecting the militant nature of the counter-culture at the time. It had a strong anti-establishment view; with articles critical of the police whom they repeatedly refer to as “pigs”²¹⁸ (other articles and graphics speak of “pig professors” and refer to Grand Rapids as “pig city”). Articles boldly stated “our enemy is anyone who helps to preserve our imperialistic

form of government. Remember that includes bureaucrats and reactionary intelligentsia, and of course, landlords.”²¹⁹ The newspaper was strongly dismissive of students who only expressed “concern” over the U.S. invasion of Laos.²²⁰ They argued that a more revolutionary approach was needed instead of the temporary occupations and limited disruptions favored by many students.²²¹ The newspaper was action oriented and encouraged its readers to take revolutionary steps. An unsigned author reminded readers that “...only a revolutionary solution is valid. Liberals awake—dreams do not smash the state.”²²² Elsewhere in the same issue, a graphic advised readers that “Voting is Bullshit in Babylon!”²²³ In the issues surveyed, *Babylon Free Press* never sets out a specific ideology or strategy for change—and even when it raises the issue, it specifically avoids taking a position.²²⁴ There are quotes from Lenin and Mao sprinkled throughout—as there was in much of the underground press—but no specifically Marxist proposals were made. In fact, the paper reprinted a lengthy criticism of the Weather Underground’s failings.²²⁵

Riots as Expressions of Anti-Government Rage

In the 1960s, several riots took place in Grand Rapids’ inner cities—connected to the larger context of racial rebellions that swept across the United States from the mid-1960s to the 1970s but also separate as a product of conditions specific to Grand Rapids. These riots are of interest to anarchists not because they were anarchist in any direct sense (and to claim them as such would be wrong), but because they were an expression of a complete rejection of electoral politics and an unmediated negative expression. Moreover, the ways in which other forces attempted to recuperate the riots and use them to push for more social programs or expanded city bureaucracies provide an interesting glimpse into how the forces of co-optation work.

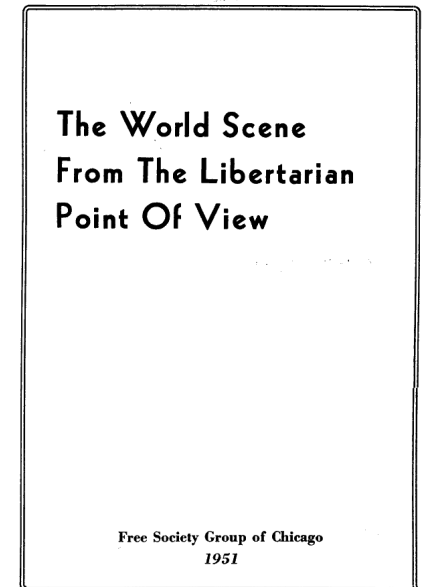
With riots winding down in Detroit, a similar scene took hold in Grand Rapids on July 25, 1967. There were numerous arsons, attacks against property, direct clashes with the police, and sniper fire in the area immediately southeast of the intersection of Wealthy and Division.²²⁶ Police blamed the riots on “outside agitators” and talked of a “spark that drifted to the city from Detroit.”²²⁷

paper’s such as Dave Dellinger’s *The Alternative*.¹⁰⁷ The anarcho-pacifists spent much of the period training activists and innovating in non-violent direct action tactics.¹⁰⁸ They clustered around groups like the War Resisters League, the Peacemakers, and Committee for Non-violent Revolution. The newspaper *Liberation* came out of this milieu and it would become an important anti-war voice in the 1960s.¹⁰⁹ Anarchists were also early proponents of the black freedom movement,¹¹⁰ with *Liberation* publishing many original writings by Martin Luther King, Jr.¹¹¹ Anarchists and other radical pacifists were active participants as well, sharing their more recent insights into non-violent direct action.

In 1951, the Free Society Group published the pamphlet “The World Scene from the Libertarian Point of View.”

It was an attempt to theorize about the state of the world, giving anarchism relevancy for a new era. They solicited contributions and received submissions from across the world.¹¹² While there was little anarchist activity reported in its pages, it did show that anarchists were attempting to think critically about their views and their position in the world.

