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Niko Huttunen

Eschatological Prophet as Political Realist: Paul, Nations, and the State

I Introduction

> Those who are persuaded that anarchism is a collection of visions relating to the future, and an unconscious striving towards the destruction of all present civilization, are still very numerous.[1]

In this way Pyotr (Peter) Kropotkin, a theoretician and spokesman of anarchism, laments the reputation of anarchism. He repudiates the view as a prejudice, which leads to anarchism having a negative ring to it. In turn, I contend that this is exactly how anarchism should be understood – at least if we look at it through the eyes of the Apostle Paul. My thesis is that Paul was an anarchist – albeit surely with differences compared to Kropotkin and other anarchists. Here I leave to the side Christian anarchism, which is a story of its own, to intentionally concentrate on mainstream anarchism in the form it appears in the classical texts of Pyotr Kropotkin (1842–1921) and Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876).[2]

What follows is a comparison between Paul and anarchists: how did they understand the end of human hierarchies and what was the outcome regarding issues like social position and national identity. In seeking to show where the similarities and differences lie, I do not refrain from reading those Pauline texts that are less anarchistic. A significant part of my paper deals with Romans 13, which is surely a nightmare for an anarchist. My aim is to show how the anarchistic and conservative traits in Paul play together. I claim that the conservative trait belongs more to Paul's reason and realistic side while anarchism belongs more to his heart and hopes. However, the latter – one's heart and hopes – can influence reason and realism.

One might challenge my pursuit due to its anachronism: Kropotkin and Bakunin lived eighteen centuries after Paul in a totally different time, culture, and place. Still, I would claim that the comparison is meaningful. Plato and Aristotle are still discussed in political science, which shows that temporal, cultural, and geographical gaps are not decisively prohibitive. Plato's and Aristotle's views are a fixed part of our Western philosophical tradition, making it meaningful to discuss them.

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[1] Peter Kropotkin, *Anarchism: Its Philosophy and Ideal* (Freedom Pamphlets 10. London: J. Turner, 1897), 2.
[2] For a general introduction to the history of anarchism, including short biographies of Kropotkin and Bakunin, see, e.g., Peter Marshall, *Demanding the Impossible: A History of Anarchism* (London: FontanaPress, 1993).

Similarly, Paul has also become extremely meaningful for the later generations.[3] However, great influence does not mean unquestionable authority. Therefore, I am not seeking for an authority to say what we should think. Instead, I am seeking culturally prominent figures to think in terms of.

Admittedly, anarchism is an extreme political ideology, but it just sharpens many modern liberal values, for example the idea of autonomous individuals.[4] In this way, the comparison gives us a picture not only of Paul and anarchists, but also of some core values of liberal democracy. As I will show, the search for a society of autonomous individuals may also lead to disaster. In this way, my article reminds of the moral responsibility to maintain critical detachment from any direction.

II Paul's Anarchism and His Conservatism

I start off the comparison by the idea of religion. As an ancient person, Paul did not know the modern category of religion. However, from our point of view, he had a religion and he vigorously promulgated it. Paul was an enthusiastic monotheist, believing that there is only one God who oversees all. Earlier only the Jews had held this, but in Paul's time everything changed: God gave his son to be crucified so that even non-Jews can live in relationship with God and attain eternal life in the future. This was Paul's faith, in a nutshell.

Given its huge influence on the Western world, Paul's religion was roughly what Kropotkin and Bakunin understood by religion.[5] They counted it among the plagues of humankind. Bakunin even wrote a whole book, *God and the State*, to argue this negative view. According to Bakunin, the end of human hierarchies starts with the eradication of religion. For Bakunin, the power relation between God and humankind is the foundational model of hierarchy, and that model is reproduced in society. Thus, religion is the root of all social hierarchies. He provocatively concludes as follows, "If God existed, only in one way could he serve human liberty – by ceasing to exist."[6]

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[3] Romans 13 is an obvious example of Paul's political influence. Elsewhere I show its decisive significance for Finnish political culture (Niko Huttunen, "Esivalta: The Religious Roots of the Finnish Moral View of Society," in *On the Legacy of the Reformation in Finland: Societal Perspectives.* Ed. Robert H. Nelson, et. al. Studia Historica Fennica. Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society. Forthcoming).

