Radicle /rædIkel/ [rad-i-kuhl] n. (Botany) The rudimentary shoot of a plant that first emerges from the seed during the process of germination, often the embryonic root of the plant.

It is somewhat coincidental that The Portland Radicle has emerged in the early days of April. Walking around the city through the rain and gray, one sees green seedlings sprouting from the mud of every garden, abandoned lot, and forest floor. The name “Radicle” draws on the earliest stage of a process in which the dormant seed explodes with the determined growth of the plant it contains. From this initial shoot grow the roots that will feed the developing leaves, stems, trunks, and blossoms.

Anatomically a seed isn’t entirely one self-contained organism. The shell that surrounds the seed is actually a hard, dead husk leftover from the parent flower, alien to the new life inside. To reach its full development the plant must shake off its spell of dormancy and the shell that entraps it. The success of this process is never guaranteed; some seeds lay forever stillborn in the soil, while others realize the inner vitality that grows a tree from seed to sky.

Throughout the world communities are enacting the same struggles as the seedling. In order to realize our full potential indeed to go on living we are working to break out of the dead structures of our ancestors; working to break through the State, racism, sexism, capitalism, and all the everyday forms of domination suffocating life. The task, it seems, is to burst a new society from the shell of the old.

We are dedicated to tracking and promoting this movement of social radicles. In form and content we hope to foster the exuberant passion and vitality that smashes old hierarchies. We don’t purport to have a blueprint for this process one cannot anticipate every movement in the expansion of a hundred-meter redwood from a seedling measured in millimeters, but we know that to remain dormant is to abandon the possibilities of life and freedom that beat within our hearts. This paper seeks those possibilities and is dedicated to those who dare to fight to make a rich and overflowing life possible to all.

What is the Radicle?

The Portland Radicle aims to stimulate discussion of anarchist thought in our communities. We seek to disseminate diverse ideas of autonomy, self-determination, and mutual aid in order to encourage constructive resistance against political, economic, and social forms of domination in our lives.
Throughout history there have been two opposing tendencies that have confronted each other: the elite and the popular, the authoritarian and the libertarian, those seeking power and those wishing to disperse it. It is within this second tradition that anarchism is rooted. The term anarchy comes from the Greek word anarchos, meaning “without rulers” and, for the greater part of history, came to mean disorder and chaos. In the 1840s, a political and ethical philosophy emerged calling itself anarchism that sought new relationships between people, work, and with themselves.

These relationships based on the principles of voluntary association, mutual aid, freedom, and solidarity are to be the scaffolding of a new society. It is based on these principles that we seek to create a new society in the here-and-now, based on our ideals, within our very organizations, relationships and lives.

In concert with these efforts to create a new world, we also seek to destroy systems of oppressions, hierarchy (any system of persons ranked one above another) and domination. Today, these systems of domination can be seen in the state, in capitalism, in racism, and in patriarchy (the social systems in which power is primarily held by men) and are exhibited in other forms that also seek to shackle people to non-freedom. Anarchism seeks to expand both collective and individual freedom, as Mikhail Bakunin said: “I am truly free only when all human beings, men and women, are equally free. The freedom of other men, far from negating or limiting my freedom, is, on the contrary, its necessary premise and confirmation.”

Anarchism has always had different tendencies that prioritize both different modes of struggle and critiques for reaching an egalitarian (equal for all people in every sphere of life) future. Anarcho-syndicalists see the workplace as the center of struggle. Insurrectionary anarchists look to organize informally and prioritize constant attacks on the capitalist system. Green anarchism is centered on the environment. These are but a few of the tendencies of anarchism which overlap and cross-pollinate, contributing distinct parts to a body of thought.

In Peter Marshall’s *Demanding the Impossible*, he explains the relationship between the different tendencies as well as a goal of anarchism: “For all the different philosophical assumptions, strategies and social recommendations, anarchist are united in their search for a free society without the State and government. They all flow in the broad river of anarchy towards the great sea of freedom.”
I no longer wish to be part of a system in which I must give up my body and sanity. To give my life to a corporation that neither appreciates me as an individual nor understands the human need to bathe in sunlight and yearning to see the vastness of the open skies. Instead I wish to use my time for play amongst the people I love. I wish to see people utilizing their creativity not for the efficiency of profit but for breaking free of learned dependency upon outside institutions and creating interdependent collections of communities. As we've grown accustomed to living in our cages, having specific types of relationships, following models of predetermined learning and beneficial activities or life's work, we've forgotten what it feels like to create from our surroundings.

We depend on waste management to rid ourselves of the muck we wish to ignore. But couldn't we be utilizing our excrement to help grow our gardens and feed our community? Couldn't we refuse to buy packaged commodities and make or reuse what is already existing in our homes or what our neighbors have stashed away in their hoarded piles of useful resources? Couldn't we form new relationships and new forms of manifested spontaneous inspiration? We ought to be brainstorming what it means to share and what our security needs are. How can we help ourselves efficiently become the people we are at our heights of manifestation for the benefit of all? We need to be able to identify and satisfy our longings, to satiate our individual core needs and to express ourselves without shame or fear of insanity. To realize we don't need the commodities we surround ourselves with. How do we reuse and create with the abundance inherent in our lives?