Also in the 1950s, The Libertarian Book Club out of New York City was an important group as it provided a meeting place for anarchists, kept anarchist literature in print, and provided a way for anarchists of the older generation to connect with the younger generation.¹¹³ These connections with the younger generation were important in keeping anarchism alive. Another group, the Libertarian Circle on the West Coast, united artists (poets and painters) and more politically-oriented anarchists.¹¹⁴ Consequently, a lively anarchist-influenced literary and arts scene developed.¹¹⁵ City Lights bookstore would become a center of this counter-cultural anarchism.¹¹⁶



A more traditional anarchist group was the Libertarian League, which was founded in 1955 and ran for ten years. It became an important literature distribution point (it sold over ten thousand dollars of literature during its existence) and published a journal called *Views and Comments*. The group regularly hosted forums, participated in demonstrations, and was a very strong critic of Castro. The group developed connections with European anarchist

groups, organized a few affiliates across the United States, and had a mailing list of more than three hundred people.¹¹⁷

Setting the Stage

These efforts not only kept anarchism alive by keeping ideas in circulation, but also innovated theory, developed new tactics, etc. These efforts would in many ways help open the space for a new generation of anarchists to pursue different directions in the 1960s, resulting in renewed interest in anarchist ideas by the end of the decade.

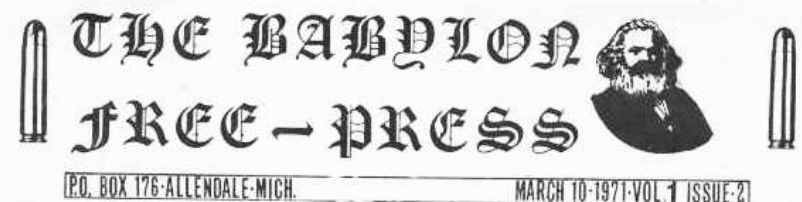
ANARCHISM IN THE 1960s

In the 1960s, a new anarchism emerged that had little in common with the classical anarchist movement that had largely declined in the post-World War II years.¹¹⁸ The new anarchy was more youth-oriented and was largely the province of counter-cultural and student radicals. This was a shift in the base of anarchism, which in the classical era tended to be working-class and immigrant-based.¹¹⁹ As general tendency, the role of anarchism in the counter-culture and what was broadly called “the movement” was apparent by the mid-1960s.¹²⁰ Anarchism—while not always explicitly clear—played an important role in the ideological underpinnings of “the movement,” particularity with the emphasis on “the rejection of the state, the abandonment of the comfortable in favor of the good life, direct action, decentralization, the primacy of the functional group, participation.”¹²¹ It manifested itself in the emphasis on “participatory democracy, communal and community organization at the grassroots level, and spontaneous movements of protest.”¹²² Others noted that militant forms of protest, hostility to property, and pursuit of “the simple life” marked a turn towards anarchism as the 1960s came to a close.¹²³ Many activists gravitated towards a political expression that rejected state power and all authority, sharing much in common with anarchism.¹²⁴ While there is a tendency to speak of the 1960s as a monolithic whole or see it through the lens of a few major organizations, it was a varied movement made up of a variety of contradictory tendencies. It has been described as “...a vast patchwork of various affinity groups with differing and sometimes competing outlooks, motivations, and goals.”¹²⁵ Even movement participants who advocated more authoritarian organizational forms tied to Leninism admitted that the movements of the 1960s were “relatively anarchistic.”¹²⁶ Moreover, classical anarchism—long ignored by historians—was the subject of many new historical works in the

and *The New River Free Press* were the most moderate of the newspapers articulating a liberal or “progressive” view. *The Salt* rejected Democratic and Republican candidates, while calling “...for politicians to get behind the people and the constitution.”²⁰⁹ The newspaper’s first issue covered a recent women’s conference for women only, the potential for targeting Lear Seigler for its manufacture of guidance systems for bombers, and the formation of a Vietnam Veterans Against the War chapter. *The New River Free Press* was similar, existing “...to make free speech a reality in Grand Rapids.”²¹⁰ The newspaper reported on the peace movement, published a calendar of movement-related events, and covered political activity of the day.