[4] On the connections, see, e.g., Marshall, *Demanding*, xi–xiii.

[5] See, e.g., Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 24: "What other teaching could have had more hold on minds than that spoken in the name of a crucified God, and could have acted with all its mystical force, all its poetry of martyrdom, its grandeur in forgiving executioners?" For Bakunin, Christianity (and especially Roman Catholicism) is a religion *par excellence* as it manifests every evil. See Mikhail Bakunin, *God and the State*, preface by Carlo Cafiero and Elisée Reclus (London: Freedom Press, 1910), 13.

[6] Bakunin, *God*, 16. The moral teaching of Christianity is also very dubious. Kropotkin reluctantly admits that the Golden Rule is a key principle in religion, but he blames its use for the sake of hypocrisy: "As for law and religion, which also have preached this principle, they have simply filched it to cloak their own wares, their injunctions for the benefit of the conqueror, the exploiter, the priest. Without this principle of solidarity, the justice of which is so generally recognized, how could they have laid hold on men's minds? Each of them covered themselves with it as with a garment; like authority which made good its position by posing as the protector of the weak against the strong" (Pëtr Kropotkin, *Anarchist Morality*. The Anarchist Library. S.l.: S.n, 1897/2009, 24).

Interestingly, human freedom is a key idea for Paul (e.g., Gal 5:1).[7] He shares the anarchistic idea that human power relations will and must cease. However, it does not happen at the expense of God. In 1 Corinthians 15:24, Paul boldly states his future vision: "Then comes the end, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father, after he has destroyed every ruler and every authority and power."[8] This is not only an anti-Roman claim but anarchistically directed against any political use of power. According to Paul, God's power leads to the end of human power.[9]

One can note that there is even a terminological convergence of the terms that Paul uses and the word 'anarchism.' What the NRSV translates as 'ruler' is ἀρχή. Anarchism, in turn, is the negation, or conditions without any ruler (ἀναρχία in Greek). This is just what Paul envisions happening in *human* relationships. While Bakunin states that God's authority is the source of all human authority, Paul takes the opposite route. In his vision, God's authority excludes all human authority. God guarantees human ἀναρχία.

The Greek equivalent of anarchism (ἀναρχία) does not occur in the New Testament or in the Septuagint. The negative connotations of ἀναρχία in the Western mind – which Kropotkin laments – are due to the influence of ancient political theories. Here one can point to Aristotle, who has had a huge impact on Western political thought. In his *Politics,* Aristotle sees the ἀναρχία of slaves, women, and children as a populist but dangerous requirement of the state. He remarks: "A constitution of this sort will have a large number of supporters, as disorderly living is pleasanter to the masses than sober living" (Aristotle, *Pol.* 1319b; transl. by H. Rackham, slightly revised).[10] Pierre-Joseph Proudhon was the first to use anarchism in positive sense.[11]

Aristotle here assumes that slaves and women need a ruler. Paul's thoughts on this are different. He famously promulgates in Galatians: "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). This maxim was seemingly a fixed part of the baptismal paraenesis. When it appears elsewhere in the New Testament, it is always combined with baptism (1 Cor 12:13; Col 3:11).[12]

In the context of the maxim in Galatians, Paul is speaking of ethnic status. However, the maxim itself reveals that the indifference of ethnic statuses applies with respect to other statuses as well. Male and

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[7] One must admit that the word 'freedom' does not recur as it does, for example, in the Stoic Epictetus' *Discourses.* Nevertheless, Paul is sometimes compared with Epictetus. See Niko Huttunen, *Paul and Epictetus on Law: A Comparison* (Library of New Testament Studies 405. London: T&T Clark, 2009.2009), 6, 9. Some of Paul's sayings on freedom (Gal 5:1; 2 Cor 3:7; Rom 8:2) are highly constitutive.

[8] All the biblical translations are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) unless otherwise indicated.

[9] Rulers, authorities, and powers are sometimes interpreted as angelic beings. The words are so general that they may include terrestrial and celestial beings. See Wolfgang Schrage, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther* 4, 1 Kor 15,1–16,24 (Evangelisch-Katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament VII/4. Düsseldorf: Benziger Verlag, 2001), 173–174. In this case, the idea of the end of hierarchies is still more constitutive: not only will the terrestrial hierarchies cease but the celestial ones will also.