My occupation is dreaming. I share for a living. My skills are smiling and laughing. If I ran a business, I'd give free smiles to strangers I passed by on the streets. I might even manufacture halos of white light or project Care Bear Stares into the hearts of cops.

Why are people so afraid to break loose? To give into joy, to follow their simplest dreams and desires? Is this not what we should be in the business of? What would you rather do, if you weren't in that cubicle, on that phone all day, if you weren't selling an amalgam of what used to be precious resources? Who would you be if you took your daydreams seriously? What exactly are we doing now, in this waking dream at work? We are in the service of others.

We take pride in our work. We enjoy the interactions we have with fellow workers. We enjoy the independence; we enjoy the teamwork. We want more vacation time, health coverage and a little extra money in our pockets. But what if we stopped caring so much about what's driving us crazy and making us empty inside and coming up with solutions to what itself is insane? What if we brainstormed ways of never needing to do deadening work for income? How do we organize the resources we have to improve distribution? How can we take back our shared land and what would we do with it? What is it that you excel at, can teach, and can form? Do you love cooking and gardening? How do you make clothes or spin fibers? How do you make a fire, build an oven, a house, get people to talk about their feelings? What do you see beyond the paperwork, beyond the paper money, continue beyond the walls, even beyond the trees and out past the sky?

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Hannah Arendt, at once political theorist, cultural critic, philosopher and a figure embroiled in a love affair that marred her reputation throughout her life. She adaptably moved through radically different circles, studying under and sleeping with Martin Heidegger, the notorious philosopher as a young student in Germany, to eventually writing her thesis under the tutelage of Karl Jaspers, with whom she never lost contact. One of the only types who could escape from a German death camp, emerge a Zionist, but simultaneously eschew the usage of state power, consistently arguing that a non-coercive federalized council system, based in mutual recognition, was the only alternative to the statehood, which she argued was an outdated institution from the 19th century. Arendt switched between spending her life documenting the way evil manifest itself in the modern world, to critiquing Mark, to being a New York socialite, friends with Mary McCarthy and Paul Goodman, to-staking herself out as the first female professor at Yale, to reinvigorating modern academic interest in the humanities. Arendt’s dynamic maneuvering as a person only but understates her dynamic and acute philosophical and political writings.

There are unlikely allies lurking in the annals of intellectual history who provide, perhaps by contrast, the framework by which we understand our own ideas. Hannah Arendt provides an interesting grounding for understandings of anarchism, as she attempted to envision a justification for democracy outside of liberal and Marxist traditions, with an eye to communitarian ethics and a strong disposition against metaphysics. What I want to provide here is a bibliography, so to speak, suggesting titles of hers, which are particularly suited to the anarchist tradition.

In The Human Condition Arendt seeks to establish an understanding of the fundamental categories of human beings, which she outlines as labor, work, action and finally, wholly separate from these three, contemplation.

Tracing back notions of the human back to the Greeks, she seeks to understand man in light of the death of metaphysics, which Nietzsche and Heidegger had apparently hailed. Fundamental to man, she claims, is the ability to be conditioned (created by his surroundings), but also the chance to be glorious and individual. Her attempt to negotiate the boundaries of duty to the collective and the freedom of the individual ultimately resolves in the understanding of the freedom of the individual as emerging from those conditions of possibility provided by the collective. This problem of the “individual vs. society” has been one of contention in anarchist thought, culminating in Bookchin’s scathing attack on lifestyle anarchism Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: an Unbridgeable Chasm. What Arendt seeks to demonstrate is that the chasm is largely a result of myopic, western, liberal goggles. Interestingly, Arendt and Bookchin largely cite the same sources to scaffold their arguments and that Bookchin cites Hans Jonas, a great friend of Arendt’s, as his main influence belies a certain tender connection between Arendt and anarchism that remains to be explored.

The most obvious text for anarchists to explore is Arendt’s
The Origins of Totalitarianism, in which Arendt seeks to demonstrate the common origin of Nazism and communism. Central to both is a notion of the end of history, a grand narrative to which people can be subjected. Interestingly, anarchism has historically been entwined with Marxism, from the beginning, excepting the teleological and statist aspects of the ideology. What we find in Arendt is a manual to that very dissection, to understand the historical and political causes of those very movements against which, arguably, anarchism is most pitted. The Origins is central to any anti-authoritarian library.

Arguably her most reactionary text is On Revolution, in which she argues that the French revolution was a failure and the American Revolution a success. Her argument runs along the lines of what she perceives to be the goals and methods of both. The French revolution was palliative and violent while the American Revolution was constitutional and honorable, she argues. What she argues is that any revolution to feed the poor, if we are to talk in metaphors, is bound to fail love is not the proper virtue to the public and political realm, courage is—but that this is not a discouragement of attempting to fix such problems. What she claims is that revolutions necessarily need to be positive, they need to be attempting to establish political freedom for all involved and political freedom emerges from the condition of possibility of a populace well fed and equal. That is to say, while revolutions should not seek to feed the poor, people should seek to feed the poor in order to engage in a revolution. Although quite a conservative argument, it provides an interesting context in which to situate the competing anarchist goals of autonomy, community, equality, freedom and so on.