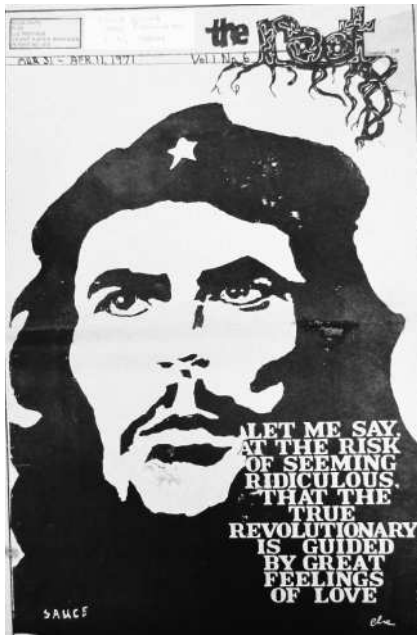
By contrast, *The Root* was a newspaper more firmly rooted in the radicalism of the counter-culture. It described its purpose as “to educate public opinion towards an affirmation of human liberation, and towards action against those forces which are oppressive and dehumanizing.”²¹¹ *The Root* focused on “International and National News; Students, Youth, Culture and New Life Styles; Poor and Minority Groups; and Local Domestic Items (politics, women’s Liberation, ecology, senior citizens, etc).”²¹² While perhaps less radical and militant than other underground newspapers around the country, *The Root* was similar. It featured covers with Che Guevara²¹³ and a pig-like Richard Nixon.²¹⁴ It reported extensively on anti-war activity in addition to women’s liberation, gay liberation, abortion, and other popular topics. Articles were republished from other sources, including an article from the *Berkley Tribe* called “You and the FBI” about how the FBI was targeting movement participants.²¹⁵ Like much of the underground press, it was a place where contradictory ideas were often counterpoised, for example, voter registration information would appear near information on the Republic of New Afrika.²¹⁶ Food co-ops, anti-war repression, drugs, high school rights were also covered as was information about herbalism and witchcraft. While there were no explicitly anarchist positions articulated in *The Root*, it reflected the largely anarchistic nature of the counter-culture and the decentralized network of movement institutions and groups, many of which were organized along theoretically non-hierarchical lines.

The most militant of the area’s underground publications was *Babylon Free Press*, a publication that centered largely on the Grand Valley State College community. Its first issue in February of 1971 featured a masthead with a



“Originally reflective of the regional character of the communities and scenes from which they sprang, the newspapers that would comprise the underground press grew to cover and sponsor sit-ins, be-ins, love-ins, yip-ins, Black Panthers, third-world liberation, women’s liberation, gay liberation, grease power, red power, black power, brown power, student power, people power, abortion, crash pads, communes, comix, SDS, Weatherman, peace, love, self-defense, Viet Cong, Motherfuckers, hippies, Yuppies, Diggers, dope, rock ‘n’ roll, and fucking in the streets.”²⁰⁴

Underground newspapers were connected beyond their shared identity, aesthetics, and approach. There were also organizations that helped link newspapers, the two prominent ones being Liberation News Service (LNS) and the Underground Press Syndicate (UPS). LNS distributed news packets on the movement and various political issues twice a week while newspapers in the Underground Press Syndicate shared copy and ran a list of other underground newspapers in their own papers.²⁰⁵ At its height, LNS had between four and five hundred subscribers.²⁰⁶ Newspapers were distributed throughout “the movement” at protests, events, spaces, subscriptions and even through national distributors. But the biggest sources of circulation for many papers were “street sales” where volunteers—often for a small per issue rate—would hawk newspapers on the street.²⁰⁷



Cover of *The Root*, March 1972

The Grand Rapids area was home to publications that fit within the context of the larger underground press. In the city, *The Salt*, *The River Free Press*, and *The Root* were published. The newspapers were like most underground newspapers, providing a cross-section of “movement” activity and information that was unavailable in the *Grand Rapids Press* or through other outlets. In reflecting what was a nationwide presence in the underground press (which were among the only outlets willing to cover the gay liberation movement), newspapers in Grand Rapids covered the emerging gay movement.²⁰⁸ The newspapers offer a glimpse of how the counter-culture worked, what was happening, and the thinking of participants. *The Salt*

1960s, giving new credence to the ideology and exposing a new generation to its ideas.¹²⁷ Beyond these theoretical underpinnings, anarchists were involved in the different facets of the movement from the Civil Rights movement to the free-speech movements and everything in between, often being important participants.¹²⁸

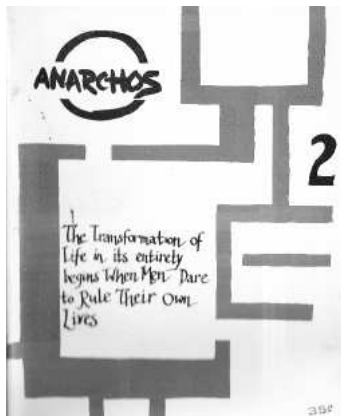
In Grand Rapids, a “movement” that largely paralleled what was happening across the United States appeared. There were a number of “alternative institutions:” food co-ops, libraries, and newspapers that formed, as well as more political expressions such as feminist collectives, queer groups, antiwar protests, and the like. While specifically anarchist formations seem not to have existed, these groupings are of interest both because of the fact that their history has been largely unexplored and because the movement was one that was organized in an “anarchic” manner.