[10] Cf. Plato, *Resp.* 560e and 575a, where anarchy is falsely called freedom. Actually, anarchism and lawlessness mean a tyranny of passions.

[11] Marshall, *Demanding,* x; Colin Ward, *Anarchism: A Very Short Introduction* (Very Short Introductions 116. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 1.

[12] Col 3:11 lacks an explicit reference to baptism, but the symbol of "clothing" in verses 3:9–10 implies it. See Robert McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon* (A Critical Exegetical Commentary. London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 250.

female, slave and free, seem to be examples of other statutes than ethnic ones. I suppose that according to Paul any characteristics and any statuses are no longer relevant in relation to Christ. In the ancient context, this was an extreme view.

Ancient people ranked ethnic, social, and gender statuses. Not only slave and free were hierarchically ranked. National and gender differences also expressed lower and higher ranks. Both Jew and Greek could be ranked higher, depending on one's viewpoint. In Philippians, Paul boasts of his Jewish roots (Phil 3:4–5), indicating its higher status. According to the traditional Greek point of view, however, the Jews belonged to the category of barbarians, who were below the Hellenes. When it came to gender differences, males were thought to be above females. Moreover, status distinctions could also intersect. For example, according to Aristotle, barbarians were natural slaves for the Greeks (*Pol*. 1252b).

When Paul promulgates that all status differences are unimportant, he not only nullifies pure divisions between people. He also nullifies the hierarchies which are founded on the ranking of those divisions. This sounds like a quite anarchistic ideal, and here I emphasize the word 'ideal.' One must also ask what the practice and the reality were.

The anarchists noted the difference between Christian practice and preaching. The anarchists not only claimed that religion is fabricated in order to justify hierarchies. They also presented another kind of critique, claiming that early Christianity has fallen into the temptations of the Roman Empire. Kropotkin puts it as follows.

> Soon Christianity – a revolt against imperial Rome – was conquered by that same Rome; it accepted its maxims, customs, and language. The Christian church accepted the Roman law as its own, and as such – allied to the State – it became in history the most furious enemy of all semi-communist institutions, to which Christianity appealed at its origin.[13]

This may seem a somewhat favorable understanding of Christianity. Unfortunately, this widely held theory of the Constantine Fall in the fourth century is nothing but an untrue myth. Paul's epistles are the earliest Christian documents, and they are not only proof of an anarchistic ideal but also a more conservative stance. While radical values expressed the future hope, the same hope also contributed to maintain the prevailing social order. Why change anything if – as Paul says – "the present form of this world is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31)? Paul thought that he lived in a transitional period, and this created a duality in his thinking. While the statuses are not supported by Christ or the future form of the world, we still live here under the old codes.

1 Corinthians 7 is illustrative, as it deals with all the relationships mentioned in the Galatian maxim. Eschatologically speaking, there are ultimately no males or females, but now Christians are still males and females. Paul does not waive the institution of marriage, and slavery and ethnic statuses remain. The slave should continue to serve her or his master, since that relationship will not hold with the advent of the new world. Circumcision and uncircumcision – Jewishness and Greekness – are also a matter that will pass away. Therefore, stay as you are. Paul sums up his practical social ethics for this

[13] Kropotkin, *Anarchism,* 24.

eon: "In whatever condition you were called, brothers,[14] there remain with God" (1 Cor 7:24). This does not sound anarchistic.

III Romans 13: An Anarchist's Nightmare

In Romans 13:1–7, one encounters the greatest stumbling block an anarchist might ever imagine. To briefly summarize, the apostle says in this passage: Do not resist state authority. Resisting authority is to resist God, who has appointed those in charge. Those doing good and paying taxes are approved but evildoers will live in fear. With their sword, the authority is God's servant to execute punishment on the wrongdoer.

After the horrors of the Third Reich, it has become a commonplace to feel awkward with this passage. Are there no limits in obedience to the authorities? Biblical scholars have been at pains to find some limiting principle in Paul's text. Let me consider their claims for a while. Here I cannot go through the whole history of research, but I provide some attempts which – to anticipate my point – fail to find a principle that limits the duty of obedience.[15] Actually, in this passage there are no limits for obedience – no matter if we like it or not. My aim is to show that this passage is nothing but anti-anarchistic. Only after realizing this we can consider its place in Paul's thought.

