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# David Graeber and anarchism

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**This brings up some questions pertaining to your other side, David Graeber the Anarchist. In your article entitled, Anarchism, Or The Revolutionary Movement Of The Twenty-first Century, you begin by talking about the "movement of movements." What is this movement referring to?**

It's what is usually referred to in the press as the "anti-globalization" movement. This seems a silly name, since almost no one involved actually considers themselves opposed to globalization - in the sense of the effacement of borders, free movement of people, possessions, and ideas... Some people call it the "global justice movement", some people

the "alternative globalization movement", some people call it the "movement of movements" because there are so many diverse movements within it and no single overarching vanguard or leadership.

**The word globalization has been passed around a lot recently. Can you talk about the difference between imperial vs. genuine globalization?**

I always use the example of NAFTA. Since the US and Mexico signed NAFTA, the size of the American border guard has more than tripled. They put up walls and call it globalization. We have to bear in mind that just a few hundred years ago, international borders didn't exist at all. And even in the 1890s, things like passports were considered antiquated barbarisms. In a lot of ways we've moved backwards. Real globalization for me would mean a genuine effacement of borders, moving towards some notion of global citizenship - not in the sense of subordination to a single global state, that would be a disaster, but rather, in the sense of recognizing that everyone on this planet is ultimately part of the same community and beginning to think about what we all owe to one another as a result, of creating forms of movement and solidarity that ignore the apparatuses of nation-states entirely.

**Why do you call the 21st c the anarchist century?**

Maybe I'm an optimist. But if you look at the world from a long-term historical perspective, it just seems obvious to me that current arrangements cannot last. Capitalism particularly by the way. Everybody has a different definition but the one thing everyone agrees is that capitalism is based on an imperative of infinite growth: if a firm doesn't grow, it fails; if your GDP doesn't grow, you're a failed country.... Don't get me wrong: if you want the economic system that will produce the maximum number of consumer goods, capitalism is definitely the thing. But infinite growth is simply not sustainable - it wasn't when you only had twenty or thirty percent of the world's population in consumer economies, and certainly isn't once you have countries like India and China as equal players in the game. So something's going to give, and it probably won't take all that long, because history in general seems to have accelerated lately.

Of course, we have no idea whether what comes afterwards will be better, or even worse. This is why I think it's so important we at least start talking and thinking about what might be better. But the moment you start looking at revolutionary paradigms as inherently legitimate, it becomes obvious that most of those that were popular in the 20th century are entirely discredited, and mostly for good reasons: anarchism is one of the few that stands intact. And in fact that's where all the creative energy is really coming out of.

**What has your life been like since all of the media attention? I've read you've been getting chummy with the IRS?**

Yes, that's a common pitfall of being a dissident in the United States. Suddenly they develop a profound interest in your taxes. Other than that, however, I seem to have gotten off pretty easy. I remember during the Republican

Convention, Nightline put out a list of the fifty most dangerous anarchists in the US supposedly coming into town. Half of them were friends of mine. What exactly was dangerous about them, I'm not sure - but I was actually rather hurt that I didn't make the list.

### **Which anarchist organizations do you belong to?**

At the moment I'm a member of the IWW- which New York is engaged in a series of increasingly successful campaigns to organize Starbucks workers (we have three declared shops and several more pending) and mostly Spanish-speaking workers in restaurant supply shops in Brooklyn, a campaign that's moving along very quickly. I'm part of the broader PGA networks - that's the global network initiated by the Zapatistas, along with rural direct action groups in places Brazil and India, indigenous organizations, anarchist groups in Europe, and so on - and taking part in discussions about recreating something along the lines of the old Direct Action Network in North America. But we're really just starting to think about what we're going to do with that.