Anarchism Emerges on the National Level

Within the larger context of the counterculture and political rebellions of the 1960s, some newly politicized individuals began to turn towards anarchism, fueling a resurgence in anarchist ideas throughout the decade. One of the earliest of these groups was the Rebel Worker group in Chicago, a group that drew from surrealism and anarchism. The primarily working class radicals¹²⁹ developed a perspective critical of the traditional left, rejecting “the stifling ideological compartmentalizations which seemed to... typify the overall bureaucratic sterility of so many leftist orthodoxies.”¹³⁰ They joined up with the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) because of its relatively open and egalitarian radical history,¹³¹ launching *Rebel Worker* as an IWW newspaper that was critical of the idea of work as a whole.¹³² In addition, the group ran a radical and anarchist bookshop called Solidarity and was one of the earliest distributors of Situationist literature in the United States.¹³³

Anarchist strains were also found in the anti-war movement. Going back to the 1950s, anarchism meshed with pacifism and an anarcho-pacifist opposition to the Cold War emerged, with anarchists such as David Dellinger and Paul Goodman contributing to the anarchist-oriented *Liberation*.¹³⁴ The publication was influential in the anti-war movement, as was another similar publication titled *WIN*.¹³⁵ However, the focus wasn’t just on publications, a West Coast group called The Resistance advocated for draft resistance.¹³⁶

Other new anarchist projects emerged in the 1960s as well. Murray Bookchin and others formed the Lower East Side Anarchists in New York City, hosting discussions and publishing literature. According to Bookchin, they were the first group to bring black flags to antiwar protests.¹³⁷ The group eventually renamed themselves East Side Anarchists and opened a bookstore carrying anarchist



Cover of *Anarchos* #2

literature called *The Torch*.¹³⁸ Bookchin was also involved in the publication of *Anarchos* which printed 2,000 copies of each issue and tried to unite political students and counter-cultural radicals along anarchist lines.¹³⁹ A group of anarchists associated with the New Left in Duluth started a “Kropotkin House” in 1967.¹⁴⁰

By the end of the 1960s, many more anarchist groups would form across the country and clusters of anarchists engaged in a wide variety of projects including print shops, food co-ops, head shops, and the like.¹⁴¹ Many early feminist groups were also

steeped in the anarchist tradition and practice.¹⁴² Anarchists advocated for militant confrontation during street demonstrations, distinguishing themselves as street fighters.¹⁴³ The experience of one such group—Transcendental Students (TS)—was chronicled in a 1971 film *Inciting to Riot*.¹⁴⁴ Numerous anarchist publications were also launched in the early 1970s, including *The Match!* (still publishing irregularly to this day), *Anarchist Black Hammer*, *Black Cross Bulletin*, and *Root and Branch*.¹⁴⁵ Anarchists also attempted to formalize networking between the emergent collectives, launching a series of efforts aimed at creating federations and networks including the earliest the Social Revolutionary Federation.¹⁴⁶ Anarchist forms of organizing based on affinity groups and direct action would continue to gain favor, segueing into the strongly anarchist-influenced direct actions against nuclear power in the late 1970s and 1980s.¹⁴⁷

Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and Anarchism

By 1966, some groups in Students for a Democratic Society—the largest anti-war student group of the period—were explicitly anarchist.¹⁴⁸ SDS had a structure that was friendly to anarchist ideas, with largely autonomous chapters coordinating their own anti-war work based on their own goals and local needs. The broad influence of SDS and its ideological openness made it appealing to anarchists. SDS’ philosophy was based on the idea of “participatory democracy”—essentially the idea that people deserved a say in how their lives were run. This concept, along with others articulated in “The Port Huron Statement” (the basic articulation of SDS’s values), were consistent with anarchist principles (although there were certainly flaws in the document and it was not purely anarchist in any sense).¹⁴⁹ The group originally sought to influence the Democratic Party, but changed course once they realized the impossibility of the task.¹⁵⁰ Ironically, the libertarian and anarchist