I start with the claims that the passage is not originally a part of the epistle.[16] Yet, no manuscript evidence backs up this theory and the scholarly majority has rejected it.[17] Some scholars assert that Paul's words constitute such an exaggerated degree of praise for the authorities that a wise reader cannot miss the irony.[18] Unfortunately, I am not conscious of any ironic reading of Romans 13 before postmodern times.

One of the most frequently proposed limitations centers around the fact that, according to Paul, authorities promote good. This is thought to mean that only those authorities promoting good should be obeyed – and, conversely, that those authorities not promoting good should be disobeyed. Yet, this is not what Paul says. He just claims that the authorities, without exception, promote good. A critical reader must surely marvel at this, but one cannot change what is written. The apostle really believed in the benevolence of the state authorities.

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[14] The NRSV adds "brothers and sisters" to include that all were intended as Christians, but this small detail shows that Paul's practice was more traditional than is sometimes remembered.

[15] For an overview of Christian anarchist interpretations, see Alexandre J. M. E. Christoyannopoulos, "Responding to the State: Christian Anarchists on Romans 13, Rendering to Caesar, and Civil Disobedience," in *Religious Anarchism: New Perspectives*, ed. Alexandre J. M. E. Christoyannopoulos (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009). Many of these interpretations are mirrored below, although I am not focused on consciously anarchistic material.

[16] E.g., Ernst Barnikol, "Römer 13: Der nichtpaulinische Ursprung der absoluten Obrigkeitsbejahung von Römer 13,1–7," in *Studien zum Neuen Testament und zur Patristik.* FS Erich Klostermann. Ed. Komission für spätantike Religionsgeschichte (Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur 77, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1961).

[17] Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 789–790.

[18] See, e.g., Timothy L. Carter, "The Irony of Romans 13," *Novum Testamentum* 46 (2004). For an overview of this reading with critical remarks, see Stefan Krauter, *Studien zu Röm 13,1–7: Paulus und der politische Diskurs der neronischen Zeit* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 243. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009), 28–32.

Interpreters have also searched for a limiting principle in the textual context of the passage. In the beginning of the paraenetic part, Paul admonishes Christians not to "be conformed to this world" (Rom 12:2). Some scholars claim that this admonition draws a line for obedience.[19] The claim is hardly true, however. Paul explicitly says that disobedience is against God's will. Thus, obedience cannot be something which Paul condemns as conforming to this world.

Another alternative is sought after in Paul's eschatology. Shortly after his words on authorities, Paul reminds the readers of the imminent eschatological change (Rom 13:11–14). According to some, this imminent end relativizes the state authorities and one's obedience to them. In 1 Corinthians 7, however, the imminent end seems to lead to the conservative stance that everyone should remain in his or her social position without seeking to change it. It is meaningless to try to effect change in a situation that is soon disappearing.[20]

Scholars have also sought to contextualize Paul's words with the political situation of his time. Paul is supposed to have recommended loyalty because of this or that political disturbance, be it tax uprisings, problems between the Jews and Romans (cf. Suetonius, *Claudius* 25.4; Acts 18:2), or friction between the Jews and Christians. Thus, Paul's admonition would be situational rather than general.[21] The problem is that Paul hints at no situational factors but speaks on a very general level.

Since completing my dissertation, I have sought after a principle that would limit the duty of obedience, but I have found nothing. I suggest that the interpretative problems are due to a basic misunderstanding in reading the passage. Romans 13 is not so much an admonition but a description of the world as it is. Paul is not giving direct advice on how to live in society, but instead he is reminding his audience of how it works in practice and, consequently, suggesting reasonable behavior.