A proper discourse on Arendt would require much more space. Quickly, the other texts that are important are Eichmann in Jerusalem, one of the most acute analyses of evil and ethics in the last 100 years, and On Violence, my favorite of her works, in which she argues that power and violence are opposites. Power comes from bottom up solidarity and is legitimate while violence comes from the top down and is illegitimate. Anarchists I would argue need to embrace power, not violence.
Rich People Things: Real-Life Secrets of the Predator Class
by Chris Lehmann
2011, Haymarket Books

This is a fun, easy read and a delightful expose of many supposedly unbiased American institutions for what they truly are: instruments of the ruling elite. Lehmann’s book covers the obvious (Ayn Rand) and the less-obvious (Malcolm Gladwell); it would probably be most usefully read by liberals to disabuse them of their assumptions that groups like the Democratic Party or institutions like The New York Times are not organs of class rule. For the reader well-versed in radical ideas, however, most of the chapters make fairly obvious points, though with considerable panache. Particularly amusing is Lehmann’s chapter on the iPad.

There isn’t much objectionable content in here; although Lehmann doesn’t offer alternatives or make any comprehensive conclusions, that isn’t the point of the book. He simply aims to illustrate the class-biased nature of almost every aspect of American life. Perhaps the only chapter that I would criticize would be the one on Malcolm Gladwell. While it may be true that Gladwell’s writing is geared toward the wealthy and his arguments for reform where he makes them are hardly agreeable, his book Outliers in my opinion is a valuable takedown of the widely-held notion that successful people in this society; whether in business, sports or academia; achieve that success through their innate superiority most of the time. Instead, Gladwell shows how they more often reach it through something like random chance via economic conditions, birth order, etc. It is certainly not a radical argument, but it is useful, like Lehmann’s book, in undermining certain mistaken notions about the nature of this society.

I’d recommend this book as a gift to give to all your liberal friends and family.

A historical timeline of some anarchist events that occurred in April

1836: William Godwin, the “father” of modern anarchism, dies.
1871: The Paris Commune, under attack from the French government, decrees the separation of Church and State, postponement of debt obligations, and the organization of shuttered factories into self-managed cooperatives.
1886: On the eve of May 1, 50,000 workers strike in Chicago. The next day 30,000 more swell their ranks, bringing most of Chicago manufacturing to a standstill, a setting the stage for the Haymarket massacre.
1919: Worker’s Councils declare a Republic in Bavaria, in spite of the opposition of the Communists. Anarchists Erich Mühsam, Gustav Landauer, Ret Marut, and Ernst Toller play a leading role.
1925: Alexander Berkman’s The Bolshevik Myth, critical of the Bolshevik counterrevolution in Russia is published.
1934: The FOCH (Federacion Obrera de Chile) headquarters in Santiago, Chile is attacked by the police; seven workers and children die in the attack, 200 workers are badly injured.
1946: Korean Anarchist Congress meets in Anwui.
I Aim to Shoot for the Scaffolds Continued from page 3

I'm not in the business of telling other people how they should think; I would like to employ people with the concept that they have whatever it takes to be a free person as we all hold the ability to create what we desire. Everyone has the power to share who they are, to be useful in communities, and that is exactly what we need if we are going to live in a world in which we can all effectively live with liberated wills. I don't want to employ experts; I want to employ people who exist. Do you exist? There are plenty of job openings which need filling. We need to work on making a new society. Do you want a job? You're hired! Benefits include anything you can imagine and create with your community.

**CALL TO CONTRIBUTE**

The Portland Radicle is an anarchist-without-adjecitives project that is looking for articles from anarchists of all backgrounds for consideration. We like writing that is accessible, but not simplistic. Generally short articles are around 250 words, medium around 500 and longer up to 1000. To submit articles please contact us at:

http://portlandradicle.wordpress.com/

theportlandradicle@riseup.net

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1950: Lettrists perpetrate the Notre-Dame Scandal, one member dressed as a Dominican monk, reads a sermon announcing the death of God at Easter mass.

1968: In Berlin, the attempted assassination of Rudi Dutschke, a well-known student anarchist activist, unleashes solidarity demonstrations in his behalf in Paris, Rome, Vienna and London.

1969: People’s Park planted in Berkeley, California — a resistance to the encroachment of the authorities into “people’s space.”

1977: Adriana Gatti, daughter of Uruguayan anarchist labor militant Gerardo Gatti is “disappeared” by government security forces.

1981: Riots erupt in the racially mixed section of London, known as Brixton. Young anarchists, who had just squatted an empty shop in the neighborhood, even though most rioters were black youths unfamiliar with anarchism.

1995: The platformist Workers Solidarity Federation is founded in South Africa, organizing in black working class and student struggles and forging connections to anarchists in Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania.

2000: A16 rally and protest against the IMF and World Bank in Washington DC brings 15,000 into the streets.
"If I do not burn
If you do not burn
If we do not burn
How will darkness come to light?"

-Nazim Hikmet