In Grand Rapids, several counter-cultural institutions formed that mirrored what was happening elsewhere. The People’s Community Center on Wealthy Street offered a meeting space and a lending library.¹⁹⁴ A food co-op existed on the corner of Indiana and Dayton on the West side of Grand Rapids.¹⁹⁵ Another food co-op began in the mid-1970s, growing out of a buying club at Aquinas College and several cooperative households to become the Eastown Food Co-op which would exist into the late 1990s.¹⁹⁶ Communes¹⁹⁷ and women’s collectives were formed.¹⁹⁸ At various points, at least four different underground newspapers were published, providing coverage of “the movement.” Similarly, like many universities during the period, Grand Valley State College was also home to several counter-cultural experiments. These included an underground newspaper (*Babylon Free Press*), regular rock concerts, numerous protests against university rules governing student life, and numerous political expressions. In addition, there was a branch of the college that did away with grades, focusing instead individual freedom and exploration as opposed to indoctrination.¹⁹⁹ The school within a school—eventually named Thomas Jefferson College—had a strong counter-cultural feel and was even promoted under the tag-line “escape from the traditional.”²⁰⁰ Students largely decided the direction of their studies and how classes would function and according to some the school had a considerable influx of “radicals” when it merged with a similar program from Maine.²⁰¹ By 1971, Grand Valley State Colleges was even home to an “anarchist” professor—Jim Thompson of the political science department identified himself as a proponent of “communal anarchism” in a profile in *The Grand Rapids Press*.²⁰²

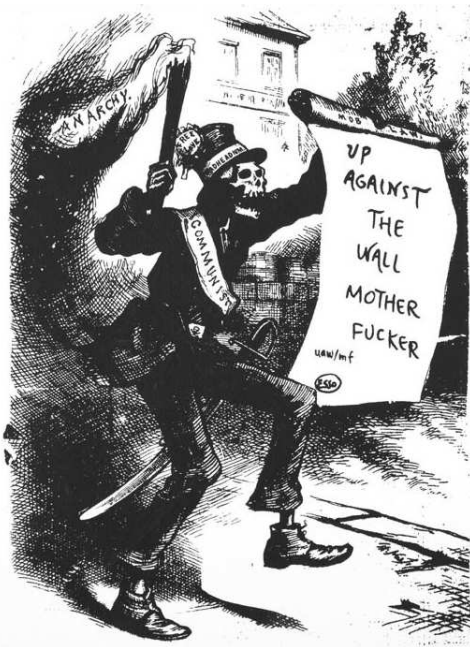
Moreover, as the counter-culture emphasized new forms of communal living, anarchism became a popular means of running communes. The anarchism that manifested in communes tended to be more of an “anything goes” approach rather than one that had connections to the broader anarchist tradition.²⁰³ However, when it functioned well—and even in some cases when it didn’t—the communal life was characterized by a quest for personal and collective freedom in an environment where people were completely free from the constraints of society. Many communes utilized processes and meetings to come to group consensus, a precursor of the type of practices that characterize more modern anarchist experiments. In some anarchist circles, these methods would be further solidified in the 1970s.

The Underground Press in Grand Rapids as Representative of the Counter-Culture

The “underground press” was a general term used to describe a wide-range of publications that identified with the oppositional movements of the 1960s and early 1970s:

students participated in national demonstrations, as was the case with a group of Calvin College students who attended the march on the Pentagon in 1967.¹⁸⁵ Groups that were active in Grand Rapids included the International League for Peace and Freedom, Grand Rapids Friends Meeting, and Resistance.¹⁸⁶ Vietnam Summer—a nationwide anti-war campaign in 1967—also had a presence in the city.¹⁸⁷ Members of the White Panther Party—a fusion of counter-cultural and political forms of resistance—were arrested at an anti-Agnew demonstration in 1970.¹⁸⁸ In response to anti-war efforts, the City of Grand Rapids eventually passed a resolution calling for the money spent on the Vietnam War to be redistributed to the city for social programs, a move that would also be pursued 30 years later.¹⁸⁹ By 1974, elements of the anti-war movement associated with the Quaker tradition opened an office described as “non-violence, peace and justice with a storefront.”¹⁹⁰