The opening words of the passage should make clear that Paul is not admonishing his readers. Just note the opening: "Let all life (πᾶσα ψυχή) be subject (ὑποτασσέσθω) to the governing authorities" (Rom 13:1). Obviously, Paul cannot exhort all life to behave a certain way.[22] He must be describing power relations, and the grammatical form attests to this. The imperative of the third person has a divine ring to it. In Genesis, God lets humankind have dominion (ἀρχέτωσαν) over "all life of the living" (πᾶσα ψυχὴ ζῴων; Gen 1:20–26). A similar construction is found in a saying of the Stoic Epictetus. According to Epictetus, God's law, which is most powerful (κράτιστός) and most just, prescribes, "Let the stronger always prevail over the weaker" (τὸ κρεῖσσον ἀεὶ περιγινέσθω τοῦ χείρονος) (Epictetus, *Diatr*. 1.29.13; trans. W.A. Oldfather, revised). Here the imperative of the third person describes the universality of divine rule. This is also its function in the opening words of Romans 13.[23]

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[19] E.g., Jewett, *Romans*, 732.
[20] Huttunen, *Paul*, 26–36.
[21] Krauter, *Studien*, 12–15, and James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Conflict of Ideology* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 273. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 271–272, have helpfully provided situational explanations.
[22] Or "every soul," if one prefers to translate ψυχή as 'soul.'
[23] On Epictetus' passage, see Huttunen, *Paul*, 63–65.

There are several similar examples in ancient literature where submission to the stronger is described as divine necessity and as a natural law.[24] It was also known in early Judaism. Josephus puts it as follows: "There is, in fact, an established law, as supreme among brutes as among men, 'Yield to the stronger' and 'The mastery is for those pre-eminent in arms'." (Josephus, *Bell*. 5.367; trans. Thackeray; slightly revised). For Josephus, this is the theological rationale for submission to Roman rule. Thus, one reads, Jewish rebels "are warring not against the Romans only, but also against God" (*Bell*. 5.378; trans. Thackeray). Josephus' saying is a very close parallel to Paul's words, "whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed" (Rom 13:2).

The Jewish and non-Jewish parallels prove that Paul's words on authorities belong to a widely known ancient tradition. Romans 13:1–7 is merely a piece of general wisdom on how power works. Any resistance is nonsensical, as it would lead to destruction. I do not hesitate to call it political realism. However, submission is not only a way to avoid troubles. It is also a way to gain approval in the eyes of the powerful. Paul puts it as follows: "do what is good, and you will receive approval" (Romans 13:3; slightly revised). It is not in the interest of the powerful to destroy their subjects but rather to take advantage of them. Thus, if subordinates would like to live, they must provide advantages for the powerful.

According to Teresa Morgan, this moral code was typical of the popular morality of the early Roman Empire. Hierarchy was seen as a natural phenomenon. The weak should not put themselves in the way of the powerful. Instead, they should try to show themselves as useful. Respectively, the strong should not destroy themselves by unwise treatment of their inferiors.[25] Those in power need subjects. The whole of society is interconnected: everyone is bound together, above and below. The exemplary figures presented by Morgan are loyal toward persons of higher rank. The state institutions – such as the army, censorship, the magistracies, and the law courts – are regarded as moral authorities.[26] Romans 13 is nothing but a Christian variation of this popular morality. Paul views the authorities optimistically, because they need their obedient subjects.

Anarchists naturally object strongly to this – and with good reason. They condemn not only the idea of natural hierarchy but also the idea of a mutually advantageous relationship between the higher and the lower ranks of society. Kropotkin denies the idea that advantages prevent malpractice, citing the example of slavery. The abolition of slavery and serfdom was realized in many countries during the 19th century, but the whole system was still a fresh memory when Kropotkin wrote about it. He ridicules the arguments which try to show that the slave owner's advantage prevented abuse.

> Do you remember the Slave-owner of whom we heard so often, hardly thirty years ago? Was he not supposed to take paternal care of his slaves? "He alone," we were told, "could hinder these lazy, indolent, improvident children dying of hunger. How could he crush his slaves through hard labor, or mutilate them by blows, when his own interest

[24] Niko Huttunen, "Powers, Baptism, and the Ethics of the Stronger: Paul among the Ancient Political Philosophers," in *Paul and the Greco-Roman Philosophical Tradition.* Ed. Joseph R. Dodson and Andrew W. Pitts (London: T&T Clark, 2017), 102–105.
[25] Teresa Morgan, *Popular Morality in the Early Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 63–67.
[26] Morgan, *Popular Morality*, 136, 142.

