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Terence Kissack, *Free Comrades: Anarchism and Homosexuality in the United States, 1895-1917* (Oakland, CA and Edinburgh, Scotland: AK Press, 2008).

Free Comrades strikes a nice balance between being scholarly and accessible to the average informed reader. It is a revised version of Kissack's doctoral dissertation at CUNY, as he tells us in the Acknowledgments and also at the end of the first chapter, where the phrase "examined by this dissertation" still appears in the text. AK Press, an anarchist collective, could have done a better job in proofreading. Occasionally the mistakes in the text produce smiles, as in the phrase "a series of courts-marital" instead of courts-martial (this in the context of a discussion of homosexual scandals in the upper echelons of Kaiser Wilhelm's court). AK need not be embarrassed about employing a proofreader; in interwar France the proofreaders' union was a virtual anarchist enclave.

Kissack argues that anarchists at the turn of the century were alone in defending same-sex relations in the United States. He focuses on a handful of influential "sex radicals," including Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman, Benjamin Tucker, John William Lloyd, and Leonard Abbott. A few other figures, such as the young Will Durant and Goldman's lover Ben Reitman also enter the picture. Kissack is careful in his introduction to specify what his book does and does not include: "This is not a book about gay anarchists. While some of the anarchists discussed below were attracted to members of their own sex, for the most part, the anarchist sex radicals did not identify as homosexual... This is a study of public pronouncements, not private actions or feelings, except as they relate to the creation and shaping of political discourse" (6). The book has two parallel themes: anarchist recognition of the importance of sexual identity, and their willingness to include homosexuality as a valid aspect of that identity.

It is well known that anarchists considered free love to be the right of every man and woman. However, while the term was in use in the 1890s, it did not mean the same thing that it did when it reemerged in the 1960s. Rather than promiscuous relations with multiple partners, free love usually implied monogamous relations with one partner without the sanction of either church or state. Institutionalized marriage was perceived as fundamental to bourgeois capitalism, and restricted freedom of choice while rendering the woman a possession of the husband. At the end of the book, Kissack comments on the irony of the current push for same-sex marriage given the anti-marital rhetoric of a century ago. Most anarchist exponents of free love after 1900 were not explicitly favoring same-sex unions; nevertheless Kissack convincingly argues that homosexuality was recognized as falling within the bounds of consensual

relationships.

There were American anarchists before 1895, when this study begins, but Kissack says they were not sympathetic to homosexuality, even though some of them, such as Ezra and Angela Heywood and Victoria Woodhull, were notorious sex radicals. Recognition of the right to same-sex love came only in the 1890s, he argues, in part because of a shift in locale from the Midwest to the east coast on the part of anarchist ideologues such as Benjamin Tucker, in part because of the tremendous publicity occasioned by the Oscar Wilde Affair. Tucker and Goldman both defended Wilde at a time when few others would do so. Kissack makes a point of differentiating anarchist toleration of homosexuality from socialist conventional morality (though socialists did critique the institution of marriage). Kissack devotes a chapter each to the Wilde trial and to the figure of Walt Whitman, the poet and bard who died in 1891, as a spokesman for male comradeship. Also, the American anarchists were aware of and influenced by the new sexologists of England and Germany, including Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Magnus Hirschfeld, Edward Carpenter, and Havelock Ellis. While the main message from the sexologists was the documenting of the enormous variety of possibilities of sexual attraction, their influence is controversial. Some commentators criticize the anarchists for uncritically accepting the pathologization of homosexuals as “inverts” or degenerates. Kissack is inclined to think the sexologists’ influence was overall beneficial; in any case it helped spur the anarchists’ awareness of same-sex love at a time when the terminology for homosexuality was rapidly evolving.

Though this book does not claim to represent homosexual practice in America, there are two groups of people on whom anarchists reported and who were seen to have higher levels of homosexual behavior than was true elsewhere in society. By far the most important group was the prison population, for which Kissack’s main source is Berkman’s *Prison Memoirs of an Anarchist*, published in 1912. Kissack reveals it to be a rich source for uncovering the homosexual practices of incarcerated men. On his release from prison, Berkman, like his close friend Goldman, lectured on toleration of homosexuality. The other group where one frequently encountered homosexuality was among tramps and hobos; the best testimony in this case came from Ben Reitman, who sometimes fancied himself “king of the hobos. One will not encounter any discussion of homosexuality among the working classes, either native-born or immigrant. One may surmise that homosexuality was tolerated neither by anarcho-syndicalists nor their working-class followers. Certainly anarchist propaganda was bent on masculinizing the workers, depicting them as mustachioed, muscular men wielding pick-axes and shovels, while the bosses were usually old and overweight parasites. Since workers were dominated, gender imagery required them to be seen as violent and dominant, on the verge of perpetual revolution. There is surprisingly little discussion of class in this book, or the ways in which the cate-

gories of class and gender interacted.

Though the book title announces that it concerns the years 1895-1917, that is the heyday of the anarchist movement, there is a final chapter on homosexual activists of the interwar era, and a conclusion on the transformation of homosexual politics after the Stonewall riots. He accepts the usual account of the rapid decline of anarchism after America's entry into World War I, as born-again Americanism led to the persecution and deportation of radicals, and the Russian Revolution gave added luster to communism as the serious revolutionary movement of the left. Somewhat paradoxically, as the culture overall became more liberated sexually in the Roaring Twenties, the left turned socially conservative. The sexual liberation of the "Lyrical Left" of the pre-war era was soon forgotten, while aging anarchists such as Emma Goldman and Alexander Berkman condemned current mores as favoring loose sex rather than free love. Benjamin Tucker left for Europe as early as 1908, after a fire destroyed his bookstore, and spent the next thirty years living in southern France, where Berkman and Goldman also ended up after being deported to the Soviet Union. Their examples underscores a point Kissack makes throughout, that there was continuous dialogue between European and American theorists of sexual radicalism in this era. Kissack's readable book highlights unique anarchist acceptance of deviant sexuality by ideologues who were not themselves homosexuals, as well as anarchist realization that sexuality as well as labor played a key role in defining how people related to their society and to themselves.

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Peter D. Norton, *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008), and Lewis H. Sidgelbaum, *Cars for Comrades: The Life of the Soviet Automobile* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

The ongoing crisis in the automotive industry reminds us all that the car remains a central tenet of the modern experience. While the angst and fallout over the past, present and future of building autos garners all the headlines (especially in North America), the driving of vehicles, and their social impact, is so ubiquitous as to sometimes escape scrutiny. There have been thousands of books on cars and driving and the auto industry, but often the simplest and most direct consequences of the car are overlooked.

Two recent books on the automobile's role in society break from that ubiquity to provide us with disparate examinations of the far reaching and profound role that the car has played in shaping our world, from the very streetscapes we inhabit to Cold War battles over ideology and *real politik*. Both