Anarchism in the Counter-Culture



Graphic by Up Against the Wall Mother Fuckler / Black Mask

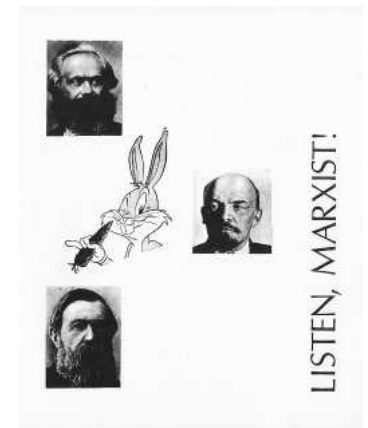
The counter-culture, while lacking any kind of cohesive ideology, was broadly anarchic in nature. Organized largely along decentralized lines, the counter-culture was home to many anarchists and anarchist-oriented projects. Newspapers, free stores, clinics, and other alternative institutions were run without hierarchy and in ways that emphasized the participation of all (as with any such project, the debate about the degree to which they were successful is always open). The counter-culture—with a history going back to Beat culture—had a specific association with anarchism, with many Beats identifying as anarchists.¹⁹¹ Some counter-culture groups had more

explicitly anarchist outlooks as well. These included the Diggers who provided free food, free stores, free housing, and free medical care to counter-cultural dropouts and hippie youth in San Francisco.¹⁹² Other groups such as Black Mask published newspapers and bridged the divide between “political” and “counter-cultural.”¹⁹³

current within SDS would only become explicit once the authoritarian Marxist Progressive Labor Party began to raise the question of revolution, as there was a need to challenge their authoritarian views.¹⁵¹

An SDS group associated with the *Rebel Worker* group in Chicago adopted the martyred Louis Lingg for its namesake, christening itself the Louis Lingg Memorial Chapter of SDS in late 1967.¹⁵² At the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the SDS chapter renamed itself “Rosa Luxemburg SDS” for the famous Marxist’s gender and anti-Leninist views (another choice included “Sacco and Vanzetti SDS”).¹⁵³ Anarchists made a strong showing at the 1967 Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) conference, including the group connected to the I.W.W.¹⁵⁴ In 1968, a group of anarchists connected with the Motherfuckers proposed restructuring all of SDS along essentially anarchist lines by “destructuring” the group into collectives and affinity groups and getting rid of the centralized national office.¹⁵⁵ Anarchist ideas and tactics also grew in visibility as SDS and the antiwar movement embraced decentralized and mobile street tactics that emphasized affinity groups.¹⁵⁶ This emphasis on street-fighting, adopted by anarchists and others, has been characterized as a return to the Bakuninist insurrectionary ideas.¹⁵⁷

As SDS and the larger movement continued on, anarchists increased in visibility both within and outside of SDS. At the 1969 SDS convention—which is rather notorious for its role in splitting SDS and launching the Weatherman faction—anarchists had a distinct presence. Anarchists had a table setup and distributed literature, notably Murray Bookchin’s “Listen, Marxist!” pamphlet which strongly denounced the Marxist tendencies that had come to dominate SDS.¹⁵⁸ The anarchists and others formed their own faction called “the Radical Decentralist Project” and positioned themselves as an alternative to the Marxist analyses.¹⁵⁹ When the convention split into sectarian fighting between the Weatherman faction and the Progressive Labor faction, anarchists organized their own meetings and encouraged others to join them.¹⁶⁰ They circulated a leaflet reading



Listen Marxist! Cover

in part: “Tired of people throwing red books at each other? Tired of the old rhetoric? Come breathe a breath of fresh rhetoric!”¹⁶¹ Around 250 delegates (approximately 10% of the convention), aligned themselves with an anarchist-sponsored resolution criticizing the Leninist factions.¹⁶² A critique of the authoritarian politics and the disintegration of SDS is found in the pamphlet

“Students for a Stalinist Society” that analyzes the politics and actions of both the authoritarians and the anarchists.¹⁶³

SDS in Grand Rapids

In the Grand Rapids area, at least one chapter of Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) was active. An SDS chapter at Grand Valley State College (the school had not yet changed its name to Grand Valley State University) was identified by the Senate Committee on Government Operations which was investigating SDS as a whole. There was also nearby chapter in Muskegon County.¹⁶⁴ SDS at Grand Valley State started in late 1968 or early 1969.¹⁶⁵ It seems to have retained a presence into 1972, long after the national organization folded.¹⁶⁶ In 1969, SDS at GVSC sent delegates to a regional SDS gathering at Western Michigan University.¹⁶⁷ Numerous media reports document that SDS had a role in local anti-war activities. While there is no evidence of the chapter declaring anarchist sympathies, it was characterized by the type of direct action and militant confrontation characteristic of SDS and the student anti-war movement as a whole by the late 1960s.