> lay in feeding them well, in taking care of them as much as of his own children! And then, did not 'the law' see to it that the least swerving of a slave-owner from the path of duty was punished?" How many times have we not been told so!

Kropotkin continues by referring to the widely known report by Charles Darwin.

> But the reality was such that, having returned from a voyage to Brazil, Darwin was haunted all his life by the cries of agony of mutilated slaves, by the sobs of moaning women whose fingers were crushed in thumbscrews![27]

This must not be far from the reality of slaves in ancient times. The admonitions to a more lenient treatment of slaves in the New Testament epistles (Eph 6:9; Col 4:1) prove the fact that such teachings were necessary. The gospels are even more telling. In one of his parables (Luke 12:46), Jesus describes how the master cuts his slave in pieces! This may be an exaggerated case, as in the following verses Jesus gives an example of the normal course of life:

> That slave who knew what his master wanted, but did not prepare himself or do what was wanted, will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating will receive a light beating. (Luke 12:47–48)

One is left with a degree of duality in Paul's ethics. In theory, Christ abolishes gender, national, and social hierarchies. In practice, however, we are told to live within the same hierarchies. So, are theological principles merely beautiful but intangible clouds far above reality?

IV Revolution Instead of Waiting for God's Intervention?

It is not a giant step to then blame Christianity for being a fantasy, providing an intoxicant that alleviates pain but does not change the reality that causes it. Karl Marx famously put this in poetical terms:

> Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of spiritless conditions. It is the *opium* of the people. To abolish religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is to demand their *real* happiness.[28]

Anarchists took this a step further, positing that religion is maliciously fabricated in order to create and justify unjust conditions. For example, Bakunin understood religion as the root of all human hierarchies. Instead of waiting for a future eschatology, the anarchists wanted to make eschatology

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[27] Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 21. The reference is to Darwin's description on August 19, 1836 in his *The Voyage of the Beagle with Introduction, Notes and Illustrations* (The Harvard Classics. New York: P. F. Colliger & Son, 1909), 525–526. He also repudiates the arguments for slavery, among others that "it is argued that self-interest will prevent excessive cruelty." Thus, Kropotkin is not original in this example, but goes far beyond Darwin by using it to resist all human exercises of power.

[28] Karl Marx, "Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Law: Introduction" in *Collected Works by K. Marx and F. Engels* 3, (Trans. C. Dutt. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1975), 175–176; original italics.

real in the present, to do something *now* instead of waiting for God's intervention. The idea was thus to abolish the iniquities of hierarchies, once and for all.

Both the anarchists and the Marxists believed in abolition of all state structures. The anarchists believed that the state would lose power immediately after a revolution, while the Marxists held that the state would disappear later. Both were in agreement, however, that a structured society with hierarchies is an evil which must be destroyed. This was the revolutionary logic behind both the anarchistic and Marxist movements of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In his *Memoirs of a Revolutionist*, being very optimistic in his view of the future, Kropotkin describes his radicalization and his participation in underground resistance and terror attack.[29] Kropotkin states: "We can be sure that, whatever comes out of the next revolution, it will not be the dictatorial and centralized Communism."[30] Apparently, Kropotkin was no prophet. Vladimir Lenin ridiculed anarchists for their belief that the revolution would lead to an immediate collapse of the state, hierarchies, armies, and so on. He clarified (by citing Friedrich Engels): "The victorious party must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries."[31] And they really used terror. *The Black Book of Communism* counts nearly 100 million deaths on the communist conscience.[32] The exact number of victims is debated, but no one questions that the number is huge.

Instead of sweeping iniquities from the world, the idea of violent revolution led to continuous violence. This inner logic of violence was something that Kropotkin and other anarchists did not understand. Even Lenin was wrong; as a good Marxist, he anticipated that the state would cease after a hard period of proletarian dictatorship and class terror. But what happened? After seventy years the state was still going strong! Violence did not seem to create freedom, peace, and prosperity. The attempt to create a new world with weapons failed.

So, are we at an impasse? The anarchists and the Marxists led us down a bloody path. The Christians, in turn, are still waiting for God's intervention – after 2000 years! Paul was clearly off in his expectation of an eschatological turn in the near future. Thus, he did not intend to influence the subsequent millennia. Nonetheless, his ethics based on an imminent eschatology have modified Western thought and even caused changes in social practices. How did this happen?