Even as SDS began to fade from the national scene into factionalism, the local SDS kept functioning. In October of 1969 it held a militant demonstration against Vice President Spiro Agnew, with demonstrators physically rushing police barricades and attempting to disrupt a speaking engagement.¹⁶⁸ At GVSC, SDS also setup a “fake” chapter of Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) to discredit the right-wing student group.¹⁶⁹ Locally, SDS also promoted the “Days of Rage” actions in Chicago, a notorious action/riot where the Weatherman faction of SDS organized a series of direct confrontations with the police. The group worked to provide transportation, while also providing attendees with self-defense skills, legal help, and medical knowledge. A leaflet promoting their efforts reportedly said, “An’ when you’re smashing the state, kids, don’t forget t’ keep a smile on your lips an’ a song in yer heart!”¹⁷⁰ In the lead-up to the “Days of Rage,” Rogers High School in Wyoming and Central High School in Grand Rapids were heavily spray-painted with slogans such as “Off The Pigs,” “Bring the War Home,” and “Vietnam Will Win.”¹⁷¹ The slogans were consistent with those being used by Weatherman to promote their upcoming Chicago action and mirrored Weatherman’s focus on high school students. In other sources, Weatherman members mention their being a collective in Grand Rapids and that at least one person from Grand Rapids participated in the “Days of Rage.”¹⁷² As an aside, this wasn’t Grand Rapids’ only Weatherman connection. Carpet heir Silas Bissel would spend much of his life on the run after being a part of the Weather Underground and attempting to bomb an Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Building on the University of Washington campus.¹⁷³

Into 1970, SDS was disrupting local events, with several heckling Representative Gerald R. Ford when he spoke at Grand Valley State College.¹⁷⁴ When Nixon’s invasion of Cambodia became public and student demonstrators were shot and killed at Kent State in Ohio, Grand Valley State College was one of several colleges across the country that closed temporarily.¹⁷⁵ The teach-ins and discussions that were held were well-attended. The fact that the college endorsed closing the campus can be seen as a testament to the power of the anti-war movement at GVSC, but it can also be read as a way to co-opt and neutralize more militant forms of dissent. Unlike other campuses in Michigan, the protests at GVSC remained peaceful¹⁷⁶ and College president Arend D. Lubbers used the occasion to remind students that “only in our established political system can we reach solutions to our problems.”¹⁷⁷ Whereas other campuses exploded, GVSC passed resolutions calling for the withdrawal of troops from Cambodia, an end to Senate appropriations for military operations in Southeast Asia, and an end to the intimidation of dissent by the government.¹⁷⁸ At other Grand Rapids area colleges, protests were equally tame.¹⁷⁹

SDS Compared with other Anti-War Activity in Grand Rapids

By the late 1960s, SDS’ focus on disruption and militant anti-war protest was considerably different than the tactics and strategies employed by other elements of the anti-war movement in Grand Rapids. Whereas SDS could be fertile ground for more anarchist-oriented approaches, other segments of the movement approached anti-war organizing in more restrained ways.

The differences in strategy are relevant because in some ways they mirror the conflicts that a new generation of anarchists would have in the 2000s when they turned their efforts to anti-war activity. Once again, a tension would emerge between direct action oriented protests and a more non-confrontational approach.¹⁸⁰ In some cases, this conflict even centered on residual debates unsettled from the 1960s, with anti-war activists from the Vietnam era seeking to implement the same approaches that they employed over thirty years prior.

As with the larger anti-war movement, there was a range of anti-war activity in Grand Rapids. Rallies and protests could attract “thousands” of people.¹⁸¹ Vigils were commonplace, attracting a mix of ages and participants.¹⁸² By 1972, weekly vigils had been conducted for nearly two years straight.¹⁸³ Many efforts were aimed at spreading awareness about the war, including circulating leaflets, organizing clergy in opposition to the war, and publishing advertisements in newspapers to announce opposition to the war.¹⁸⁴ Anti-war activity took place at the major colleges in the area (Grand Valley State, Calvin College, and Aquinas College). It ran the gamut from speakers and teach-ins to on-campus demonstrations and student government resolutions on the war. In some cases,