Christianity was just another minor cult in Paul's time. The apostle showed but a facet of realism when accepting the Empire as it was. What he could expect was a new order among those who found the source of all good. The eschatological imagination could be acted on and so come true, insofar as it was realized in the *attitudes* of the Christian in-group. On a more general level, Paul put trust only in Christ, who would destroy – as he said – "every ruler and every authority and power" (1 Cor 15:24).

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[29] Petr Kropotkin, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist with a Preface by George Brandes* I–II (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1899).
[30] Kropotkin, *Anarchism*, 27.
[31] Friedrich Engels, "Über das Autoritätsprinzip (Dell' Autorità). Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Internationale: Zwei unbekannte Artikel von Friedrich Engels und Karl Marx übersetzt und eigeleitet von N. Rjasonoff," *Die Neue Zeit* 13 (1913): 39; English translation taken from Vladimir I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution," in *Collected Works* 25. Trans. and ed. Stepan Apresyan and J. Riordan (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 442–443.
[32] Cortois, S. and al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Trans. by J. Murphy and M. Kramer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

While waiting for this divine revolution, it was better to realistically lead a quiet life under the powers that be. What was truly important was the new order among those living in Christ.

This is how Jacob Taubes understood Paul – and rightly so. Paul created a parallel state, so to speak, which posed no threat to the existing political structure.[33] But the story did not end when Paul passed away. What he could not expect or even imagine is that such a vision would come true also at the practical level of social structures, already before "the form of this world [might] pass away." Paul did not preach much more than a change of attitude in the advent of the eschatological turn. But when attitudes changed, the justification of social iniquities started to slowly weather.

At least in the case of slavery, Christian attitudes gradually influenced the society. Clement of Alexandria, an early Christian theologian (*c.* 200 CE), required a decrease in slave work. The theologians usually admitted slavery as a given, but it became more and more restricted. In a sense, the anti-hierarchical spirit corrupted the system of slavery from the inside. Certainly, the development leading to the end of slavery was not without some backtracking. In addition, the general prohibition of slavery was not only due to Christianity. Christianity did play a significant role in that process, however.[34] In other words, what the anarchists and the Marxists rejected as a fantasy actually had a more powerful effect than the violent revolutions.

In the beginning of this article, I claimed that Paul was an anarchist whose vision of the future held the destruction of the present world. However, Paul never thought that Christians would change the world through a revolution. His practical program was quietist and, in a sense, politically realistic. But this was not the heart of his proclamation that Holy Spirit anarchistically does not care about human divisions and hierarchies: "For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body – Jews or Greeks, slaves or free" (1 Cor 12:13). While not a direct attack against any social institution or state, this attitude slowly changes those.

V Literature

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[33] Jacob Taubes, *The Political Theology of Paul* (Trans. Dana Holländer. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 52–54. See also, e.g., Bruno Blumenfeld, *The Political Paul: Justice, Democracy and Kingship in a Hellenistic Framework* (Journal for the Study of the New Testament Supplement Series 210. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2003), 389 and Anders Klostergaard Petersen, "Imperial Politics in Paul: Scholarly Phantom or Actual Textual Phenomenon?" in *People under Power: Early Jewish and Christian Responses to the Roman Empire*, ed. Outi Lehtipuu and Michael Labahn (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2015), 116.

[34] Richard Klein, "Sklaverei IV," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 31, ed. Gerhard Müller (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); David Turley, "Sklaverei V," in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* 31, ed. Gerhard Müller (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000); Ilaria Ramelli, *Social Justice and the Legitimacy of Slavery: The Role of Philosophical Asceticism from Ancient Judaism to Late Antiquity* (Oxford Early Christian Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). That Paul's ideal of equality among Christians was easily changed back to the ethics of the law of the stronger is illustrated by Clement of Rome, who wrote only a few decades after Paul: "Let the one who is strong (ὁ ἰσχυρὸς) take care of the weak (τὸν ἀσθενῆ); and let the weak show due respect to the strong. Let the wealthy provide what is needed to the poor, and let the poor offer thanks to God, since he has given him someone to supply his need" (*1. Clem.* 38.2; trans. Ehrman, LCL).

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